

Framing the Edge of Time: Disaster, Architecture and Change

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I conduct a reflection on the effects of disaster on time perceptions and their consequences on architecture as a vessel of social and individual values, through a study of two major paradigmatic disasters spaces – Post World War II Japan and Post-earthquake Haiti. While on the surface these two cases do not have many points in common, both are instrumental to establishing the manifestation of disasters' impacts on the culture of construction and on the architectural theories that ensue from them. The first case, Japan after the Second World War, establishes the long term influences and changes in social and architectural thought that occur after a disaster, while Haiti, examines the role of the architect in the reconstruction phases and attempts to register the immediate impressions of local architects on the disaster's impact on their practice.

I show that both cases exhibit manifestations of the importance of the architect's role of not only building back, but moving forward while capitalizing on the events and social changes that happened.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

This dissertation reflects on the impacts of disasters on architecture and on the production of space. Through an analysis of the history of architecture in Post-World War Two Japan and the trends of architectural thought in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, this research has been able to establish linkages between the role of time and memory and the changes of architectural practices after destruction.

In the case of Japan, the destruction caused by the Second World War triggered a change in the perception of the role of architects in social. It also allowed local Japanese architects to innovate and create an architectural language that translated the social changes that occurred in their country after the end of the Second World War. This caused a preservation of an active memory of the history and culture of Japan through new designs and buildings that propelled Japan in the forefront of contemporary architecture.

Haiti on the other hand, is on the cusp of major changes in its cityscapes, after the 2010 earthquake. However, the building community (architects, engineers, etc.) needs support to strengthen its capacity to translate the local cultural values in the new climate of post-earthquake Haiti.

DEDICATION

To Haiti and Japan...

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Many thanks go to the Fulbright program, and the Moroccan American Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange, particularly, Dr. James Miller, for offering me the opportunity to advance this scholarship. Senator William Fulbright said: “We must care to think about the unthinkable things, because when things become unthinkable, thinking stops and action becomes mindless.” Post-disaster architecture is one of those things that need to be thought about with great consideration, for it is in part a key to understanding many cultures.

Finally, the love and caring of Fred Sheffield over the past years, the continuous support, sacrifice, and unconditional love of my mother, my sister Nadia, and nieces Zaynab and Ritas, were a pillar for me to lean on. This dissertation is as much their work as it is mine. To them I say: I love you.

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PRELUDE:

Disasters are commonly conceived of as anomalies. They are regarded as episodes that should never have happened, and as events that disrupt the ordinary conception of time. By causing major losses to individuals and social environments, a disaster creates a gap between the pre-disaster world and the one that follows. The perception of this unique condition of time in the aftermath of disasters has an important effect on the architectural response. This dissertation explores the role of the architect in disaster recovery and the effects of the disaster experience on the development of architectural theory and practice.

In so doing, the dissertation argues that two principal phenomena govern the relationship between disasters and architecture. First, I argue that the disjunction caused by disasters – whether natural or manmade – can trigger long-lasting fundamental shifts in social and cultural values, which in turn lead to changes in thinking about, and the practice of, space making. These changes become apparent over time through the built production after a disaster. Second, I argue that in order to capture that long-term shift of values, articulated and then expressed in space, architects, and particularly local architects, can play a critical role in questioning culture, preserving tradition, and creating new spatial realities. The study of local architects in Japan and Haiti illustrates these two main arguments by demonstrating their direct and indirect influences on the recovery from devastation that their countries went through in 1945 and 2010 respectively.

In order to understand the larger scale impacts of disaster on the constructive culture, time is one of the primary concepts addressed in this work, because it is a distortion of time that causes disasters to have long-lasting effects on culture. It is also through time that these effects are manifested. However, today, we conceptualize disasters as events that happen outside of time. Indeed, the term “resilience” has become a jargon in recent humanitarian relief literature. After a disaster, there is an understandable urge – among both survivors and those who respond to emergencies – to snap back to the most prior recent state of stability: the time immediately preceding the disaster. Yet the local reality is often more nuanced and complex. By considering disasters as events that are separate and unrelated to a given locale, we attempt to repress their memory in our collective and individual experiences. The aim of this mainstream approach to disaster recovery is to erase, forget, and move beyond the event, which proves to be its own sort of intangible disaster. If one were to imagine time as an arrow, this arrow would have a blank portion where the disaster occurred. Perhaps understandably, the blind spot in this approach stems from an inability to find a mode of coping with tremendous loss. However, this chronological time conception is not the only way we perceive and comprehend time. There are two words for time in the Greek language, Chronos and Chairos. Chronos is the root for the word ‘chronology,’ the time of infinitely divisible time of ordered minutes, making hours, days, months, decades, and centuries, etc., in other words, the clock time. It is the time in which we locate events in an interpersonal scale. On the other hand, Chairos is the pregnant time of condensed Chronos where experience and sensation exists simultaneously. It is the time that is more than its Chronos, a time not of minutes, but of that of moments.¹Henri Bergson (1859-1941), defined Chairos as the lived time, or the

¹ R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), pp.

real duration (*durée réelle*), and argued that it is the way we experience time and insisted on its immeasurability². This kind of felt time expands and contracts; one can feel that an hour goes by like mere seconds for example, but one also can feel that time stood still³, often in traumatic situations. Bergson describes disasters – in his case, his experience of the World War I, which he compares to William James’s experience of the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, and which was decisive of many aspects of his thoughts – as “all at once probable and at the same time as impossible: a complex and contradictory idea, which persisted until the fatal day⁴.”

The duality, between the clock time and the perceived time, often overshadows the latter as the mechanization of the world led to a need for quantifying time.⁵ War-scapes, refugee camps, and the collapsed/destroyed architecture – the sites that once constituted the social and cultural capital of everyday life – are often impossible to look at due to the horror of the event and the losses attached to it. Moreover, because the palpable human tragedy can be so great after a disaster, there is high motivation to systematically, and mechanically, “fix” the immediate problems. In this horror, people reach back in time to a familiar point in the past, and then must rush forward to a point in an imagined future where remnants of the disaster have no place. This combination of analepsis and

343–49

² Bergson, Henri. *Time and Free Will, an essay on the immediate data of consciousness* Dover p.106-110

³ The time standing still, or Chronostasis, is distortion of time perception. Neuroscientists describe it as a change in the perception of time, related to the levels of subjects’ attention.

In Eagleman, David M (April 2008). "*Human time perception and its illusions*". *Current Opinion in Neurobiology*. Vol 18 p.131–136

⁴ Bergson, H. *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*, 1932Ed. Flammarion page: 85.: “Puis cette guerre nous apparut tout à la fois comme probable et comme impossible : idée complexe et contradictoire, qui persista jusqu’à la date fatale. Elle ne suscitait d’ailleurs dans notre esprit aucune image, en dehors de son expression verbale. Elle conserva son caractère abstrait jusqu’aux heures tragiques où le conflit apparut comme inévitable, jusqu’au dernier moment, alors qu’on espérait contre tout espoir ”

⁵ Bergson, Henri. *Time and Free Will, an essay on the immediate data of consciousness* Dover p.106-110

prolepsis, that is flashing backwards, then fast-forwarding, aims to achieve an omission of the traumatic event and its memory. The response to disaster is to retroactively go back in time⁶. Accordingly, there is an effort to “build back” better and safer⁷, without the disaster’s presence, while using the pre-disaster conditions as the only benchmark for possible scenarios of recovery. The rhetoric used is important as it reveals the conceptual framework and goal of the current strategies of post-disaster relief and reconstruction. The spectrum of the benchmark, it ought to be noted, moved depending on which humanitarian, organization, aid organization or donor is involved. Humanitarian aid workers tend to think that the nature and the process of the construction after a disaster has the sole purpose of reducing risk and increasing resilience: “building stronger homes in safer places, with access to sustainable livelihoods, health and social services, and involving and ensuring the protection of men, women, girls and boys from any dangers they may face”.⁸

⁶ Analepsis and prolepsis are narrative devices that are used to manipulate the story and make a discourse about time and events in time. Perhaps the most cited example of the narrative flash-back/flash-forward, are Oedipus’s story, who, having been told his future, succumbs into it almost retroactively.

⁷ Depending on the institution the ‘build back safer’ catchphrase is used differently. FEMA addresses periodic brochures to flood and hurricane prone areas, with information about the insurance options and values that the beneficiaries can get in case of a disaster. The Shelter Cluster on the other hand, promotes a building education based approach, in which NGOs teach local residents on better construction and building practices. The International federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent estimates that “settlements are about creating a safe environment for the population where they not only have access to safe and adequate shelter but also to utilities, critical infrastructure and employment opportunities.”

⁸ Kennedy, J., Ashmore, J., Babister, E. and Kelman, I. (2008), *The Meaning of ‘Build Back Better’*: *Evidence From Post-Tsunami Aceh and Sri Lanka*. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 16: 24–36.

Flood Insurance Changes Might Affect You

As risks change, insurance premiums also change to reflect those risks. Your flood insurance premium may be going up.

However, you may be able to reduce your premium if you build your home or business to be safer, higher, and stronger.

The Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 provides long-term changes to the National Flood Insurance Program.

Under the new law, rates are likely to increase overall to reflect the true flood risk of your home and many insurance discounts will be eliminated.

For example, premiums for certain non-primary residences¹ in high-risk areas will increase 25 percent per year until they reflect full-risk rates.

Policy rates for all properties could increase based on one or all of the following circumstances:

- Change of ownership
- Lapse in coverage
- Change in risk
- Substantial damage or improvement to a building

Some changes will depend on external factors such as when flood risk maps are revised, buildings are damaged or improved, or when flood claims are filed.

Talk with your community officials and insurance agent to see how these changes could affect you.

¹For flood insurance rating purposes, a primary residence is a building that will be lived in by the insured or the insured's spouse for at least 80 percent of the 365 days following the policy effective date. If the building will be lived in for less than 80 percent of the policy year, it is considered to be a non-primary residence.

Resources for More Information

To ask questions and get information about flood insurance, call the National Flood Insurance Program Help Center at 1-800-427-4661

To see if you are eligible for Hazard Mitigation grants and loans:
www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance

To learn how to build safer and stronger and potentially decrease your flood insurance premiums:
www.fema.gov/building-science

To learn more about the National Flood Insurance Program or find an insurance agent:
www.FloodSmart.gov or 1-888-229-0437

For information about local building code and permit requirements, contact your community officials:

IF YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS HAS BEEN FLOODED

Build Back Safer and Stronger

What You Need to Know

FEMA NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

02/2013

Figure 1: ‘Build Back Safer and Stronger: what you need to know’ In Collection: Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance. FEMA (available at fema.gov)

The approach described above, however, often leads to unintended results and effects that are overlooked. When we try to deny and repress disasters, we contaminate the reality in which they happened. While attempting to cleanse the everyday life of the horrors of the disaster is understandable, it can never be fully achieved. Its memory is always present; we therefore inevitably lose that struggle. The aftermath of the 2014 Tsunami in Japan, and consequent nuclear disaster, serves an example. After the nuclear crisis, nearby areas recorded a surge of episodes of what individuals described as spiritual possessions and ghostly visitations, as reported by Sir Richard Lloyd Parry, in his essay “Ghosts of the Tsunami.”⁹ Hundreds of people claimed they experienced some sort of interaction with

⁹ Parry, Richard Lloyd. *Ghosts of the Tsunami*. London Review of Books, February 6, 2014: 13-17.

spirits. Even two years after the tsunami destroyed the lives of thousands, the necessity to pacify the spirits who had been denied the correct local rituals was still hovering over the living, and making the recovery of the survivors and their return to “normalcy” incomplete. Interpreting the presence of ghosts in post-tsunami Japan, not as an issue of the existence of the spiritual world, but as an expression of the suffering of the survivors, opens up the possibility to understand traumas of disasters, and therefore the healing possibilities in a different light. The foregoing illustrates how the erasure of disasters¹⁰ – and the attempt to move forward without some form of local, culturally appropriate acknowledgement of them -- affects the longer term social recovery. If the predicates of the past and the future are unsuccessfully connected without the present, there remains a gap between the two. That gap is put forward in Sir Parry’s story of ghosts that came back to haunt the living in a post-disaster environment.

The alternative is to see disasters within the real duration¹¹ of time, which play pivotal roles as a part of history. Architectural theory changes in postwar Japan demonstrate how, even when a disaster causes discontinuity and damage the memory of it can be acknowledged rather than omitted. The post-war Japanese experience suggests that the most important aspect of that nation’s recovery and reconstruction was a cleansing, but not a washing away, of the disaster, which served as the precursor of a new paradigm shift to be lived with and explored. The country’s new theory of architecture as manifested by Metabolism and TangeLab, – was in part informed by the disaster. It was a theory that did not step away from the war and the losses caused by it, but instead sought

¹⁰ This Heideggerian concept, (under-erasure) condemns the memory of the event and creates an absence out of something that is very present.

¹¹ Bergson, H. time and Free will: An essay on the immediate data of Consciousness. Dover, p.110

to engage those experiences in questioning how to address the trauma they represented in light of the issues of identity, technology, and tradition that arose from them. This architectural theory intended to reconcile the image of Japanese glory, to which the nation had aspired since the end of the Nineteenth century, with the tragic consequences of the war. It sought to reinvent what it meant to be Japanese. The manner to do so for the Japanese, and the only way to achieve a framing of the traumas of the disaster, was from within. Japanese architectural theorists needed to deal with the war, its memory, and its implications for the country's social relations and cultural values, as a part of its residents living and working experience. The Metabolism movement emerged in post war Japanese architectural thinking to address the nation's defeat and the widespread destruction, and the identity and cultural questions that arose from it. The movement's leaders also used the learned experience of the reconstruction period, as they looked toward a future that acknowledges that there was a national disaster, but also sought to employ cultural tradition in developing a new way of thinking about the role of architecture in the post-war era.

The second case I consider in the dissertation is the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Here, I focus on a critique of the mainstream approach to disaster reconstruction today, typically characterized by an influx of international aid that focuses on and prioritizes humanitarian relief in post-disaster environments. While this work is important, aid workers struggle to transition into addressing long term development issues beyond reconstruction. Moreover, aid typically comes with dependency on international donors and experts from abroad. Particularly in developing countries, an outsider assumes the role of "the expert," while the insider assumes the role of the victim. Sometimes

unknowingly, the outsider experts can bring a set of issues and agendas that are very different from the issues at stake in the place in which they intervene. The insider, the victim, the person who is suffering, relies on the outsider as the solution to relieve the suffering. The power play between these two entities makes it so that one does not exist without the other. Inverting these two highly charged words, outsider/expert and insider/victim, results in the insider as the expert and the outsider the “victimizer”. That is not to say that outsiders should not take any role in the recovery processes, but rather because they are within the reality of the disaster, that the victims are the experts. Once the roles are inverted, we can realize the limitation of the outsider, rather than think that they are omnipotent. For local architects, this could mean allowing the availability for platforms and other opportunities to create in a constructive understanding of the post-disaster realities of their society.

Both cases, Japan and Haiti, are crucial to build the totality of this dissertation: Japan sets up the component of change through time, while Haiti offers the needed perspective on the role of the local architect (which can be extrapolated to the role of the local professional and intellectual), as an actor at the center of the reconstruction processes. These cases exemplify two complementary factors that are necessary for understanding reconstruction and the effects of disasters on societies: Time and local expertise by local architects.

The perspective I take is different from those usually adopted in disaster research since questions of disaster and change are difficult to document. Accordingly, I use two different methodologies. I use historiographical reflection on postwar Japan to

demonstrate the importance of time, through the lenses of architects and architectural theorists of that period. A large scale of time – 1945 to 1965 – is the only way to demonstrate the change in the theoretical positioning of architecture after the War. On the other hand, the role of the architect at the heart of the reconstruction processes can only be fully explored through direct testimonies from the interest groups: architects that deal with disaster consequences in their home. Indeed, ethnographic inquiries and interviews, in this case, of Haitian architects, reveal how professionals in post-disaster discourses can open portals for reflecting on the reconstructed environments as more than simply spaces returned to their pre-disaster state. Both methods are mandatory to get to the larger questions of change through time, and of architecture as a vessel and translator of culture. Likewise, both are required in order to appreciate how local individual (and professional) knowledge is pivotal in creating an architecture in post-disaster environments that serves both the necessary utility of structure and feasibility, and the creation of architectural spaces that are tied to the individuals dwelling in them with meaning, memory and the incommensurable bonds to history and culture.

Accordingly, the first part of the story takes place in Japan, during the reconstruction of the country at the end of the Second World War. I also look back to the pre-war era to detect predominant thoughts in architecture and track how they changed during and after the War and during the country's reconstruction. The reconstruction of Tokyo and Hiroshima will set a framework for elements to investigate changes in the Haitian architectural profession after the 2010 earthquake, such as the role of architects in the post-disaster creation of space, the cultural identity shifts and their impacts on the production of space and the innovation in space-making. The elements the

historiographic study focuses on shedding light on parallels between the two cases. After both disasters, the collective cultural shifts, political unrest, questions about national identity, and the introduction of international concepts and theories, created an atmosphere that influenced architectural practice and the way architects perceived and created space.

Two theoretical concepts underpin this dissertation and help understanding the *timely* considerations of post-disaster architecture. First, “Habitus”¹² is described as the sum of economic, social and cultural capital that prepares individuals to function in situations and social settings. It is a notion that helps bring to the surface change at a very intimate level, but that has widespread social and cultural repercussions. Disaster aftermath situations are a new social setting that is not habitual to the individuals surviving it, therefore causing them to add to, or remove from the capital they are equipped with in order to function in the new situation. Old practices and habits become therefore irrelevant under the new situation, requiring a modification of their habitus, which affects tastes, relationships, and most importantly to us, skillsets¹³. The moment that a community is thrust into a modified environment – an environment which cannot return to the pre-disaster condition-- the result is a highly altered reality, and therefore, a different spatial conception. This massive social change can only be apparent through a historiographical study of changes in one of the components of habitus, such as the changes in theory and practice of architecture.

¹² Bourdieu, P. *Outline of a theory of practice*, Routledge, London, 1977, p77

¹³ Ibid. P.125

Second, “the accursed share”, Georges Bataille’s argument for the necessity of a superfluous part of what he calls the general economy¹⁴, is used here to present a different view of the reconstruction processes, and to counter the intervention-oriented approach of today’s relief operations, which focuses predominantly on providing strictly “what is needed” in the aftermath of a disaster, usually by an entity that is outside of the affected society. This approach seeps into the reconstruction phase and precludes (or at least makes very difficult to) perceptions of what might come out of disaster spaces-- e.g., civic collaboration, new spaces, discourse, architecture, arts – by classifying them as superfluous. Bataille argues that the economic sciences proceed by isolating the systems they study. He offers an alternative by studying the system within a larger whole. According to him, living beings generally receive more energy than they need for their survival; “solar energy is the principle of development exuberance”, he says. This excess can be used for purposes of social and cultural growth, but when the growth of the individual and the group is no longer possible, it is necessary to spend this excess without profit. Even if the individual is in need, he or she can still participate towards this general movement of dilapidation. The destruction of the surplus can be done by the feast, art, the construction of monuments (pyramids, cathedrals, etc.), by industrial activity, but also in a catastrophic way such as waging in a war. Bataille thus offers a different reading of what happens in current post-disaster reconstruction systems. Given that most of the intervention after a disaster is done by international aid organisations, the local knowledge, and the transformations that post-disaster societies undergo, becomes this superfluous share that Bataille talks about. The uncanny aspect of these superfluous elements is that they, unlike the conventional systems of post-disaster relief and

¹⁴ Bataille, G, *The Accursed share*, Volume I, Zone Books, New York, 2007

reconstruction, are better equipped to address and interpret the communal trauma the interpretation of events such as that narrated by Sir Richard Lloyd Parry, in his essay on Post-Tsunami Fukushima. When seen through this lens, the failure to recognize local knowledge contributes to putting the post-disaster reconstruction frames of thought and systems in jeopardy, and also deepens the structural discontinuity that the disaster event starts.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is organized in three major parts, each part containing three chapters with a prelude, interlude and postlude. Part I describes the theoretical views that influenced this work in relation to disasters and architectural practice. One of the objectives of this study is to clarify the nature of the paradigm shifts that can occur within architecture following a disaster. To this end, chapters one and two review architectural writings with an emphasis on cultural values, as well as writings on post-disaster reconstruction. In so doing, I hope to establish a frame of reference for the argument that disasters fundamentally change the practice of architecture, and therefore directly affect the built production of a society. This transformation happens through changes in social bonds, such as identity and the relationship to traditional values, and ultimately manifests in building and design practices. This theoretical investigation in both fields has practical implications, both on a policy level and on the level of physical space making.- The aim is to promote a different approach in disaster reconstruction among architects and practitioners in disaster reconstruction, an approach which acknowledges the part of architectural practice and the processes of thinking that are imbedded within the cultural

“appartenance” to a society, and by doing so, promotes a different approach in disaster recovery.

Part II of the dissertation examines the temporal and geographical setting of Postwar Japan. This part of the dissertation is the result of a literature review and analysis of scholarly texts that discuss Japanese architectural thought during the postwar era. It is also based in translation efforts of some of the early texts of one of the prominent architects that influenced the creation of an architectural community after the Second World War. My method of analyzing this historical literature is inspired by Carlo Ginzburg’s essay: “Clues, Myths and the Historical Method”. In his essay, Ginzburg offers an alternative to the traditional historical method by allowing for the researcher to make connections between separate and seemingly unrelated events to uncover more holistic possible explanations. Chapter one introduces the Pre-postwar conditions: The Taisho and Showa periods in the political history of Japan, and the pre-war debates in architecture and society in Japan during the period between the First World War and the Second World War. This analysis is rooted in the works of Far East historians such as Harry Harootunian, in his work “overcome by modernity.” Chapter one examines architectural practice and theory in the interwar era, through an analysis of the works and writings of figures such as Ito Chuta, Murano Togo, and Kunio Maekawa, each of whom were key figures in the career of Kenzo Tange , one of the protagonists of this study. Tange played an important role in redefining the position of architecture as a practice in Japan during and after the Second World War. Rem Koolhaas summarized the situation of architectural thinking and practice in Japan at the end of that period as follows:

In the mid-30's, Japan Invaded China, ostensibly to construct a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" that would eventually include parts of Manchuria, Mongolia, Thailand, Vietnam, The Philippines and Indonesia. The "Sphere" offered stunning possibilities for Japanese architects: a continent where they could start from scratch. Ten years later, two atomic bombs completed the destruction of their homeland. To seal their humiliation, the occupying forces of America imposed democracy on the losers. The same architects and planners who had, in the '30s, projected vast new settlements on wide open spaces abroad were now confronted with their own cities transformed into radioactive rubble. From utopia to apocalypse in less than half a generation....¹⁵

Chapter two clarifies the relationship between the war, the reconstruction, and the genesis of the Metabolism movement, under the influence and direction of Kenzo Tange, which was one of the determinant movements that changed the practice of architecture in the contemporary Japanese society. As Architectural Historian Hans Ulrich Obrist explains:

Within Japan, as I see it, there is a clear continuum, a true Japanese architectural miracle, moving from Tange, through metabolism and the ambivalent fellow traveler Isozaki onwards to the "progressive anarchy" of Kazuo Shinohara's Uehara's house (1976) and the Centennial Hall in Tokyo (1980), and then to the school of Shinohara, to Toyo Ito, for whom architecture is an extension and "epidermis of nature, and forwards again to SANAA, then to Junya Ishigami, yo Sou Fujimoto. The Japanese, it seems do not kill the father/mother.¹⁶

Chapter two also expands on the reconstruction efforts after the bombing of Hiroshima and the reactions of architects and thinkers during the postwar period (1945-60). It also identifies evidence of the linkages between the echoes of war on architects, such as Kenzo Tange, and the changes of their practice and modes of thinking on issues of urban change and design. These changes can be organized in the following categories: modernity and tradition, Japanese identity, positioning Japan on the international scene,

¹⁵ Koolhaas, Rem, Hans Ulrich Ota Obrist, Westcott Kayoko, FukuyiroFukuyiro Wakatsuki Wakatsuki, Hirotaroed Ota, Hirotaro Ota, ToraoKaizuka Yoshikawa et al. *Project Japan: metabolism talks...* Taschen,, 2011.

¹⁶ Ibid.

utopian research, and the transformation of architectural practices. Evidence of these changes, and their relationship to social shifts, first appear in the break from the modernist conversations of the Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne (International Congress Of Modern Architecture) CIAM, the creation of the Metabolism manifesto and the utopian exercises, and the search for reconciliation between tradition and modernity, as exhibited through the texts written by these architects and the projects they designed.

The final chapter of Part II, chapter three, looks back from metabolism to the war and demonstrates the influence of the Metabolism architects, not only on the immediate reconstruction of Japan, but also on a new wave of thought in Japanese architecture that remains influential even today. The bulk of the chapter two and three is based on interviews with Metabolism architects, led by Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist, and centers on the aforementioned period, as well as a reading of Kenzo Tange's writings and projects. One of Kenzo Tange's essays is, I argue, particularly enlightening as to the thoughts of Japanese architects on space and social identities (which are tightly linked to the architectural production) in relation to the Japanese history, politics, and international opinion during this period.

Part III introduces a second geo-temporal setting: post-2010 earthquake Haiti, and specifically, its capital city, Port-au-Prince. Drawing from the elements of change that were explored in the study of postwar Japan, this part investigates notions of change that are particular to post-earthquake Haiti. Anthropologist Mark Schuller, in his book, "Humanitarian Aftershocks: when the humanitarians left Haiti," has described the

deplorable state in which the international civil society is leaving the Haitian society. I focus on the current conditions in the capital city of Port-au-Prince and bring to light how the community of local architects and urban designers see events unfolding. In particular, I examine their views on reconstruction, the changes that have occurred, and what they expect to happen given the issues that remain after the departure of most international civil society organisations, I approach these views through the lens of the five categories examined in the historiography of Postwar Japan.

The first chapter of this part discusses the background of Haiti and Port-au-Prince, and is based on personal interviews, along with ethnographic and anthropological studies led by both Haitians and international scholars. The chapter seeks to clarify some of the major issues from Haiti's history that shaped its architectural thinking during the pre-earthquake era. In the same way as Japan, the political shifts that occurred during the decades before the earthquake influenced not only the physical conditions of the country in general and Port-au-Prince in particular, but also led to a flight of talent in professions such as architecture. The so-called Caribbean Modernism that flourished in the 70s and 80s quickly faded due to the changes in the political regime, and gave way to an uncertain discourse in Haitian architecture (mostly dominated by BIM and CAAD). Chapter two, which is based on face-to-face interviews conducted in January 2015 in Port-au-Prince and phone interviews between October and November 2015, introduces the processes of reconstruction in Port-au-Prince. The aim of these interviews was to ask architects, who have access to projects with the government, the private sector, and NGOs, about the practice of architecture in Haiti at the present time.

Chapter three is heuristic in nature and discusses how to better include locals in methods of design and utopian projects in the early stages of post-disaster reconstruction. This local inclusion can occur not only through participatory design in slums (as is being done on a limited scale in Port-au-Prince) but also on a larger scale of schools and practices, through competitions, manifestos and international support. This could happen through Humanitarian and development involvement in collaborations between architectural schools, groups and journals. One of the dramas of the post-disaster relief to get past is that we try to replicate the same experiences in different places, with the same set of limited skills. This is a problem that international development and humanitarian assistance bring through the way they function internally. One of the biggest issues that Haiti faced was that NGO workers engaged with the post-disaster reconstruction the same way that they did in the tsunami of 2004 in South East Asia, assuming that the conditions are the same and building on the historical precedent. The approach proposed will ameliorate this problem of international aid workers simply replicating their work in different locales. This dissertation considers disaster as part of a locale's history, but also, and more essentially, as a series of elements that change who we are, suggests that disasters can be a \un/fortunate trigger for change in architectural practices and theory, as they spur efforts to frame disaster events and reflections on their relationships to social and cultural values.

PART ONE: THEORY

POST DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION THEORY

The recent decades saw a surge of disasters hitting at the heart of urban centers. This triggered a number of research interests from anthropology, development studies and planning to understand the complexities of the urban environment. Understanding architectural production, in conjunction with disaster research, frames the question of the influence of disasters on architecture. The aim of this literature review on the theory of disaster research in humanitarian agencies literature, anthropology, and international development with a focus on urban areas is to establish a baseline of the state of research on urban disasters. It is from this baseline that the argument of the architectural understanding of the shifts caused by disasters is articulated. In addition, the complexities of dealing with disasters are addressed, as well as the various viewpoints and resulting methods of practice that stem from these disasters.

Humanitarian actors have developed considerable expertise in identifying the needs of disaster affected populations and in developing mechanisms to respond to them – mechanisms which function more or less well. The humanitarian aid sector's core literature is based on manuals, handbooks, and case studies, and focus on practical and applied recommendations and guidance modalities. Such handbooks include, but are not

limited to, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) "Shelter after disaster: strategies for transitional settlement and reconstruction", the IFRC's "Post-disaster settlement planning guidelines", their "Sustainable Reconstruction in Urban Areas" handbook, "Post-disaster community infrastructure rehabilitation and (re)construction guidelines", "Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness", the United Nations Sphere project and the World Bank's "safer homes and stronger communities".

DFID's "Shelter after disaster: strategies for transitional settlement and reconstruction" reintroduces the approaches of transitional settlement as it is implemented by NGOs through Donor-Driven reconstruction (DDR). It is a revision of the 1982 United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) handbook under the same name. The handbook offers coordination tools, strategy tools assessment tools and implementation tools. It gives clear guidance on effective measures to be taken in various weathers, and offers design solution ready for implementations for shelters. The IFRC variety of documents, focus on similar issues of NGO preparation, planning and assessment of local needs, as well as targeting assistance and tools of beneficiary selection. They move on to the types of interventions proposed through each document, the various monitoring and quality approaches and then handover to the local beneficiaries. These steps are essential for every humanitarian project. In few passages, the local context is emphasized:

[..]Social mobilization is a dynamic process to harness the potential of the people to help themselves. Social mobilization is an approach for mobilizing communities for active participation in development processes. Consequently, the premises for effective development through social mobilization are that those processes are:

- People centered: putting people first and providing them an opportunity to meet their basic needs,
- Service oriented: taking services to the people rather than asking them to come to the center,
- Participatory: ensuring that each person has an equal share in the decisions that shape their livelihoods.¹⁷

The key messages of the World Bank's "stronger homes, safer communities" handbook relate to the economic aspect of housing reconstruction, the social implications of housing on community development and the moral considerations of shelter as a basic need. It is a toolkit specifically designed for targeted policy-makers and World Bank project managers and task team leaders who are involved in large scale reconstruction program funded by the World Bank. It recognizes the hard questions that face the target audience, and the decisions to make about financing reconstruction projects, land use management, construction technologies and environmental and social safeguards. It advocates for early damage assessment and reconstruction policy. It also calls for 'creating communication lines with communities.'¹⁸

These documents are reference points for humanitarian assistance shelter makers and are massive undertakings that require sometimes years to put together. They accumulate the essence of the international donors and international non-governmental organizations around the world and over many years. They are important documents to regulate the work of NGOs in various countries and create an accountability system within the

¹⁷ IFRC, *Sustainable Reconstruction in Urban Areas, A Handbook*, 2010 p.75

It is worth mentioning that the handbook in question is a 195 pages long document about sustainable reconstruction. Yet, community development, social development and else are only mentioned in the passage cited above.

¹⁸ Jha, Abhas K.; Barenstein, J. D.; Phelps, P. M.; Pittet, D.; Sena, S... *Safer Homes, Stronger Communities: A Handbook for Reconstructing after Natural Disasters*. The World Bank. 2010

institutional world of NGOs. The shared point about these handbooks is that they have as mission, teaching their target audience how to function in a post-disaster situation, as decision makers, and implementers. Over all these actors are members of international organisations and come, though with the best intentions, with a set agenda and with a set of actions to take and with various internal and external pressures, such as an Oxfam report states:

Obtaining funds for reconstruction housing serves both the disaster affected families and the implementing agencies. A subtext for many humanitarian interventions is a management decision by INGOs to use the availability of funding to expand operations to different areas of a country. Local agencies whose existence may be dependent upon foreign funding are understandably anxious to use relief and rehabilitation funding to expand operations and raise their local profile. Recognizing the opportunistic nature of humanitarian interventions for both agencies and their clients need not be considered cynical, but denying its influence can lead to ineffective housing interventions.¹⁹

However, while they try to provide a comprehensive set of guidelines to shelter actors, they are subject to several criticisms and have various weak points, especially when the main focus they have, shelter, is considered to be a complex living architectural organism / artifact. First, the assumption that there is universality in designing shelter and the heavily codified texts that emanate from it do not allow for creative responses. The French NGO Médecins sans Frontières expressed concerns over this fact on 2003 and wrote an open letter in which it stated:

Our main criticism of the sphere project is that it risks reducing, rather than expanding, the scope for effective humanitarian action. Why? Because it can reinforce the notion that humanitarian action is all about assistance and technical issues, while hiding the fact that protection,

¹⁹ Oxfam, Guidelines for Post Disaster Housing, 2003, p.14
http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95751/B.d.03.%20Guidelines%20for%20Post%20Disaster%20Housing%20%20version%201_OXFAM%20GB.pdf Accessed August 21, 2016

respect for principles (shortly addressed in the Humanitarian chapter) and political issues are paramount. In addition, there is concern that it could engender non-risk taking behavior and an uncritical relationship to humanitarian funding with institutional donors. Humanitarian action is not only relief: it is also a reflection on some people in a certain moment and context.²⁰

The MSF letter, though written from an NGO perspective, touches various elements, such as context, freedom of action, the complex relationship between donors and organisations, etc., but most importantly it shows how critical thinking is essential to humanitarian action, and that the standardization of this action cripples both the humanitarian worker and the local individual that the workers are to interact with.²¹ Leaving little room to contextual interactions, and deciding a minimalist approach, assumes an ideal disaster situation in which NGOs have full access to affected populations and full power of action, which is rarely the case. It also stifles programmatic innovation just as much as it does for housing and shelter solutions.

Second, the way these texts are constructed is diagrammatic. This also indicative of perceptions of space and city that are at best schematic and that are not comprehensive of the range of urban variations of space. In analyzing the layout, the contextualization of the event of disaster is not existent and, most importantly, is outside of time. Almost all schematizations of actions begin with the disaster event, often represented with the sign of a graphic explosion (a star), and followed by multiple linear arrows that show the several actions to be undertaken by actors in that arrow of time. The arrows ultimately lead to the completion of reconstruction, another star/graphic explosion sign. Although

²⁰ Vila, Sanjuan, Rafael, MSF position vis-à-vis the Sphere project, letter sent to missions 25th March 2003. <http://www.msf.fr/sites/www.msf.fr/files/2003-03-25-VilaSanJuan.pdf>
Accessed on August 21, 2016

²¹ Tong, Jacqui. "Questionable accountability: MSF and Sphere in 2003." *Disasters* 28, no. 2 (2004): 176-189.

the ever-increasing disasters hitting urban centers with dense populations have forced international organizations to rethink the way they prepare and respond to the needs of affected communities in urban settings, their base documents have not yet caught up with the realities of urban shelter, cultural capital or time perceptions in different urban or rural areas. The urban environment presents complex institutional landscapes and multi-layered social and spatial structures. Humanitarians are still in need a robust understanding of such structures, local politics and social relationships in order to engage effectively with (rather than on) the sites of disaster.

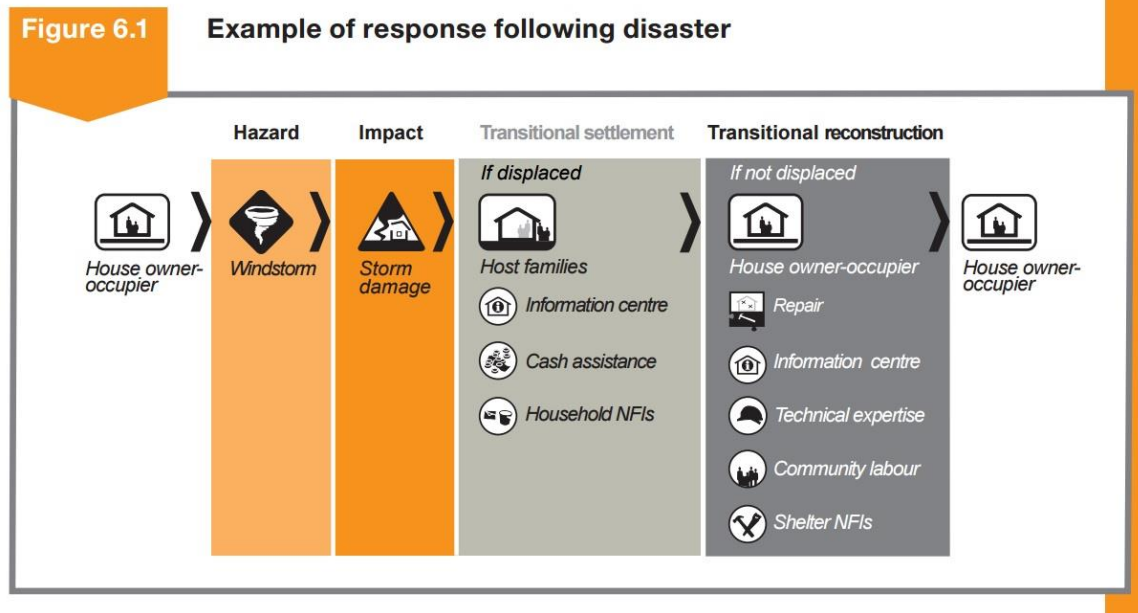


Figure 2: From the IFRC “transitional settlements reconstruction after natural disasters” handbook 2011, p.123

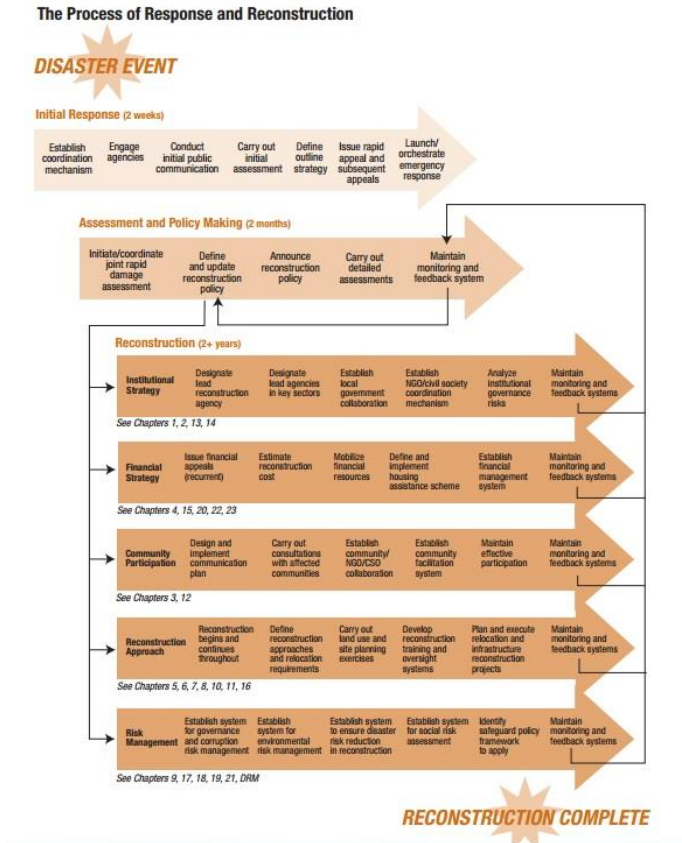


Figure 3: From the World Bank's "Safer homes stronger communities" 2010 p.7

Third, because they assume a hierarchy of needs, and aspire to provide the most basic of them, these standardized guidelines assume an automatized, pre-determined set of requirements that will preserve human dignity. Indeed, most need shelter, water and physiological stability, yet the delivery mode of these items and their role in the recovery continuum is a key to a successful healing of both individual and society. This shift towards to a basic needs' focus is a recent one. Contemporary humanitarianism, which finds its roots in western history, moved from a play of balance between religious-based feelings of charity and organization around religious principles and practices, and acts of

war, to an evidence-based action beginning in the 19th century.²² This requirement of accountability and scientific methods in humanitarianism has closely followed technological and medical advancement. After the Second World War, during the era between the 1950s and the 1980s, and due to large destruction and scarcity of resources, as well as the openness of humanitarian movements around the world and the interest in human rights, the humanitarian organizations saw an institutionalization surge and a division of sectors as we know them today: international governance mechanisms, specialized agencies, NGOs, a language of rights, a legal framework, engagement in conflicts, natural disasters, epidemiology, food and nutrition and development.²³ This required a universalization of principles of action and the use of rational and needs-based frames rather than religious, often impartial, ones.²⁴ The systematization of action according to basic needs finds echoes in psychological thought of the 1970s, specifically American psychologist Abraham Maslow's (1943 - 1954) theory of human motivation, more commonly known as Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Although this system, which offers a hierarchy of elements that allow the personal and social fulfilment of an individual, continues to appeal because of the ease that it offers to understanding difficult concepts such as those of human happiness and motivation, it has been subject to strong criticisms because of its claim to universality and standardization, in addition to a lack of empirical data to back the hierarchical part of the theory.²⁵

²² Barnett, Michael N. *Empire of humanity: A history of humanitarianism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.

²³ Barakat, Sultan, Sean Deely, and Steven A. Zyck. "'A tradition of forgetting': stabilization and humanitarian action in historical perspective." *Disasters* 34, no. s3 (2010)

²⁴ Staub, Ervin. "*The roots of evil: Social conditions, culture, personality, and basic human needs.*" *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 3, no. 3 (1999): 179-192.

²⁵ Hofstede, Geert, "*The cultural relativity of the quality of life concept*", the *Academy of Management Review*, Vol,9, N. 3, 1984, pp. 389-398

The base of this pyramid shaped hierarchy shows the basic needs for an individual to sustain life.²⁶ These physiological elements (shelter, food, sleep) are the ones contemporary humanitarian agencies solely focus on, independently from their interaction with other elements that make individuals live a balanced and socially fulfilling life after the shock of a disaster.



Figure 4: Maslow's pyramid of needs, (source: BBC News, April 2012)

Constraining the sustenance of life after a disaster to the basic physiological needs makes the questions addressed by such organisations highly narrow. What makes it even more limiting is that the needs-based approach for disaster relief and recovery is a methodology that governs the priorities with which humanitarian NGOs address disaster sites. Driven by the first principle of the sphere project standards, that all humanitarian agencies should ensure that their actions do not bring further harm to affected people, and

²⁶ Maslow, Abraham. H. *The farther reaches of human nature*. 1971

that their activities benefit in particular those who are most affected and vulnerable,²⁷ NGOs' first instinct is to identify the most vulnerable populations, conduct an assessment of their basic biological and physiological needs of shelter, food, and WASH (Water, sanitation and hygiene) and deliver it. Attempting to address these basic needs, however, does not guarantee the basis for a good life, but can if dispensed wrong, through the use of social class systems by the creation of dependency,²⁸ prolong different forms of suffering, such as extended periods of residence in minimum standards camps. It is the imperative of humanitarian action to help create a good life, not a mean life. The general expectations of a person after a disaster differ dramatically from one case to the other. In an interview with a Shelter specialist from UNHCR working on flood areas in Sri Lanka, the interviewee specialist told the story of a woman he was working with in the rebuilding and reinforcement of her house that was in the flood zone. This Sri Lankan rural farmer was adamant that the money the UNHCR was to give her will not do her any good if it was not directed to making the irrigation system she uses for her plot of land adjacent to her house more resilient, and refused the ready-made shacks offered by UNHCR because she found it fit to move to a safer area of the same structure her house.²⁹ The reality, that the agencies that lead the transition and reconstruction efforts often lose sight of,³⁰ is that the efforts of relief, recovery, and reconstruction are not to reach a technical deliverable, but to help people create a life. Research led by such organizations is divided into two main research poles that cannot encompass this critical component.

²⁷ Sphere, *Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*, Sphere Project, Geneva, 2004, p.6.

²⁸ For fear of digression, this topic is to be discussed by the author in a separate article.

²⁹ Hilmi, Mohammed, Interview by Karima Benbih, May 2016

³⁰ Kelman, I. *The Meaning of 'Build Back Better': Evidence From Post-Tsunami Aceh and Sri Lanka*, Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management Volume 16 Number 1 March 2008 pp. 24-36

The first one includes institutions, and NGOs as subjects, and analyzes their mode of work by focusing on the larger network of international development. The second field of disaster research focuses on responses to needs from the *victim's*³¹ perspective of the disaster narrative. These two subjects of interest, albeit important, overshadow the exploration of other research possibilities to be discovered with different fields, and that relate to the creation of an environment that fosters healing, prosperity, and a sense of cultural ownership and continuity. As a result, large majority of the disaster literature, and the one with the most traction, has been highly prescriptive, as opposed to a descriptive, reflective research that can allow for conceptual growth. Both the international development and humanitarian assistance field became increasingly interested in the question of social impacts of disasters, due to the recognition that current practices of post-disaster reconstruction are often flawed, mainly due to the fact that international donor-driven interventions fail to meet people's needs in an effective way.³² The theory of disaster has therefore largely been presumed, rather than critically and theoretically explored.

Disasters are related to the loss that we endure as human beings, which makes them socially constructed phenomena that are experienced by individuals and groups in various manners, depending on history, culture, power struggles, etc. Disasters are described as:

A process/ event combining a potentially destructive agent/force from the natural. Modified, or built environment and a population in a socially and economically produced condition of vulnerability, resulting in a perceived

³¹ Although the sphere project handbook, and the other handbook mentioned here do not cite the word victim, the words used, such as vulnerable populations, beneficiaries, affected communities, with the rate of 104 for vulnerable in the sphere project handbook.

³² Lewis, J. and I. Kelman. 2010. *Places, people and perpetuity: Community capacities in ecologies of catastrophe*. ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 191-220.

disruption of the customary relative satisfactions of individual and social needs for physical survival, social order, and meaning.³³

They are also defined by the United Nations office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNSDR) as: “A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.”³⁴ The social construction of disaster causes that has changing meanings, depending on which culture and perception of time the populations subject to a disaster have. However, the fact that a culture is used to the recurrence of an event that leads to a disaster – such as earthquakes, civil war, etc.— does not diminish its effect on that culture and the social environment in which it occurs. As long as there is loss of life and destruction of home, there is trauma, and there is disaster. Also, a natural event such an earthquake or a tsunami, is of course different from one of human cause such as war, but the outcomes of both in terms of physical destruction and social disruption can be very similar. This creates multiple subjective interpretations of disasters, because they change depending on variables that impact social institutions such as family, religion, rituals, and economic organisations.³⁵ Each one of these elements affects directly the building production, which makes the study of these social changes after disaster directly linked to the changes that occur in architecture due to events such as wars or natural disasters.

Both post-disaster humanitarian relief, recovery specialists, and anthropology researchers agree that local knowledge is not well served, nor well understood when it comes to

³³ Hoffman, Susanna M. and Oliver-Smith, A. eds. *Catastrophe & Culture: The Anthropology of Disaster*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2002. p.4

³⁴ UNSDIR, <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>, Accessed august 16th 2016

³⁵ *Ibid* P. 12

disaster response. Humanitarian agencies work either within silos, meaning that each technical expertise within each international organization works in isolation from and in competition with other organizations in the field, or within clusters, groups of humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action, e.g. shelter, water, health and logistics.³⁶ This is the bureaucratic reality in which both humanitarian and development agencies operate,³⁷ often leading to humanitarian organizations that work in the same area but with little or no coordination between each other. This causes not only difficult interactions with local governments and local experts, but moves the strategic decision-making processes out of the area in which it is supposed to stem from, and that is the city, or neighborhood, or home. The research led by most humanitarian agencies however, as exhibited above, focuses on governmental agencies expertise and perception, and how they can be useful to allow for smoother humanitarian assistance work.

While both produce rich material, neither the NGO literature nor the anthropology researches speak the same language. The sociologists, anthropologists and environmentalists approach disaster from different starting points than those working on the field, as NGO workers. One addresses the issue as a research opportunity and an investigation of human modes of living and coping, while the other sees it as a problem that needs systematic, quick and pragmatic solutions.³⁸ But both have a different

³⁶The Cluster Approach was applied for the first time following the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. Nine clusters were established within 24 hours of the earthquake. Since then two evaluations on the Cluster Approach have taken place. The first, finalized in 2007, focused on implementation. The second, conducted in 2010, focused on the outcome of the cluster approach in improving humanitarian assistance. It is a complicated system that requires coordination among the international organizations and leaves small room for local powers to form and take ownership of local projects on the strategic level.

³⁷ Ferris, E. G. *The Politics of Protection: The Limits of Humanitarian Action*, the Brookings institution 2011, p.284

³⁸ Kelman, I. and JC Gaillard. 2016. *Linking theory and practice regarding the role of climate change*

perspective than that of the local individuals residing in disaster affected communities. This becomes more so evident when it comes to urban disasters.³⁹ These various perspectives are crucial to understand urban systems, yet to attain a full image of how the city functions and how it is built; other formal sectors need also to be taken into consideration.

Scholars with architecture backgrounds engage in urban disaster research. They focus on areas pertaining to development planning, and break down the urban settings into various categories including, infrastructure systems, markets, and governance. By doing so, the scope of urban disaster response and reconstruction can encompass all the pressing, social, political and economic issues that are made apparent after disasters. This is a relatively new interest on the part of both architectural research and international humanitarian and development research, and it is prompted by the rising number of urban disasters in the past decades. Architectural researcher Camillo Boano⁴⁰ has observed the evident gaps in NGOs' operational modes of recovery and reconstruction dedicated to urban areas, and suggested that these modes of operating need to develop in order to adapt more to the complexities that various intertwined urban systems cause.⁴¹ However, given that most areas hit in urban disasters are disproportionately in informal settlements and slums, justifying the massive interest of humanitarian agencies, this incited viewing

in humanitarian disasters. Presentation at Emergency preparedness and disaster management, Kristiansand, Norway, 25-26 February 2016

³⁹ The 2011 UN Habitat report "cities in globalizing world" stressed on challenges in urban humanitarian response demonstrated the unique and complicated challenges that need to be considered when it comes to relief logistics in urban spaces. The report explained that "the density of urban development presents particular challenges for meeting Sphere standards because the population's living conditions normally fall well short of what would be expected," meaning that the conditions pre-disasters are already below the standards with which humanitarian relief is held in terms of shelter and sanitation.

⁴⁰ Boano, C. et al., *Architecture at Risk (?): The Ambivalent Nature of Post-disaster Practice*, Architectoni.ca 2012, 1, P: 1-13

⁴¹ The rise in the number of urban disaster in the recent years challenges most of the practices that international development based their operations on, and which were developed in rural areas.

the informal urbanism and architecture as a new opportunity of involvement for the building professionals, especially Western-based architecture and urban planning firms. Indeed, these firms seek contracts in developing countries, which caused a shift of view on matters of informality and reconstruction in the architectural practice. Boano calls this age “the renaissance of interest in informality” and qualifies it as a different approach to the practice of architecture that replaces the image of the individual star architect, with that of an agent that supports and collaborates with the international reconstruction efforts.⁴²

The question of the relationship between international disaster recovery and the creation of cities and space after a disaster, is again framed narrowly depending on which field of expertise addresses it with the operational frame being the most dominant. However, the bigger question would be to understand issues such as the long term qualifiers of disaster impacts on societies, which specifically unfold through time and are meaningful signifiers to the site. Lessons outside of the fields of international development and humanitarian response can be useful to investigate disasters’ impacts on societies; architectural theory and practice has the potential of being one of them. These are not usually taken into consideration as noteworthy fields from which reconstruction after disasters could benefit in the medium and longer term. Yet, they are the fields that documented the most, throughout history, the evolution of city and thought about the city as a living social organism where values are translated into the built environment, such as historical architecture treatises.

⁴² Boano,C <https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/camillo-boano/architecture-must-be-defended-informality-and-agency-of-space>

Also, even with the recognition that disasters offer the possibility of “building back better”,⁴³ and the subsequent adoption of policy frameworks and manuals describing the benefits and the how-to of participatory reconstruction, of long term development and strengthening of the local knowledge and the cultural systems, there is still a major gap to be filled between the reality of reconstruction, and the policies and projects coming particularly from international cooperation, as anything emanating from within the disaster spaces is often perceived as eminently insufficient, and incompatible. An example of this is the reconstruction of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, after the 2006 earthquake. This Indonesian region was famous for a “home-grown” co-op model in urban areas, in which neighborhoods of approximately 10 houses are responsible for the creation and maintenance of all shared roads and infrastructure, but also of helping building the commune’s houses. After the earthquake, the government, with support from aid agencies, tapped into this resource to distribute reconstruction funds, which accelerated the reconstruction to a record time (finished rebuilt houses by owners in two years). However, recent visits from the government and the aid agencies to see how the neighborhoods have developed after 10 years, showed a declining interest in that neighborhood model. Families were in discord over the amount of money distributed among them and that drove a divide in the community fabric. The way with which aid had been distributed had negatively affected the very social bonds it used.⁴⁴

Because of this, it is still very difficult to address this gap from the perspective of international agencies that hold the biggest share of reconstruction initiatives, and which continue to invest in practices stemming from rural experience, unsuitable for urban

⁴³ Kelman, I. The Meaning of ‘Build Back Better’: Evidence From Post-Tsunami Aceh and Sri Lanka, *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* Volume 16 Number 1 March 2008 pp. 24-36

⁴⁴ Hilmi, Mohammed, Interview by Karima Benbih, May 2016

disasters, or in policies that do not bear evidence of their efficiency.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the needs based approach,⁴⁶ though crucial in the phases of recovery, needs to be complemented with different modes of thinking. Theoretically understanding disaster, outside of the operational perspective that reigns on both development and humanitarian response, can allow clarity, especially when it comes to production of space. This understanding is driven by an interventionist mindset that is regulated by budgets and measured in strict timelines, e.g. the mandate of the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. For example the humanitarian agencies working in consultation with USAID in a disaster-afflicted community is limited to 90 days. This period of time is followed by other mandates⁴⁷ and perhaps other organisations with other fields of expertise entering the field. However, the decisions made in that period create a ripple effect over a long period of time.

The action in emergency does not leave room for thorough thinking, because it assumes that disasters and traumas strip communities of their autonomy and critical thinking and require an executive power of an entity that was not touched by that trauma, e.g. international organisations. Social theorist Elaine Scarry calls it the implicit claim of emergency, in which thinking ceases and action must be taken. She argues that often, a community organizes itself in accordance to its own habits and modes of operation to respond to a crisis it is faced with, but that such stories are often overshadowed because if

⁴⁵ Duyne, J., Leemann, E. *Post-Disaster Reconstruction and Change: Communities' Perspectives*, 2012, CRC Press

⁴⁶ UN-Habitat, *Asset-based Approaches To Community Development*, The Human Settlements Financing Tools And Best Practices Series, 2008 p.6-8

⁴⁷ Under international law, UN bodies such as UNHCR (Refugee Conventions) and the ICRC (Geneva Conventions) have legally recognised mandates, while NGOs do not. However, most NGOs use international legal instruments as points of reference for their activity and talk in terms of a mandate. Some NGOs are described as 'multi-mandated' encompassing development as well as relief, and aspects of developmental interventions are brought into their relief work as an essential part of humanitarian action.

the presumptions that disasters never leave room for grass root organizational capacity to emerge. She wrote:

The implicit claim of emergency is that all procedures and all thinking must cease because the emergency requires that 1) action must be taken, and 2) the action must be taken quickly. It is odd to see the first of these, the requirement that an action must be taken, in opposition to deliberate thinking, the unspoken presumption is that either one can think or one can act, and given that it is absolutely mandatory that an action be performed, thinking must fall away.⁴⁸

In addition to the base drives that lead to actions of immediate recovery, thinking of reconstruction in terms of local culture, habitus, and time and change, offers a complementary image of the possible futures of reconstruction, even though they seem superfluous from an aid institutional standpoint. According to philosopher and literary critic George Bataille (1897-1962), in order for societies to be able to continue producing wealth and evolving their contextual political economy, there is a part of that production, which can be viewed through our contemporary lenses as an excess, that does not go into a rational cycle of production of physical objects, but that is still necessary for the continuation of the culture. He offers, through the analysis of a series of historic examples such as the sacrificial Potlatch, a radically new perspective on economic phenomena concerning both nature and society. In fact, the general economy that Bataille proposes is an economy based on this somehow repressed and unspoken excess that he calls the “accursed share,”⁴⁹ an excess that puts economic issues on foundations that are related to the individual unconscious and to the social and cultural specificities, rather than specific sets of standards. He explains that there were two forms of economic activity:

⁴⁸ Scarry, E., *Thinking in an Emergency*, Norton 2011 p.7

⁴⁹ Bataille, George, *La Part Maudite*, les éditions de Minuit 2007/

The first, reducible, is represented by the usage of the necessary minimum, for individuals in a given society, for the conservation of life and the continuation of the productive activity: the first is therefore simply the fundamental condition of the latter [...]

The second part is represented by spending that is considered non-productive: funerals and mourning, cults and rituals, construction of monuments, spectacles and art, [...] represent actions that have finality within themselves.⁵⁰

The “accursed share” has a special status and encompasses acts and elements that do not have evident value in any system of set market values. This notion represents this greater-than-utilitarian component, which is purposefully ignored in the external interventions of humanitarian action. It is considered not only irrelevant but also reprehensible, because it does not fit within a set frame of direct project that have clear and short term deliverables. That means that anything more than the minimum survival is irrelevant to the discourse of post-disaster reconstruction. Architecture is typically characterized as this “accursed share” because it rarely subscribes to the efficiency based indicators and measures that ignore the cultural component entirely.

An alternative could be using both models in post-disaster reconstruction frameworks, in which an inverted pyramid with a set of variables relating to cultural and social expansion can be superimposed over the conventional Maslow’s Pyramid of Needs.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p 28-29, author’s translation

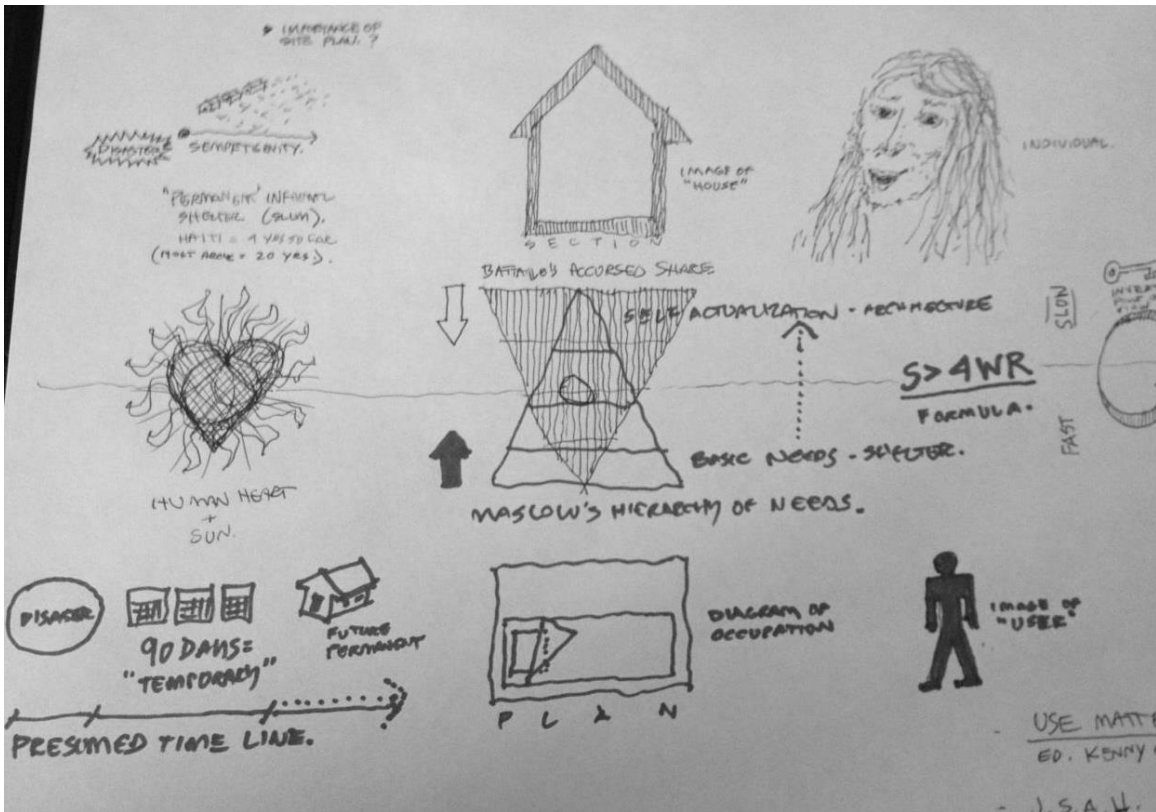


Figure 5: Superimposition of a reverse pyramid representing George Bataille's Accursed Share over Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

This visual superimposition of an empirical model of viewing disaster response as a response to a set of physical needs, and a humanistic model that encompasses the uncanny (that is the unspoken and hidden) aspect of our social and cultural interactions, values, history and memory, can cover the intangible long term shifts and social changes that occur after shocks. This reverse pyramid brings, with full force, elements that the emergency action mentality of the Maslow hierarchy of needs tend to qualify as non-immediate requirements. These superfluous elements, such as participation in continuing local identity and architecture in the service of philosophical and social discourse can act as Bataille's accursed share and allow overcoming the trauma, not by falling back to a state of normalcy, but by generating a new reality through the creation of new spaces.

THE CUNNING OF THE ARCHITECT - ARCHITECTURAL THEORY

Among all the arts, those children of pleasure and necessity, with which man has formed a partnership in order to help him bear the pains of life and transmit his memory to future generations, it can certainly not be denied that architecture holds a most outstanding place. Considering it only from the point of view of utility, it surpasses all the arts. It provides for the salubrity of cities, guards the health of men, protects their property, and works only for the safety, repose, and good order of civil life.⁵¹

Architecture has a long standing tradition of addressing urban disaster. It also integrates the future and the past in its usage, making the present thick⁵² with experiences, material and technics from the past, and expectations of the future and has the quality of combining wisdom with cunning. This proposed way of viewing disasters, through a local and architectural lense, requires a revision of the role of local architect in the social compendium, not only as a main actor in the production of space, but also as a carrier of culture, as architectural theorist Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849) wrote above. The “traditional” role of architect, particularly in post-disaster environments, moves from being an element resisting to change to one that is adapting to change and taking an active part in it. In the *Eleven Exercises*, Marco Frascari envisions the architect as the alchemist from the tarot card, a mothering magician that takes material and transforms it into space that holds emotional meaning both to the individual and to the society.⁵³

⁵¹ Quatremère de Quincy A-C., *Dictionnaire d'architecture de l'Encyclopédie méthodique*, éd. Hachette, 3 vols., Paris 2012

⁵² Husserl, E., *Collected Works - On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, p 102-114

⁵³ Frascari, M. *Eleven Exercises in the Art of Architectural Drawing: slow food for the Architect's Imagination*, Routledge, 2011, p.46



Figure 6: The *Geometrician*, a play of words with geomancer, the oracle divining the future with geometrical forms, and the mother, Marco Frascari, in "Eleven Exercises" p. 46

In the case of post-disaster reconstruction, an architect can create spaces in which destruction, ruin, and the fragmented fields of past capital and habitus, can crystallize keeping open the gap between past and future, i.e. allowing the disaster to serve as an ongoing drive, not only through memory, but through changed everyday practices.

Historically, architecture, building practices, and city planning often underwent radical changes as a result of disaster. The great fire of London in 1666 devastated five sixths of the medieval city, and caused a need to fill the historical, economic, social and conceptual gaps the disaster created, as well as reinventing the city as a whole.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Wall, C. *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* p. 9

English writer John Evelyn, in his diary wrote:

Thus I left it this afternoone burning, a resemblance of Sodome, or the last day. It call'd to mind that of 4 Heb: non enim hic habemus stabilem Civitatem; the ruines resembling the picture of Troy. London was, but is no more.⁵⁵

In the few months following the fire, Charles II commissioned a committee of architects, including Christopher Wren, to establish new building regulations for the new city of London. Some of the most important imperatives of this new fire rebuilding act were brick and stone construction enforcement, and different heights and street widths, which changed the type of the skillset that was required for construction as well as the spatial considerations.⁵⁶



Figure 7: .1 Wren's plan for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire 1667 (Source, The British Library)

⁵⁵ Evelyn, John, in Pepys Diary entry of Monday 3rd 1666

⁵⁶ Porter, Stephen, *The Great Fire of London*, the History Press, 2009, p.117.

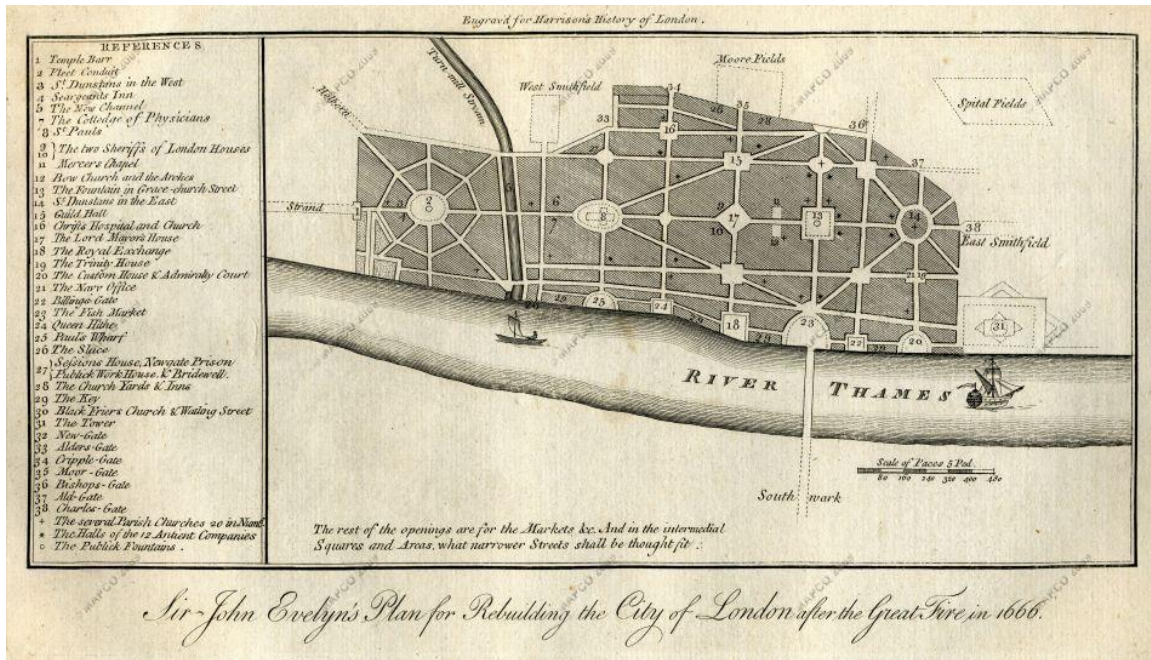


Figure 8: John Evelyn's plan for the rebuilding of London after the Great fire of 1666- (the British Library)

The fire, in addition to changing methods of construction and the physical presence of the city through building regulations, triggered attempts to re-conceptualize the space.⁵⁷ The loss of the most valuable referents of the culture, that is the narrative attached to the city, to its streets and buildings, affected the construction of spaces from the dwellers' perspectives. In her book, *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London*, 18th C British restoration historian Cynthia Wall argued that the destruction of London left a lasting impact on both the culture and the political scene in Great Britain⁵⁸. She also argued that the cultural and particularly the literary production (sermons, poems, novels...) bear marks of the change in the spatial production. This was on part due to the loss of significant landmarks and referents that position the city and its neighborhoods in a historical continuum, which left a gap in the cultural imaginary (that is the dominant

⁵⁷ Resurgam: When Wren began laying out the central dome of St. Paul's cathedral after the great fire of London, he called a workman to bring him a bit of stone. The workman grabbed the first piece that came to hand and inscribed on it in Latin was the word, Resurgam. -- "May I Rise Again." St. Paul's rose swiftly. Few cathedrals are built in a lifetime. Wren completed the project in just 35 years.

⁵⁸ Wall, C *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London*, 1998, p.26

social structures) and the spatial references points, but also because the newly constructed spaces needed to be digested and included in the collective narratives of the new life after the great fire.⁵⁹ This suggests a strong link between architectural changes and the cultural shifts; both simultaneously influence each other.

Similarly, the Lisbon Earthquake in 1755 is considered one of the biggest events in history that changed European thought, culture and politics.⁶⁰ The earthquake created incentives for making socio-political changes visible through the built space. In addition to creating and implementing the first seismic regulation building code in the history of Western architecture,⁶¹ the practice of architecture had to translate the political aspirations of the period and the new social practices that emerged as a result of the post-earthquake change. The new layout of the city, the introduction of new architectural elements to the city, such as the square, shifted fundamentally the way the people of Lisbon dwelled.

Architectural treatises, although not addressing the question of reconstruction after major disasters as a main theme, have approached how architects have dealt with decay, destruction and the impacts of these events on inhabitants. In fact, historically, architects were leaders in disaster response amongst their communities. Vitruvius, Roman architect

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 155

⁶⁰ Benjamin, Walter. *The Lisbon Earthquake. In Selected Writings*, vol. 2. Belknap, 1999.

⁶¹ The Pombaline buildings are among the earliest seismically protected constructions in Europe. Small wooden models were built for testing, and earthquakes were simulated by marching troops around them. Lisbon's "new" Lower Town, known today as the Pombaline Lower Town (Baixa Pombalina), is one of the city's famed attractions. Sections of other Portuguese cities, like the Vila Real de Santo António in Algarve, were also rebuilt along Pombaline principles. A flexible wooden structure on the walls, floors and roofs and later covered by pre-manufactured building materials "shakes but doesn't fall." Lisbon's downtown, called Baixa, the area most affected by the earthquake, is built over unstable ground, and it is thus necessary to reinforce the whole area. Another anti-seismic system was needed in this area, consisting of a forest of buried poles. Because these poles are exposed to salty water they maintain their elasticity and resist rot. David Kendrick Underwood: *The Pombaline Style and International Neoclassicism in Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro*, 1988, PhD thesis U of Penn

and author of the oldest treatise on architecture known today, dating back to ancient Rome, provided an anecdote concerning the siege on Rhodes in his last of the ten books of Architecture:

3. Diognetus was a Rhodian architect, who, to his honour, on account of his great skill, had an annual fixed salary. At that period, an architect of Aradus, whose name was Callias, came to Rhodes, obtained an audience, and exhibited a model of a wall, whereon was a revolving crane, by means whereof he could suspend an Helepolis near the spot, and swing it within the walls. The wondering Rhodians, when they saw it, took away the salary from Diognetus, and conferred it on Callias.

4. Immediately after this, king Demetrius, who, from his resolution, was surnamed Poliorcetes, prepared to wage war against the Rhodians, and brought in his train Epimachus, a celebrated architect of Athens. This person prepared an helepolis of prodigious expense and of ingenious and laborious construction, whose height was one hundred and twenty-five feet, and its width sixty feet: he secured it, moreover, with hair-cloths and raw hides, so that it might securely withstand the shock of a stone of three hundred and sixty pounds weight, thrown from a balista. The whole machine weighed three hundred and sixty thousand pounds. Callias being now requested by the Rhodians to prepare his machine against the helepolis, and to swing it within the wall, as had promised, confessed he was unable.

5. For the same principles do not answer in all cases. In some machines the principles are of equal effect on a large and on a small scale; others cannot be judged of by models. Some there are whose effects in models seem to approach the truth, but vanish when executed on a larger scale, as we have just seen. With an auger, a hole of half an inch, of an inch, or even an inch and a half, may be easily bored; but by the same instrument it would be impossible to bore one of a palm in diameter; and no one would think of attempting in this way to bore one of half a foot, or larger.

6. Thus that which may be effected on a small or a moderately large scale, cannot be executed beyond certain limits of size. When the Rhodians perceived their error, and how shamefully they had wronged Diognetus; when, also, they perceived the enemy was determined to invest them, and the machine approaching to assault the city, fearing the miseries of slavery and the sacking of the city, they humbled themselves before Diognetus, and requested his aid in behalf of his country.

7. He at first refused to listen to their entreaties; but when afterwards the comely virgins and youths, accompanied by the priests, came to solicit his aid, he consented, on condition that if he succeeded in taking the machine, it should be his own property. This being agreed to, he ordered a hole to be made in that part of the wall opposite to the machine, and gave general as well as particular notices to the inhabitants, to throw on the other side of the hole, through channels made for the purpose, all the water, filth, and mud, that could be procured. These being, during the night, discharged through the hole in great abundance, on the following day, when the helepolis was advanced towards the wall, it sunk in the quagmire thus created: and Demetrius, finding himself overreached by the sagacity of Diognetus, drew off his army.

8. The Rhodians, freed from war by the ingenuity of Diognetus, gave him thanks publicly, and loaded him with honours and ornaments of distinction. Diognetus afterwards removed the helepolis within the walls, placed it in a public situation, and inscribed it thus: "DIOGNETUS PRESENTED THIS TO THE PEOPLE OUT OF THE SPOILS OF WAR." Hence, in defensive operations, ingenuity is of more avail than machines.⁶²

The most important implication of Vitruvius's story for this argument is that the local architect was able, thanks to his tacit knowledge of ways of life in his city, to defend the city with the means he had known he had on board. This did not require complex designs and foreign intervention. Rather, the elements this architect used came from within. This story also clarifies the role of the architect in his environment. Philibert de l'Orme, a 14th century French architect describes in his treatise, how a good architect is a boon to his immediate environment, and can help in the flourishing of building, gardens, and the education of younger generations. The good architect, in addition, is endowed with a keen sensibility, as show in the picture below with the four hands and the third eye of knowledge. On the contrary, the bad architect is portrayed as a haggard, eyeless and handless individual, stumbling through a desert-like land amid remains of animals. He is

⁶² Vitruvius Pollio, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, Trans Morris Hicky Morgan, Dover, 1960, p.181-182

not in communication with his surrounding, and could precipitate the fall and decay of his city.⁶³

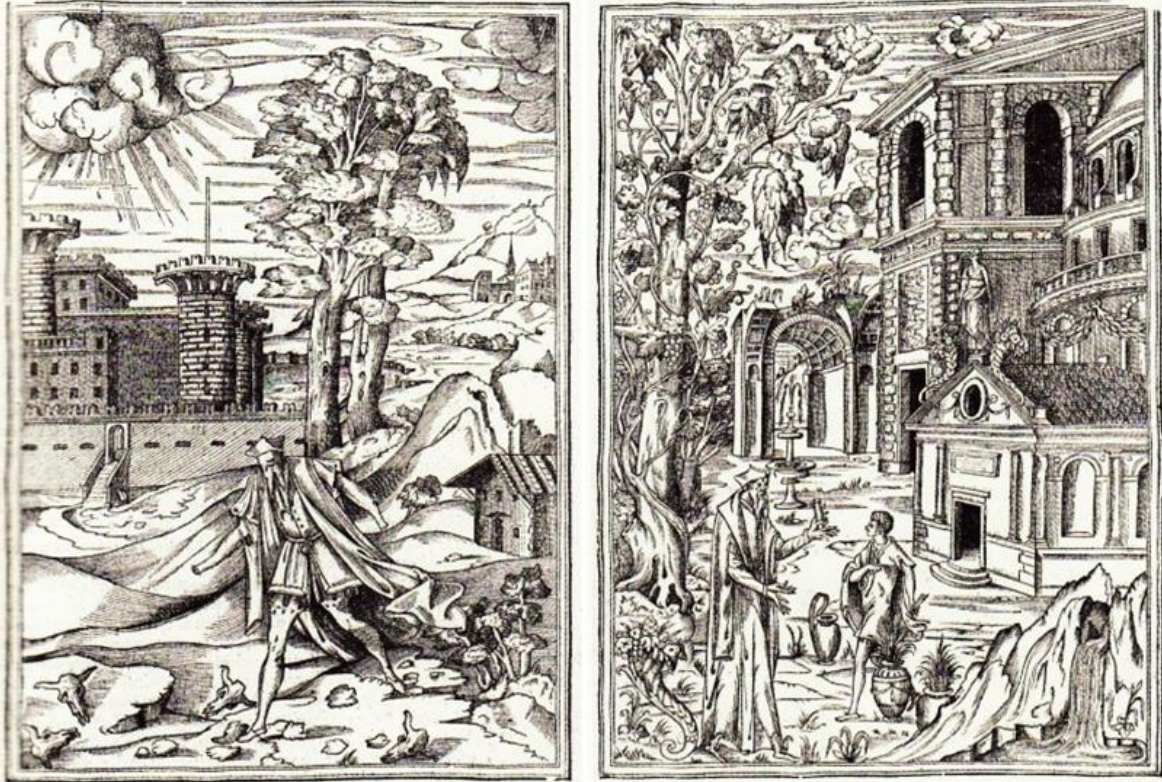


Figure 9: The good (right) and the Bad Architect. Quatremetre de Quincy, Treatise: On Architecture.

One of the topics that architectural treatises addressed is the use of *spolia*, an old practice that carried memory of destruction into newly rebuilt spaces. It consists of the reuse of old building material and elements in new constructions. I want to make an analogy between disaster survivors returning into their former homes and digging out their family photos, jewelry, and memorabilia, to the old practice of *spolia*. The explicit meaning of the practice is the reuse of elements of destroyed buildings in new constructions. The implicit meaning, I believe, is to carry out hidden clues of the old building, the old myths and cults, the old political systems, into the new order.

⁶³ De l'Orme. Philibert., *L'Architecture*, Federic Morl, Paris, 1567, p

The mundane level of *spolia* is an economic one, which deals with limited resources by the reuse of existing building material. This is particularly significant when we trace fragments of impermanent shelters that made their way to become permanent through the use of building material in the houses constructed after disasters. Designing for such purpose can be one of the positive elements in which local architects can participate in the early stages of post-disaster recovery.⁶⁴ This requires an understanding of what disasters mean as well as a different way of considering the stages of recovery as so distinct as the mainstream approach views them, one that considers a continuum rather than a phase-based understanding of space. The phase approach, in its emergency thinking mode, does not have space for planning, and therefore leaves very small space for thinking about the evolution of impermanent structures such as shelters into permanent elements of the city, homes.

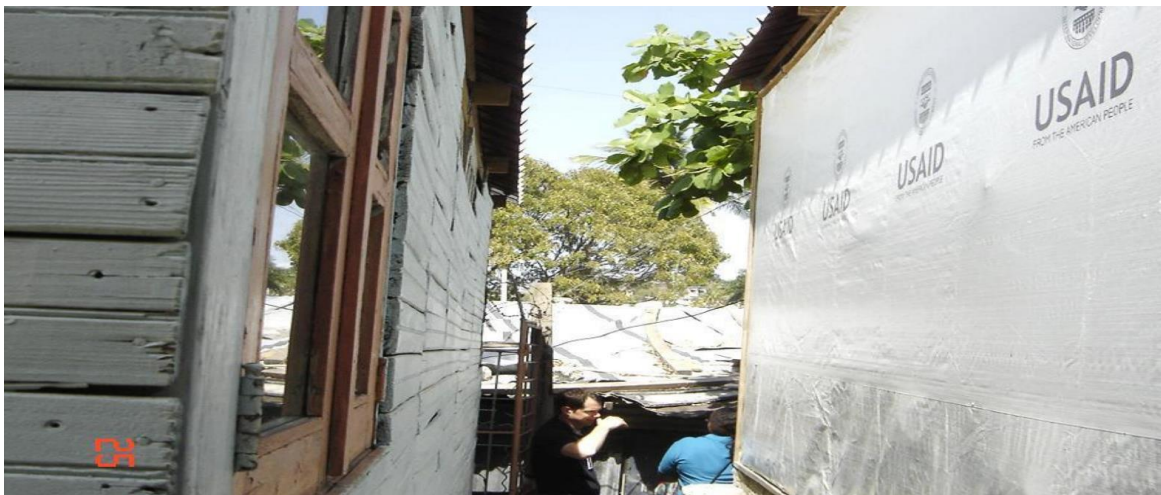


Figure 10: Transitional Shelters in Haiti (Courtesy of Charles Setchell, Senior Advisor at OFDA, USAID)
To the right a transitional shelter offered by USAID in its original material - aluminium frame and tarp used as enclosure. To the left, a similar transitional shelter, in which the tarp was replaced by the owner with reused material – scavenged wood old windows... (Courtesy of Charles Setchell, Senior Advisor at OFDA, USAID)

⁶⁴ One of the OFDA projects, the transitional shelters promoted first in Haiti, formalizes this idea from the donor, NGO perspective. In fact, the OFDA offers a structure of a home, that can then be expanded, merged with other structures and carried towards a more permanent state as the beneficiaries from the transitional shelter programs move towards permanence.

The second level of the notion of Spolia does not deal with the economic aspect of reuse, but its cultural and/or political significance. There are multiple examples of this symbolic use of spolia throughout history. Scandinavian Vikings were told to remove a pole from their house when they went to settle in a new place, and that wooden pole, would be the first thing to arrive in the new land⁶⁵. The Christian tradition, particularly the Christian church in Rome is full of use of pagan spoils. Columns, stones, from pagan temples would be reused in churches and signed with a cross to remove the pagan devil and cleanse/christen the spoils. This is an example of the triumph of one culture over another, in which the christening of the building elements becomes both a religious ritual and a cultural statement of the primacy of Christianity. Some Christian churches and monasteries around Europe were built around single architectural elements brought from Jerusalem, and sometimes even dirt from the Holy Land was laid in monastic crypts, which bestowed these buildings with relics and land from the holy land. Another city which was built out of symbolic spoils is Venice. The spoils of the war between Venice and the Byzantine empire against the Muslim empire in the east, ended up garnishing the then rising city state of Venice. Even though Venice was fighting alongside with Constantinople in the crusades against the Muslim empire in Jerusalem, most of the spoils brought back to the city were from Constantinople, which was supposed to be an

⁶⁵ The Trelleborg House, the standard Scandinavian Viking house, was shaped like a boat. It can be inferred that there is a relationship there. The old column may become a ship's mast and the first column in the new settlement house. From a pragmatic perspective, however, it would not have made a lot of sense. If they actually did it, then how could we know? Viking architecture was entirely made from wood. Wooden poles rot when put in the ground. Therefore, all we know about Viking architecture is the pole patterns and diameters (from excavations), not how tall they were or how the wooden construction above ground was designed (even if there are a lot of guesses of course). My guess is that we will never know with certainty, based on archeological evidence. But the Vikings themselves only left very limited literature (rune stones, in fact, and their saga), and to my knowledge none of that concerns architecture. Others have written about the Vikings (like the Romans and Celtic monks). Given the remoteness of their settlements and their means of getting there, I would argue that if they practiced some form of initiation of new homes, that it is more likely that they performed some form of rite involving either far smaller objects from home (like amulets) or objects which were available on site (such as animal offerings).

ally of Venice in that war.⁶⁶This was a case in which a state attempted to establish political power through building materials, materials which carried a memory and conveyed power needed by the state to establish its legitimacy. These materials brought from afar, by being assembled with other local materials create a new memory and a new meaning to the built environment, and take up a new life that was strengthened by the past, but had a local identity.

The historic Iron Market in Port-au-Prince Haiti, which was destroyed in a fire after the earthquake of 2010, is another type of disaster-related spoil. Originally built in France with the intent to be assembled as a railway station in Cairo in the late 19th century, the building found its way to Haiti and was established as a market after being purchased by Haitian President Florvil Hyppolite, in the late 1890s.⁶⁷ The market had been a symbol of the economic prosperity of the city and became for more than 110 years part of the history of the people. So much so that it was the first building that was commissioned by the private Haitian telecommunication company –Digicel –for reconstruction.⁶⁸ The construct that is expressed with the idea of spoils is one of continuity with change. Spoils partake in the creation of a whole, as functioning elements, but they also provide continuity of memory not only of one moment in time, but also of all the life of a building on the city leading to the present.

⁶⁶ Even though Venice was fighting alongside with Constantinople in the crusades against the Islamic empires in Jerusalem, most of the spoils brought back to the city were from Constantinople, which was supposed to be an ally of Venice in that war

⁶⁷ Nobody knows exactly why the building did not make it to its initial destination. .. deal fell through and so the President of Haiti Florvil Hyppolite had it shipped over in 1891, and there it stood until it was destroyed by the earthquake of 2010.

⁶⁸ http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/11/world/americas/11haiti.html?_r=0 Accessed August 24, 2016

As the world underwent two brutal World Wars and large-scale devices of destruction, architects became increasingly faced with addressing the question of reconstruction and its impact on the cultural values in the societies they serve. Throughout Europe, the post-war landscape caused major shifts in building techniques, organization, standards, and the social aspects of newly rebuilt cities. Manifestos such as Richard Neutra's *survival through design* noted the thinking of modern architectural design towards the question of disaster reduction by promoting a harmonious relationship between buildings and their environment, a relationship that would affect the individual dwelling in it. This relationship is the quiet creative power of the architect, drawn from his own cultural experiences and fueled by his imagination. He also insisted on the fact that there is no independent design without context. Neutra wrote:

No single one of the sciences or the arts has an entirely independent record of development. Mutually conditioned, they become part of the general wealth of mankind. Architecture of today is not a solitary offspring of modern society; its intellectual pedigree is complex. Thus, a glance at the broad cultural background implicitly related to design will be of value. Unlike automotive and other engineers, architects have been trained to keep an eye on the precedents of the distant past. They have long been accustomed to never discuss even the most novel development of the future without a grain of retrospection.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Neutra, Richard, *Survival Through Design*, Oxford University Press, 1954, p.28



Figure 11: The Greek god

Janus, with a face towards the future and another looking back to the past.

This Janus-like attitude towards the practice of architecture seems to be lost in today's general understanding of the architectural profession, as it makes a distinction between cultural concepts and pragmatic considerations. Architects are expected to have a small role in the design of a building today. However, this has not been always the case. Vitruvius stressed on the fact that an architect needs to be equipped with both the knowledge of the builder and that of the thinker.⁷⁰ He cited examples in which the knowledge of history was crucial for the architect's success, which denotes an appreciation for a notion of time in which past merges with the future in the present. The

⁷⁰ Vitruvius, Pollio, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, Book I *the education of the Architect*, Morris Hickey Morgan (Trans) Dover, 1960, pp.5-6

contemporary perception of architecture has its roots in the 17th century Cartesian revolution, which adopted a different understanding of time than that Richard Neutra and Vitruvius both embraced. It is a linear time, in which there is a split between the perceptual understanding of space and culture, and the abstract conceptual space to which architecture was assigned.⁷¹

The profession, as it is perceived today, relies on an institutional structure that strengthens the architect's position within his community, and participates in giving the architect the role of a beacon of society. Historically in the West, guilds were in charge of coordinating the life and affairs of masons, but no law regulated the profession of architecture, even though it had a lot of traction since the renaissance. The first institution dedicated to regulating architecture was the Royal Institute of British architects (RIBA) in 1837, followed by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1867, and the creation of l'Ecole Nationale Des Beaux Arts in France in 1867. The aim of these institutions is to promote and educate architects, defend their rights, and be a platform for engagement between architects and their environment. The model of these structures has since then been replicated in many countries.

Although the form of the profession today is predominant in the world and has Western roots, -there is a difference between the western notion of architecture, and the local practices of building and making cities in different places. In the broader sense of architecture, the profession existed in places such as Japan as early as the 6th and 12th century. The site of the Ise shrine was believed to be decided by Yamatohime-Makoto,

⁷¹ In His Mirror of Design Lectures, Dr. Paul Emmons makes the distinction between the representation of a building in plan between the plan as a footprint, implying a body and weight and reality to the building, and a plan as a section cut, which places the building in a linear abstract dimension unrelated to its context

after she wandered around the Mount Miwa, in the Ise prefecture for 20 years.⁷² Similarly, Chogen (1121-1206), a Buddhist monk who lived during the Kamakura Era was believed to have visited China under the Song Dynasty on several occasions, learning from building manuals such as government-sponsored Yingzao Fashi or Buildings Standards, which was published in 1103 and which was written by Li Jie, an official in the Directorate of Construction. The Yingzao Fashi is the earliest official court manual of building construction ever to survive in its entirety, and is an example of how the literary and intellectual side of architecture, meets the craftsman's apprenticeship in a symbiotic relationship, in which one learns from the other, all the while informing him and educating him.⁷³ Back in Japan, Chogen, thanks to his travels and his apprenticeship in China, was responsible of the construction of the Great South Gate of the Todaiji Temple and the Jodo Pavilion of the Jodoji Temple in Nara using his Daibutsu (Great Buddha) Style.⁷⁴ Individuals such as Chogen, and Enshu Kobori, who was famous for his garden design in the Katsura Imperial Villa, renovating tea ceremony rooms, gardens and castle halls, and who established a style known as the *Enshu Gonomi*- the Enshu taste,⁷⁵ had an architect's identity but were not masons or carpenters. They however, did not subscribe to the Western tradition of architect in the narrow sense it is understood in today.

In Japan, today's form of the profession was introduced to the country in the late 1800s.

The first generation of Japanese architects that graduated from the imperial university

⁷² Brown, D., and Ishida, I., eds., *Gukanshō; The Future and the Past: a translation and study of the 'Gukanshō,' an interpretive history of Japan written in 1219*. Berkeley, 1979.

⁷³ Feng, J., *Chinese Architecture and Metaphor: Song Culture in the Yingzao fashi Building Manual*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2012

⁷⁴ Rosenfield, J. M. *Portraits of Chōgen: The Transformation of Buddhist Art in Early Medieval Japan*. Brill. 2011, pp. 207–31

⁷⁵ Teiji I., Takeji I., *Imperial Gardens of Japan*, Weatherill, , 1970.

established the *Zouka Gakkai*, the Architects Association in 1887, in order to organize the profession. This association was modeled after the RIBA, which was established over 60 years before. As it underwent various changes, it was renamed the Architectural Institute of Japan. As it became increasingly academic in its pursuit, in 1914, Japan Kenchikushi Association, a splinter group from the institute, was formed as an organization of architects. After World War II, Japan Professional Architects Association was formed in 1947, and Japan Architects Association in 1956. Later, Japan Architects Association was merged with Japan Federation of Professional Architects Associations, and had a fresh start as the Japan Institute of Architects in 1987. It started by unifying two formerly individual associations that shared the same ideology: The Japan Architects Association (JAA) and The Japan Federation of Professional Architects Association (JFPAA). Along with *Kenchikushikai*, The Japanese Federation of Architect and building Engineers Associations, and the Japan Institute of Architects, these institutions count as members over 50.000 architects, engineers and building professionals. These institutions have been a driving force for structuring the profession in Japan and making sure that new buildings go through an architectural firm to get permitting, particularly after the Second World War, but it also was responsible in instilling in architects and in the public the notion that architects are not only responsible of the technical aspect of building, but of the environment in which his building is erected.⁷⁶

The Haitian architectural profession is modeled after the French system. It is regulated by decree laws that require architects with degrees recognized by the governments and who are members of an architectural association to supervise and building design and

⁷⁶ <http://www.jia.or.jp/activity/>, Accessed August 17, 2016.

construction. However, the reality is that the profession is less structured in practice. Many architects with B.Arch from Haitian universities need to go abroad to pursue a graduate education, reducing starkly the number of graduate level architects in the country.⁷⁷ Moreover, the country's poverty led to the development of a strong informal building practice, of which architects were not part. Before the 2010 earthquake, the government had estimated that 60% of the buildings did not meet the basic standards, do not go through permitting standards and do not use the services of accredited construction professions. The poverty, corruption, and lack of skill-building opportunities make for a difficult construction sector.

Created by decree law 25 March 1974, the Collège National Des Ingénieurs Et Architectes Haïtiens, National Board Of Haitian Engineers And Architects CNIAH includes the professionals of engineering and architecture. Among its objectives, are: defend and promote the interests of the profession, contribute to national development by promoting the arts and industry in Haiti, organize the exercise of the profession and represent the professional interest's members.⁷⁸ The organization is the only professional body that is actively promoting, and serving for professionals in engineering, architecture and urbanism practicing on Haitian territory.

As of 2010, all professionals in private practice or public officials, who are legally able to exercise in the profession of construction in accordance with the law of March 25, 1974 may join the association. The standardization of the construction sector is of great importance for the college. According to architect Gerald Emile Brun, partnerships have

⁷⁷ Clerrobrun, Martine, Interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015

⁷⁸ CNIAH, <http://www.cniah.org/> accessed on August 17, 2016.

been signed with national and international institutions in order to improve the work of professionals. The College gained traction after the earthquake and registered a significant increase of young architects and engineers memberships⁷⁹, but still with only few dozen are full-fledged active members causing CNIAH to not yet reach its cruising speed as a fully functioning architects association that advocates for the rights of architects in Haiti.

TIME, MEMORY AND HABITUS

Architecture, in addressing living and moving humans, most inevitably considers time's role in its design. Florentine Renaissance architect Filarete (1400-1469) suggested that, like the human body, a building is born, grows, lives to an old age with proper care, and eventually dies. This is an essential distinction from the modern notion of building that sees the building as in its best state on the first day after its construction is done. In fact, time is a fundamental component of architecture as the passing of time creates patterns of making and of everyday life, not only due to repetition of actions but through the sedimentation of experiences in the pre-conscious of individuals. It is not a static punctual time where each moment can be understood separately. Rather, each moment of time is a sum of all past moments and of possible futures. What the disaster recovery and reconstruction in its international form seems to struggle with, is a contradiction in a form of static time that is imposed. When the problem of shelter is addressed in a set timeframe, there is an epistemic default to the solution provided as it limits the shelter to

⁷⁹ Brun, Emile, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

an isolated time, devoid of cultural significance that is carried through memory and conscious and unconscious processing of experience.

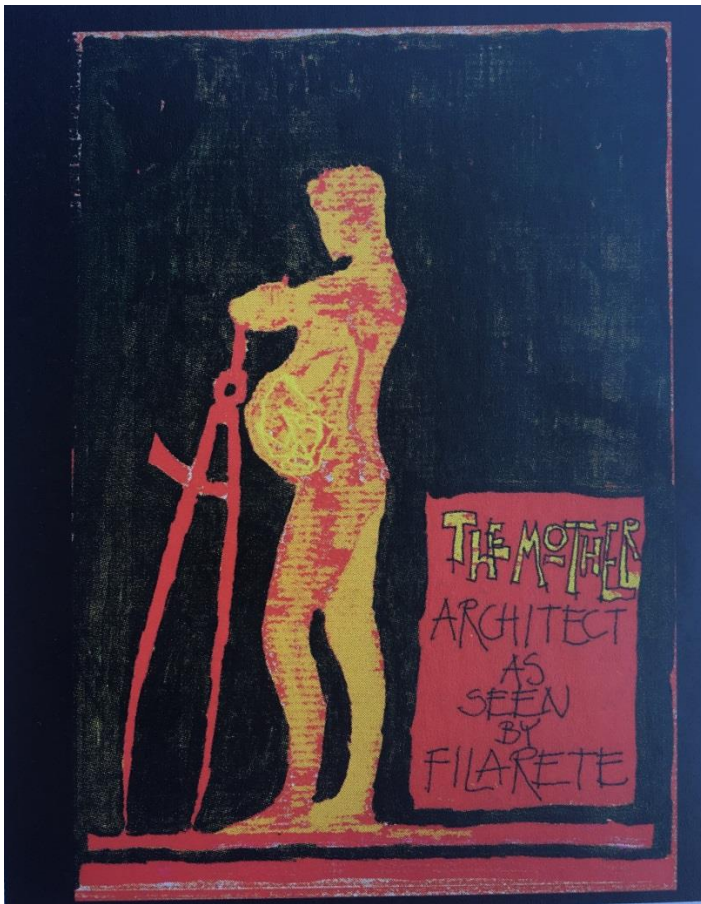


Figure 12: The Architect as Mother, by Marco Francari, in 'Eleven Exercises" p.46

The definition of time is therefore a key to understanding the gap in the international shelter provision and the local 'cultured' architecture in disaster sites. French mathematician and philosopher Henri Bergson (1859 – 1941) explains that there are two conceptions of time: the objective time, or clock time, is the time used for physical sciences because of its divisibility into measurable units. Its ease, objectivity and universality make it the perfect tool for science, in which subjectivity has little to no place. However, Bergson posits that this definition of time, standing alone, is misleading and incomplete when applied to understanding the individual and society. He noted the

mistake of applying the methods of the natural sciences, which can help to discover analogies and cycles, to understand how we think and experience life; he also denounced the use of mathematic to human sciences, which face the dynamism and subjectivity of human beings.⁸⁰ To him, the lived time, or as he calls it *duration*, is the way in which time is perceived by individuals. It is a continuous, creative, and non-repetitive stream of consciousness of what we perceive our world to be. Therefore, to Bergson, duration is the "real" time, because it is indicative of our conscience, and not a clock time, which to him, only an understanding of the real duration through space. Bergson wrote:

For if time, as the reflective consciousness represents it, is a medium in which our conscious states form a discrete series so as to admit of being counted, and if on the other hand our conception of number ends in spreading out in space everything which can be directly counted, it is to be presumed that time, understood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space. That which goes to confirm this opinion is that we are compelled to borrow from space the images by which we describe what the reflective consciousness feels about time and even about succession ; it follows that pure duration must be something different.⁸¹

To illustrate this, he gives the simplified example of a shepherd counting his sheep. Each sheep is unique and recognizable to the shepherd. In order for them to be quantified and form a flock, these sheep's distinct qualities are removed. However, for time, it is these distinct qualities of each individual moment in time that define a person's interaction with the world. He wrote:

It is not enough to say that number is a collection of units; we must add that these units are identical with one another, or at least that they are assumed to be identical when they are counted. No doubt we can count the sheep in a flock and say that there are fifty, although they are all different

⁸⁰ Bergson, Henri, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 1999

⁸¹ Bergson, Henri, and Frank Lubecki Pogson (translator). *Time and free will: An essay on the immediate data of consciousness*. Courier Corporation, 2001. p.91.

from one another and are easily recognized by the shepherd: but the reason is that we agree in that case to neglect their individual differences and to take into account only what they have in common. On the other hand, as soon as we fix our attention on the particular features of objects or individuals, we can of course make an enumeration of them, but not a total. [...]But now let us even set aside the fifty sheep themselves and retain only the idea of them. Either we include them all in the same image, and it follows as a necessary consequence that we place them side by side in an ideal space, or else we repeat fifty times in succession the image of a single one, and in that case it does seem, indeed, that the series lies in duration rather than in space. But we shall soon find out that it cannot be so. For if we picture to ourselves each of the sheep in the flock in succession and separately, we shall never have to do with more than a single sheep. In order that the number should go on increasing in proportion as we advance, we must retain the successive images and set them alongside each of the new units which we picture to ourselves: now, it is in space that such a juxtaposition takes place and not in pure duration.⁸²

German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) explains our perception of time as an operation of three inseparable intentional modes: primal impression, which has no impression of future or past, retention, which is the direct recollection of the past moment, and protention, the projection towards the immediate future. He argues that each primal moment, holds through the act of retention, the entire experience of the preceding moment (B holds the entirety of A, including p1 and r1).

⁸² Ibid. p 76-77

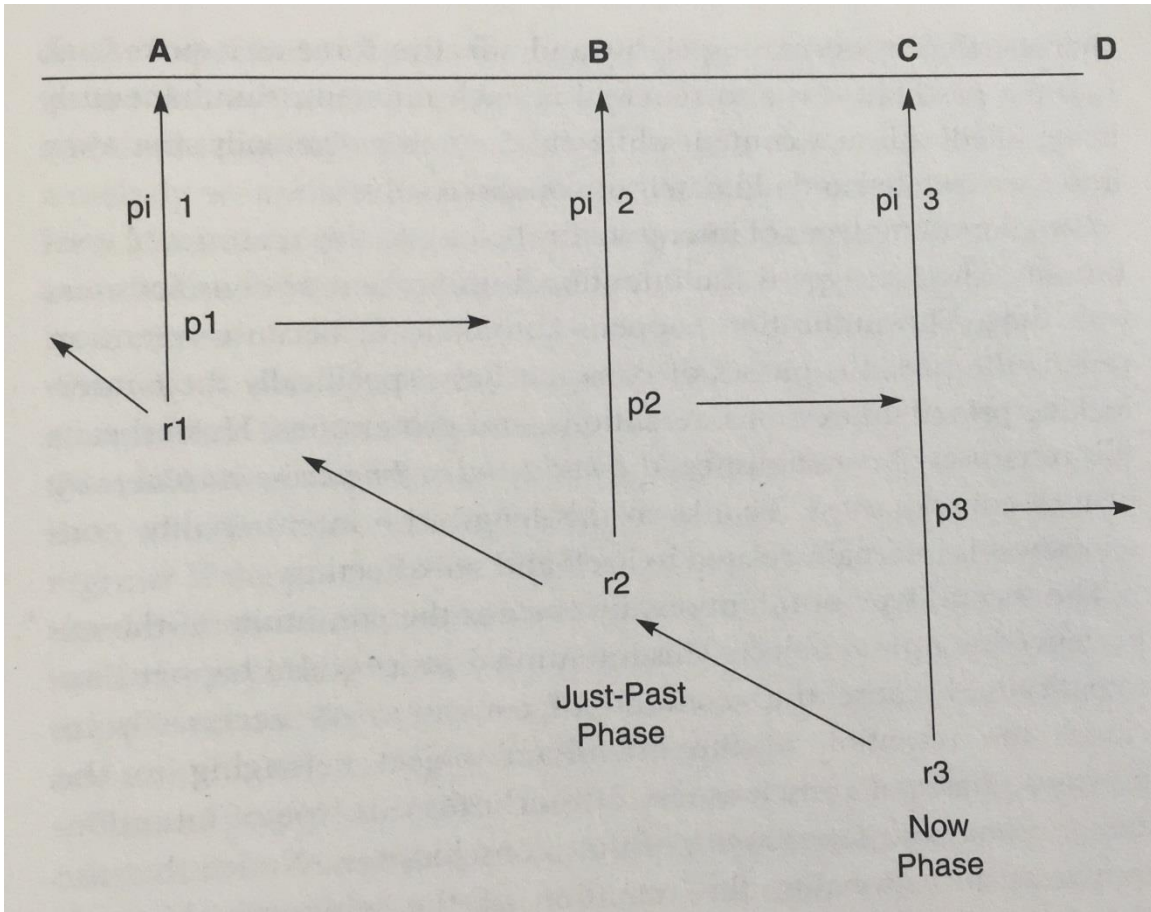


Figure 13: Time-consciousness according to Husserl. In Gallagher, Shaun. *The Inordinance of Time*

These definitions of time radically change the ideas that we adopt in describing events in time.⁸³ They prove that the specific experiential elements that we perceive differ from one moment to another. Therefore, each moment is heterogeneous, but they permeate one another. Moreover, through the perception of our experiences, we bring moments forward into a relation with the external world which is contemporaneous with them.⁸⁴ As in the case of a disaster event, such moment's perception can be strong compared to the other moments in consequence of this process, stretching that moment of time and emphasizing it in the stream of consciousness and creating a new perception of space and social realities and therefore affecting the individual's representation of their perception as well

⁸³ Thompson, Evan, *Mind in Life: Biology, phenomenology, and the sciences of mind*, 2007, p.327.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p.328

as their interactions within their social group. Current post-disaster response, because of its use of institutional clock time, attempts to close the gap by eliminating this ‘out-of-time’ occurrence by returning things to ‘the way they were’ as if it had never happened, not account for the stress in the time-consciousness.

The opposition between the institutional time and real duration affects also the types of knowledge that we can use. It allows making the distinction between formal knowledge (referred to in Bergsonian terms as analysis) and tacit knowledge (a part of Bergson’s intuition). The formal, information-based knowledge allows us to mechanically analyze observed phenomena, and search for causal links. Tacit knowledge is what allows us to relate to events, because it is integrated in a pool of shared experiences over a long period of time. These two types of knowledge are complementary and both necessary for a functioning Intuition and intelligence are not opposed, they are different and complementary. Bergson writes:

It follows from this that an absolute could only be given in an intuition whilst everything else falls within the province of analysis. By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is, to elements common both to it and other objects. To analyze, therefore, is to express a thing as a function of something other than itself. All analysis is thus a translation, a development into symbols, a representation taken from successive points of view from which we note as many resemblances as possible between the new object which we are studying and others which we believe we know already. In its eternally unsatisfied desire to embrace the object around which it is compelled to turn, analysis multiplies without end the number of its points of view in order to complete its always incomplete representation, and ceaselessly varies its symbols that it may perfect the always imperfect translation. It goes on, therefore, to infinity.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Bergson, Henri, *Introduction to metaphysics*. Dover, 2001, p.7

The return to an experience, itself pregnant with all past experiences and projecting itself into an indefinite future, occurs through an immanent principle of life. It is supported by intuition, or tacit knowledge, that has ontological, biological and psychological dimensions, and fed by both perception and memory.⁸⁶ If this perception of time and its implication on knowledge is accepted as a general method for understanding how we perceive time, and how it resonates also on what we conceive of as memory, then our understanding of how traumas of disaster, and consequent changes in individual and social structures will follow a phenomenological mode rather than an institutional one.

It is our capacity as humans to use intuition in order to capture life organically in its entirety that allows the human aesthetic experience before the works of art and artistic creation itself. Intuition participates in the creative nature of human action, but also makes present all past memory within every creative act:

No image can replace the intuition of duration, but many diverse images, borrowed from very different orders of things, may, by the convergence of their action, direct, consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to be seized. By choosing images as dissimilar as possible, we shall prevent any one of them from usurping the place of the intuition it is intended to call up, since it would then be driven away at once by its rivals.⁸⁷

This explains the complexity of pre-conscious processes by which the tacit knowledge is formed. It is a depository of all forms of collective and bodily memory.⁸⁸ Fitting memory in a static, institutional time perception, limits the time of memory to the photographic

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Bergson, Henri, *Introduction to Metaphysics*. 1999

⁸⁸ On collective consciousness see Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phenomenology of perception*, 2002, p. 356

kind.⁸⁹ This is particularly significant in a disaster setting. When we talk about the memory of a disaster, do we talk about the exact moment of when a bomb hit the ground, or the first tremors of an earthquake – separate from the prior and following events that shape the experience?

To better understand the relationship between felt/ lived time and memory, a disaster description can help. In the Tokyo based writer Sir Richard Lloyd Parry's *Ghosts of the Tsunami*, the people that were haunted by the spirits of the dead were far away from where the tsunami happened, yet they reported vivid bodily experiences of shock, e.g. taste of salty water in their throat, encountering muddy haggard people in unlikely places, etc. The reason, according to Sir Parry, is that the collective memory was not given place in the recovery processes. Japan's rites of the dead are a powerful element in the social and individual structures, and the sudden occurrence of the tsunami in 2011, left a gap in both the collective and individual memory. A gap which brought forth ghosts appearances. Sir Lloyd Parry wrote:

Along with walls, roofs and people, the water carried away household altars, memorial tablets and family photographs. Cemetery vaults were ripped open and the bones of the dead scattered. Temples were destroyed, along with memorial books listing the names of ancestors over generations.⁹⁰

This illustrates the power of memory on present of human experience, particularly that of the memory of the dead after a traumatizing event such as a tsunami. Cicero, in his book, *De Oratore*, explains another aspect of the importance of memory in the processes of recovery: Simonides, a poet on the Greek island of Ceos, was invited to a banquet in

⁸⁹ Bergson, Henri, *Matter and Memory*, 1990, Bergson, distinguishes between metastatic form, such as a series of photographs, and a dynamic form, that of film.

⁹⁰ Parry, Richard, Lloyd, *Ghosts of the Tsunami*, London Review of Books, Vol. 36 No. 3 · 6 February 2014, pages 13-17.

honor of one of the city's dignitaries. When he arrived, Simonides memorized guests names based on the technique of loci memory places, by fixing each name to a place at the table. Before long, however, a message came that he was requested outside, so he stepped out of the building. Before he could go back into the banquet hall the building collapsed. All inside were killed. Families gathered to pull their relatives' corpses from the rubble. A proper burial was essential for the welfare of the soul of the deceased and prosperity of the family as well, but the bodies were crushed beyond recognition. Simonides's memory trick, however, saved the day. By memorizing places as means of recalling names, he was able to identify the victims and allow for their proper burial, allowing a sense of closure to the living.⁹¹

These two stories show that often memory can feed the creative process that allows people to process traumas. It also means that it is in a dynamic interaction with time that takes a detour from the linear model of time and engages more complex options, which manifestation can be found in the gap created in cases of disasters between the living and the dead and between the ruin and the new construction.⁹² The fact that the systematic modern information-based knowledge is isolated and well-crafted makes it easier to describe and work with, particularly when dealing with post-disaster recovery, (CNN effect is an example). On the other hand, the collective and bodily memory is much more difficult to grasp, and therefore escape a methodical description and classification as it

⁹¹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, p.465

⁹² Kunze, Don, *Metalepsis of the Site of Exception*, <http://art3idea.psu.edu/AAPP/AAPP.pdf> accessed August 23, 2016

manifests in various forms (ghosts in the case of Japan, rejection of certain forms of housing in the case of Haiti.⁹³)

An architectural example of how architecture can be used as part of a sedimentation of memory is the Hiroshima contemporary art museum, which was built on the hill overlooking Hiroshima's Ground Zero. It used two types of granite in the finishing of its columns and circular agora. The granite at the edge of the columns was mined from radio-active quarry, and was marked by an apparent discoloration, while the rest of the agora was mined from a non-radio-active quarry. On a single framed level, this act was intended to remember the event of the nuclear bombing of the city, and thus begs to question why the architect did not use the discolored granite everywhere in the agora, but if we understand memory in a Bergsonian sense, it marks the disaster as part of a continuum that has both types of material. In architecture, memory plays an intricate role in recreating patterns that prove that there is rootedness in common place and past.⁹⁴

⁹³ Here, there seems to be a division between the folkloric ways of knowing, where memory plays a critical role, (tradition) and modern ideas that knowledge is information, which puts memory in the limited role of recall/recollection/ image/static point in time. Examining the folkloric understanding of memory requires leaving mainstream modern thinking and looking at the subtleties of the everyday lives, the familial relations, the exchanges in language etc.

⁹⁴ In *Discourses on Architecture*, French Architect Emmanuel Violet-le-Duc wrote that in order to create new things, one must 'arrange elements brought by passive imagination, or memory.' He urged his readers to enlarge his knowledge of precedent.



Figure 14: The Hiroshima Contemporary Art Museum, Source, HCAM website

If memory is created through the sedimentation of experiential moments, most of these experiential moments themselves amass into patterns that we call habits. However, while habit is usually associated with the ordinary, it can be used here to understand that which is outside of the ordinary, namely a disaster. American logician and philosopher Charles S. Peirce wrote:

The identity of habit depends on how it might lead us to act, not in merely under such circumstances are likely to arise, but under such as might possibly occur, no matter how improbable they might be.⁹⁵

This idea resonates within the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, which describes the dispositions of individuals, their reflexive habits and orientations as the internalized embodiment of social norms⁹⁶. According to Bourdieu, each individual

⁹⁵ Pierce Charles S. *How to Make Our Ideas Clear*, Popular Science Monthly, Issue 12, January 1878, p: 286-302 <http://www.peirce.org/writings/p119.html> last accessed on January 25th, 2016.

⁹⁶ Bourdieu. Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 1977 p. 37

enters a field⁹⁷ (*champs*), with a *habitus*, which intrinsically combines the sum of all learned capital – social and economic, but mostly cultural– and which allows him or her to function in the field with its specific doxa, therefore ensuring integration and hierarchization in the social continuum. A field is a setting in which agents and their social positions are located), such as school, workplace, home, etc. The position of each particular agent, that is an individual pertaining to a society in the field, is a result of interaction between the specific rules of the field, the agent's habitus, and the agent's capital (social, economic and cultural). Bourdieu defines cultural capital as the knowledge that allows us to navigate the culture we are part of. By doing so, it dramatically changes our lived experiences and the opportunities for advancement that are available in our surroundings. This also alters the lenses by which we view the world and our opinions. Cultural capital can be constituted both material and immaterial assets: codes of conduct, tastes, skills, or jewelry, real estate, art, etc. If seen as new fields, post-disaster environments disconnected from original patterns of behavior, elicit from disaster survivors new forms of habitus that capitalize on inherent socio-economic and cultural knowledge, but also on new realities altered by trauma. This means that patterns of locally conceived architecture will also undergo fundamental changes to accompany the social restructuring that happens due to the creating of such field.

Architectural theorists have established the relationship between architecture and habitus by questioning how architecture forms habitus, expanding the initial use of this notion not only to understanding stable societies and stationary situations/behaviors but to challenge and restructure this same habitus to account for the contemporary changes of

⁹⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste*. Routledge, 1984.

social life.⁹⁸ The genesis of the idea of habitus is architectural, as Bourdieu first encountered the notion while he was translating Erwin Panofsky's *Gothic architecture and Scholasticism* and then found reverberations of it when he was studying the Berber house and inter-individual relationships in Algeria. Panofsky wrote about the links between forms of architecture and thought structure in the medieval scholastic times,⁹⁹ and argues that the thought processes that generated Scholasticism and the methods of building distinctive of Gothic architecture found their genesis within each other. The connection between Habitus, architectural theory and more specifically in relation to the questions about architectural expression during the transition from disaster seems therefore legitimate, and is twofold. First, in the event of wars, technological or natural disasters, destruction is such that it causes an abrupt and violent change in spatial practices. It does so by affecting various instances of habitus through individuals' interaction with the destroyed/ruined built environment. The new environment is ultimately influenced by the disaster, therefore posing the question of the impact of architecture on this newly formed habitus. This newly formed habitus is in a delicate balance in which the play between the continuity of the past and the eruption of the new has to be respected. Second, this orientation of oneself in space and in the social hierarchy will allow a description in a non-quantitative way, of the experiential expression of how humans inhabit, and embody this new form of liminal spaces.

The Bourdieusian notion provides a conceptual framework for understanding these two elements. Bourdieu places the notion of habitus as the center of his understanding of human action. The complexity of this notion lies in the fact that even with determined

⁹⁸ Hiller, Jean, and Emma, Rooksby, *Habitus, A sense of Place*, Ashgate, 2002

⁹⁹ Panofsky, E. *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, Meridian Books, 1961.

dispositions; the outcome-habitus is never a static set of behaviors. The habitus is in constant motion, change and reinvention of itself. We cannot talk about habitus without talking about two components, the space - architectural element, and the subject, who intuitively inhabit/interpret it. The difference between habit and habitus is that the latter is not a result of repetition, but is a conscious construct that engages the individual within their social settings. It interacts (through the various dispositions it has) with its environment, and generates a new grammar at the slightest change or new additions to its dispositions. Bourdieu says that this set of interactions is limited and determined, but their outcome is negotiable. What I wish to argue is that this notion can be extrapolated to adding new environmental and spatial data at each point in time; creating various sets of stable moments, during which new behavior/sentence/movements in space create a new habitus. Bourdieu calls this a “dialectical confrontation”, he says:

In this confrontation, habitus operates as a structuring structure able to selectively perceive and to transform the objective structure according to its own structure while, at the same time, being re-structured, transformed in its makeup by the pressure of the objective structure.¹⁰⁰

However, rather than in the social sciences that address the difference between cultures, the use of habitus here is to find a whole other dimension of meaning that puts the subject within a frame of spatial understanding how such conscious uses and culturally entrenched habits are decisive in the act of transition from the old pre-disaster habitus to the post-disaster new habitus.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Bourdieu, Pierre, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, 1979 p. 167

¹⁰¹ Another way of saying this is that cultures create gaps, ethnographically, as cores stabilizing the entire social, symbolic, and energy flows of their daily lives. The cult, by definition content-free, is in effect an unconscious, and the structure of this is the same "triangular" organization of experience in a way that is remembered, and where the memory is structured by collectively perceived anxieties and desires (cathexis). When an external, accidental event (disaster) happens, it "automatically" coincides with the last

To sum up, the current approaches to disaster reconstruction have theoretical limitations that not only relate to the operational and systemic larger issues of humanitarian relief and reconstruction, but that struggle to encompass the untangible aspect of disaster that can only be processed by and through the experience of the disaster itself, by the individuals surviving it. The expert, coming from outside of this specific time and space frame, or using methods that belong to an outside condition, automatically sets the tone that the local cannot cope with the effects of disasters.

Architecture can allow the components of disaster (ruin, loss, abandonment, ghosts, wounds, etc.) to be placed as ethnographical evidence of the disaster in the rebuilt space. It creates places where survivors deposit, in the site of the disaster itself, the fragments of the past life to the utopian order that is maintained by those absent material artifacts, but that offers a vessel that carries all those fragments (houses, possessions, public spaces, etc.) forward in time into the future.

event of the series "stored" by cathexis, but it OBVERTS the triangle so that this obversion, the first event, appears as the last event of the already-stored and collectively remembered series.

PART TWO: HIROSHIMA AFTER 1945

Architecture is a deeply contradictory profession. Its actions intersect with a huge range of unrelated domains; at the same time, its essence -to build- is so complex that it requires extreme focus and concentration. Sadly, therefore, it is largely inhabited by two human typologies, “builders” and “thinkers,” united in mutual disdain. Kenzo Tange was both.¹⁰²

Many of the key concepts in architecture in Japan were challenged after the Second World War, such as the juxtaposition between imported western elements of architecture and the traditional “imperial” style of building. Architects of the era attempted to reconcile traditions and modernity, the contemporary conditions of post-war Japan and the tradition that needed to be preserved. The effects of the war on the dispositions of architects to think about their identity, skillsets, their role in reconstruction and in society, led to a long search that stretched over the decades that followed the end of the Second World War of how the war impacted what it meant to be Japanese, and how that caused changes in the habitus of the architect performing the reconstruction and living in the new world.

PRE- 1945 MAINSTREAM CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE AND THEORY:

- THE TURN OF THE CENTURY IN POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY:

The turn of the twentieth century marked the transition of Japan from the fast-modernizing imperial reign of the *Meiji* dynasty that ended in 1912, towards a

¹⁰² Rem Koolhaas in, Koolhaas, R., Olbrist, H. U., *Project Japan. Metabolism Talks*, Taschen

democratic state led by the *Taisho* government (1912-1926), and then to a militarized state in the early *Showa* (1926-1945). The Meiji period (1868-1912) was characterised by the opening of the country and the society to the outside world, after the long closure to foreigners that reigned in the Edo Dynasty (1603-1868). The most noticeable innovations of the Meiji oligarchy efforts to westernize Japan were the adoption of western banking systems, the creation of railways, postal systems, the introduction of printing press, as well as other artifacts and objects that were seen then as quintessentially Western. The Meiji period saw the imitation of Japanese upper and middle class, especially in the major cities, of behaviors and practices that were until then alien to the traditional society of Japan. Ideologically, it was presented as a concept of self-advancement and betterment of Japan as a nation and as an empire. However, as Carol Gluck, japanologist and scholar of East Asian Studies points out, while the belief in potential for social advancement was an important element in Meiji ideology, it did create tensions with traditional values of social order and status that continued to be of importance in the Meiji state.¹⁰³

Following the demise of the Meiji government, the Taisho government was congratulated for being able to steer the country from an oligarchic system to a democratic one, which won for this period the title of the “Taisho democracy”. This new political situation allowed for the flourishing of diverse political ideas, and therefore parties, ranging from leftist to socialist. The Great Kanto earthquake in 1923 and the successive assassinations that happened in the early 1920’s as a response to oppressive bills passed by this government, brought disillusion and a realization of the

¹⁰³ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 204-212

limitations of the Taisho democracy.¹⁰⁴ Socially, Japanese cities were increasingly accepting of the western influences and systems, all the while the conflict between tradition and modernity was still unresolved¹⁰⁵. *Taisho* is also considered Japan's Jazz Age. It is often associated with its slogans such as eroticism, grotesquerie, nonsense – エロ-グロ-ナンセンス, *ero-guro-nansensu* —.¹⁰⁶ The new political atmosphere allowed for the flourishing of a rich intellectual environment; art, architecture, and philosophy found new spaces and forms of expression, such as philosophical salons, which architects participated.¹⁰⁷ The *Taisho* reign and throughout the early *Showa*, witnessed a rapid urbanization of Japan. The capitalist modernization that Japan underwent during this extensive period participated in an accelerated production of new philosophical and artistic thought. After the death of the Taisho Emperor in 1926, when the *Showa* period began, it led to one of the most heavily militarized periods in the history of Japan, ultimately resulting in Japan's involvement in the Second World War.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Gluck, Carol. *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the late Meiji Period*, Princeton, 1985

¹⁰⁵ One of the manifestations of this conflict can be found in the eradication of the samurai caste. This has started in the late Meiji era, and saw the transformation of the samurai cast in the later decades from a warrior and feudal caste, to a class of high bureaucrats and traders.

¹⁰⁶ Gluck, Carol. *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the late Meiji Period*, Princeton, 1985

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Gluck, Carol, and Stephen Graubard. *Showa: The Japan of Hirohito*. WW Norton & Company, 1993.

- THE TURN OF THE CENTURY IN JAPAN

Japan, after a century of rapid transformations, entered the new century with a push from the fast-changing West, and was encouraged to modernize its systems of institutional paradigms (i.e. the cast system that was a remnant of the Edo period).



Notions such as that of the modern girl,¹⁰⁹ a new model for Japanese women as quintessential city creatures, became a figure of how urbanites dwelled in the city, and attempted to reform the heavily traditional modes of Japanese life. These shifts also changed

Figure 15: Winning competition entry for the memorial of the Great Kanto Earthquake, Source Tokyo Shinsai kiken jigyo kyo hen, Taisho daishinsai kiken kenzobutusu kyogi sekkei zushu. – Found in Schencking, CJ, *The great kanto Earthquake*, p. 296

how architects viewed space making.



Figure 16: The finished building of the Great Kanto Memorial- Found in Schencking, CJ, *The great kanto Earthquake*,. P299

Japanese architects had only recently joined the international

¹⁰⁹ ダアヌガル *Modanu Gal* in Walthall A., *The Human Tradition in Modern Japan*, 2002. p.158

conversation, as the profession with its current norms had been introduced to the country in the late 19th century, after the opening of the Meiji restoration government towards Europe. Many texts, political manifestos, as well as architectural treatises such as the architectural theorist John Ruskin's, that brought back from Europe and translated to Japanese had been misunderstood, mistranslated,¹¹⁰ or were difficult to work with within the frame of mind that stressed on the Japanese culture's primacy over the rest of the world.

As a result of this confusion, Japan struggled with the idea of modernization in architecture. It presented major conflicts within the Japanese society, of what image it would take. Japanese architects were also not able to consider the broader impact of the modernization of architecture within the Japanese city during that period. This can be linked to the fact that the majority of the newer projects were commissioned to be built in Manchuria, Korea, and China, between 1890 and 1935. During this period, architects such as Kunio Maekawa (1905-1986) explored modern teachings of architecture in the vaster (than Japan) lands of the countries invaded by the Japanese Imperial army, to the dissatisfaction of a number of architectural theorists back home.¹¹¹ It is only after 1910 that the architectural discourse began formulating the challenges that faced the country's social and architectural identity in regards to the exposure to western influences. In practice, however, most projects were not able to reconcile between the overwhelming admiration of the European architecture, and the Japanese tradition¹¹².

¹¹⁰ Harootunian, H. D., *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism*. University of Chicago Press, 1988. Pp. 488

¹¹¹ Uldermann, U. *Kenzo tange 1946 -1969: Architecture and urban design*, p

¹¹² Many of the architects and architectural critics during this period were highly influenced by the writings of John Ruskin, which found way to the architectural academic circles around the 1890s, but only had a considerable impact after his political manifestos reached the intellectual spheres in Tokyo in the 1910. His influence on political and architectural thinkers continued right until the end of the Second War, after

Figure 15 shows the winning competition design for the memorial for the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1924, in Tokyo, while figure 16 shows the actual built project that resulted from the competition.¹¹³

The modernist discourse in Japan only started to be prominent by the mid 1920's and emerged from Japanese architectural associations and student journals that were influenced by schools of De stijl and the futurists. The idealism of the futurist manifestos impressed the students associations. For example, the *Bunriha Kenchikuka* an architectural students' movement, rebelled against the previous generation's approach to traditional architecture. Until the 1920s, the practice of architecture focused on formal use of traditional and modern elements separately.¹¹⁴ This movement criticized the shallow understanding of modernism among contemporary architects,

which he became associated with the old political conservative regime. Ruskin was introduced to Japan through architectural researchers Okakura Kakuzo and Ernest Fenellosa, who were also instrumental in modernizing Japanese aesthetics, having recognized the need to preserve Japan's cultural heritage. They, and particularly Okakura kakuzo, were two of the major reformers during Japan's period of modernization beginning with the Meiji Restoration,. Japanese architects found a sense of kinship between the traditional sense of space and space making and how Ruskin's arts and crafts movement prescribed the making and learning of architecture.

That being said, the late 1890 through the early 1920's were still heavily characterised by a national crisis that affected the general perception and practices. Heritage and history struggled to find place within the nationalist projection of the nineteenth century's Western world order. The attitude towards architecture was to use the image of the traditional Japanese architecture to assert the nation's power and nationalist doctrine that aimed to assert Japan's position as an equal to the West. This posed a larger problem, if we take into consideration the social changes linked to the Westernization of the institution, which created a discord between the use of space, the image of the city, the emerging contemporary social practices linked to the rapid urbanization, such as, women joining the taskforce, the eradication of the Samurai system, etc., and the architects conception of a binding theory of space production. The effects of these radical changes in modes of thoughts and influences took a couple of decades to fully permeate the spheres of thought and practice of architecture. (See figures 2 - 3) Okakura, along with Fenellosa, is also credited with "saving" Nihonga, Yoga, and many many paintings done with traditional Japanese technique, that were, during the meiji period was threatened with replacement by Western-style painting. Outside Japan, Okakura had an impact on a number of important figures, directly or indirectly, who include Swami Vivekananda, philosopher Martin Heidegger, poet Ezra Pound, and especially poet Rabindranath Tagore and heiress Isabella Stewart Gardner.

¹¹³ This visual shows how, though there was an increasing awareness and admiration for European and American architectural ideas, these seemed to have difficulty to go beyond student journals and competition unbuilt projects.

¹¹⁴ This is apparent in the juxtaposition of traditional architectural elements such as the pagodas, with ornamented windows, in peripheral walls. Peripheral walls do not pertain to the traditional vocabulary of Japanese architecture.

forming the first indicators of the greater discussion that monopolized the architectural discourse right after the War.

It is only after the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake that Japanese architects eventually became more aware of the extent of their potential role in western influenced urban planning, residential design and construction and its impact on social cohesion.¹¹⁵

Architect and *modernologist* (term coined by Kon Wajiro, meaning scholar of modernity) Kon Wajiro (1888-1973),¹¹⁶ who was one of the most prominent figures of a new trend of anthropology-focused architectural research and specializing in farmers' dwellings, turned his attention to urban life, recording the post-earthquake housing conditions in Tokyo. The earthquake marked his break with the naturalist approach he had adopted earlier in his career in recording the peasant life. He documented, through plates and drawings of sections and perspective views, complemented with writings, notes and stories, life on the streets of Tokyo, and the types of residences that emerged after the earthquake. It is worth noting, that since the introduction of the profession of architecture - in its western model - architects did not participate in the design and construction of residential dwellings, and were only involved in the design and construction of a few higher end residences, mostly for foreign clients. The rest of the residential stock, especially, the middle and lower class residences, were still built in the traditional way, using traditional methods and mostly built by carpenters, despite the fire prevention regulations of post-great Kanto

¹¹⁵ Kuroichi, Izumi, Kon Wajiro: A quest for the architecture as a container of everyday life, Dissertation, UPenn, 1998,

¹¹⁶ Kon Wajiro (今和次郎) ,(1888 – 1973) was a Japanese architect, designer, and researcher. He is also known as the father of "modernology", a branch of sociology which studied the changes in cityscape and people which emerged as a consequence of Tokyo becoming a modern metropolis in the early Showa Era. Kuroichi, Izumi, Kon Wajiro: A quest for the architecture as a container of everyday life, Dissertation, UPenn, 1998.

earthquake. The social gap that persisted due to this urban situation was one of the issues that architects after the World War II attempted to solve through a series of proposals called the metabolism projects.

This lack of interest in the notion of home during the early period of the introduction of Western architectural practice to Japan, can explain the interest of architects of the post-war era and the questions of the individual house as a driver of a new architectural identity and of social and cultural values that capitalize on individuals traumas. The Great Kanto earthquake, caused a shortage in the housing stock, which brought in line the European discourse on residential architecture, and the demands from the government on its architects, as architects started working for government ministries.¹¹⁷

Pre-World War II Japan was also characterised by an influence of European architectural thought, especially from the Bauhaus, through a series of pilgrimages by Japanese architects to Europe to visit architecture schools and projects. Not only that draughtsmanship, design, construction, project planning and town planning became considered intrinsic to the practice of architecture, but also the individual's aesthetic sensibility that the earlier position of architecture as an engineering task refused to acknowledge. German architect Walter Gropius, who was a hero to many even after the war, defined architecture as the "design of life processes".¹¹⁸ This sunk in deep within the rhetoric of architects in the late 1920s, and the notion of architecture as design of life processes, had put in perspective the principle of tradition and traditional building

¹¹⁷ Wendelken, C., *Living with the past : preservation and development in Japanese architecture and town planning*, Dissertation, MIT, 1994.

¹¹⁸ Gropius, Walter. *Rebuilding our communities*. Vol. 1. Paul Theobald, 1945.

traditions.¹¹⁹ This also connected Kon Wajiro's architectural research that he led through the study of the material culture aspect of Japanese urban dwellers' habitus.¹²⁰ The changes in spatial habits that unfolded in the period after the Kanto earthquake, not only informed him on the slum inhabitants belongings and their arrangements in space, but also allowed him to witness a moment in time in which the rural past of the earthquake survivors and their future as urban dwellers crystallized to create a set of practices that were unique to the slums of Tokyo after the Great Kanto earthquake.

It is therefore safe to assume that a lot of Kon Wajiro's scholarly interest and experience documenting the post-earthquake life and architecture played a major role in how architects were able to process and comprehend the transformation that society, and they themselves, were undergoing. This relationship to the folk life studies movement is important when it comes to understanding the struggles and approach of the post-war architectural thinkers on questions of Japanese identity. Even though this question had been current since the Meiji restoration era, the shock of the war and its destruction, forced social and literary critics, artists, and architects to rethink trends that were considered previously irreconcilable, such as the study of temples and the study of folk life, or the dichotomy between tradition and modernity in their formal discontent and the conflicted relationship towards the West. The confusion around the questions of identity, Japan-ness, both on the social level and in architectural conversations and

¹¹⁹ The primitive hut that western architects is thought of as the beginning of architecture, as well as Ruskin's theory of making architecture, thanks to the intellectual atmosphere of the Taisho period, the idea of home, especially the folk house – Minka began to be seen under a different light.(cf, Cherie Wendlecken 1994)

¹²⁰ Wajiro was tightly linked to the Metabolist movement. In 1972, he was appointed first president of the Nihon Seikatus Gakkai - The Japanese Society life Magazine. This magazine was founded by a board of architects, anthropologists, designers and academicians including Kikutake Kiyonori, Ekuan Kenji and Kawazoe Noboru, who were also the founders of the metabolist movement under the guidance of Kenzo Tange. Through this collaboration, Wajiro's belief that social science and anthropological documentation of the everyday practices through space using architectural methods and skills, persisted after his death.

design, continued to be part of the Japanese mindset at the eve of World War II, yet reached conclusions that can be seen through the writing and designs of architects of the period¹²¹ as it is demonstrated by the utopian projects of the metabolism movements, the writings and projects of Kenzo Tange, and the architectural critiques of Kawazoe Noboru.

The Doolittle raid in 1942 brought with it the realization that, for the first time, Japan was not the greatest nation that the Japanese people were led to believe. By 1945, 215 cities were heavily damaged by the extensive firebombing that Japan sustained during the last year of the war. The sheer horror of the nuclear bombs' attacks, in addition to the heavy fire bombing of the main cities of the country, held a symbolic loss as much as it did a physical one. The only news that had been communicated to the population, were those of inflated successes, so the news of the defeat came as a shock to a society that was subjected to many radical changes during a short span of time.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF JAPAN AND THE CHANGES IN ARCHITECTURAL THINKING

Planning historians claim that although the destruction brought by the war was a game changer for innovative, long-term thinking of urban planning during the rebuilding of Japan's cities, the reconstruction was mostly devoid of symbolic meaning, that is to say that most of the decisions that were taken in the decades after the war, had multiple

¹²¹ Japan had a tradition of urban planning but not a tradition of architecture, due to the late introduction of architecture to Japan as opposed to town planning that was prevalent since the introduction of Buddhism from China.

variables that were more decisive than the traumas of the war itself.¹²² This is partially true due to the heavy codification and regulations of the reconstruction effort of the McArthur regime, in the seven year following Japan's surrender. However, evidence from writings and projects of the period suggest that, contrary to the general belief, architects and urban planners during the reconstruction years had raised several issues that attempted to address the unspeakable horror they lived through.

The bombing of Hiroshima in 1945, which marked the end of the Second World War and the end of the Japanese expansion in Asia, forced architects to refocus their attention solely on Japan and face the issues that they had been avoiding for the most part. The architectural community in Japan was quickly aware of its unique position within the international discourse in architecture, and within the cultural atmosphere of the country¹²³. The prowess of the modernist-influenced architects during the pre-war era had been possible because these architects were able to achieve a laboratory experience in Mongolia, China and Taiwan. It was a tabula rasa, where memory, past and future in the present, and habitus were not the drive behind the design.

This carte blanche of architectural design was not possible in Japan after the war. The returning architects were faced with disillusionment at the modernist repertoire that was not easily applicable so close to home. Not only that, their own experiences and perceptions of social change within their country, as well as their conflicted relationship to their own past prompted them to take a hard look at their architectural practices. As architectural historian Hans Ulrich Obrist has observed:

¹²² Hein, Carola. "Change and continuity in postwar urban Japan." in *Rebuilding urban Japan after , 1945*, pp.236-249.

¹²³ Zhongjie, L, *Kenzo Tange and the Metabolist movement : urban utopias of modern Japan*, 2011, pp. 37-44

The Japanese trauma associated with land - saturated on its own mountainous archipelago, then liberated in foreign territories, now scorched at home- forms a critical backdrop for the growth of a new generation of architects that will become Metabolists...

It was the trauma of the scorched land is particularly that made the Metabolists who they are today. In an interview, Kenji Ekuan, a Japanese metabolist and graphic designer said:

Even when separated by distances too great to hear one another's voices, greetings were exchanged and answered. That became an incentive to live. I was able to imagine the revival of the town; I built a hut on the ground of a scorched field. Our dream was to discover a middle ground between the individual and the state, a secure frame in which to live. We hypothesized a situation in which traditional state power was partly dismantled and urban society blossomed. That World War II ended with the defeat of Japan was, I think, not at all disadvantageous for conceptualizing the reconstruction of the state, society, and cities after the war.¹²⁴

The American occupation of Japan, keeping most of its military bases open in the Japanese archipelago, undertook massive restructuring of fundamental elements of Japanese society. By changing the nation's constitution and land ownership laws, disestablishing the Shinto rite of the emperor's divinity, and including western building laws and codes that suspended the common practices of the pre-war period, the United States shaped the way the architectural community responded to reconstruction. The US occupation ordered the Shinto religious system to be legally separated from the newly established state democracy. The reason behind the decision was that the US perceived Shintoism as one of the causes that led to Japan's involvement in the war, and to its ultra-nationalist identity. This legislation condemned, not only sources of funding for Shinto in the political sphere, but deeply changed fundamental institutions in Japan. It caused funding cuts for Shinto temples, terminated Shinto teachings as part

¹²⁴ Koolhaas, R, Oubri, H.U., *Project Japan: Metabolism Talks*. Taschen, 2011, p. 78

of public schools curricula, and overall condemned one of the most deeply rooted religious and social practices in the Japanese society.

In addition, Japan understandably suffered from a major post war housing and infrastructure reconstruction crisis in the immediate years following the end of the war, a task with which architects were faced.¹²⁵ Evidence of the dislocative nature of the Second World War and its impact on the thinking of Japanese architects, can be found in their writings and projects, but also in fragments of testimonies given during interviews in the following years. This was not solely the case for Japan and Japanese architects. After 1945, Walter Gropius, wrote a book entitled *Rebuilding our Communities*, in which he addressed the unprecedented building boom soon to be experienced after the War, on an international scale, and in the United States where he fled during the war specifically. In the introduction to the book, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy writes of Walter Gropius:

Such metamorphosis of a great architect is of deep significance in showing the direction our lives must take. It is no longer possible to praise the classics and let people live in the slums, or at best in a city where isolation is the fate of everyone who does not consciously tear himself out of his solitude and try to build up a feeling of coherence with the group through social activities of a different kind.¹²⁶

Bauhaus architects such as Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Buckminster Fuller, Konrad Wachsmann,¹²⁷ were instrumental to a new generation of architects in Japan in forming

¹²⁵ Walter Gropius flew into Japan during that period to advise on the matter. Coincidentally, he was in Japan when the Ise temple was finally authorized for resuming the 20 years reconstruction tradition after a long period of forbidding the Shinto rite of rebuilding the temples. He and Tange collaborated on a documentation of the rites of reconstruction of Shinto as well as a theoretical piece on the symbolic meaning of the Ise shrine and the relation Shinto rites of life and death cycles and the Japanese identity and contemporary architecture

¹²⁶ Gropius, Walter, *Rebuilding our communities*, introduction 1945 p.5

new ways of building a modern Japan. Their teachings helped formulating the new post-war Japanese architecture, and helped launching many of the young architects' careers. When the war ended, the sense of place and the notion of home in Japan shifted. The debris-ridden land and the scarcity of building materials were the most obvious challenges for the Japanese architects¹²⁸, to which they responded with projects fitting the limitations they had, while their creative responses to the more underlying social challenges that emerged due to the end of the war, the failure of the regime, and the identity crisis were apparent through sketches and drawings that took the form of utopian projects. These projects reflected on the fear of the Nuclear Bomb, and the questioning of Japanese tradition and its place in the new world order. There was a sense among the Japanese that the memory of the consecutive destructions due to events such as the 1923 Earthquake and then the Second World War fire bombings and the ensuing Nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, created in the society both a collective and an individual awareness of temporariness and frailty of what was until then considered a solid tradition.¹²⁹ The shock of the destruction of most cities after the war, as well as the defeat, caused architects to rebel against the vulnerability they were facing and led to them taking a hard look at their role in the making /unmaking of Japan. The housing projects proposed by such architects are demonstrative of what they were thinking about. The tools used by these architects to express the changes in their practice and theory in reaction to the traumas of the war and reinforce their community were the writings of Kenzo Tange and Kawazoe Noboru and the manifesto of the Metabolism movement, the

¹²⁸ Robyn Boyd writes: "Thus the Postwar generation of Japanese architects used Le Corbusier as a stepping stone out of the past to avoid parodies of the past."

¹²⁹ Clammer, J.R., *Difference and Modernity: Social Theory and Contemporary Japanese Society*. Kegan Paul International, 1995

utopian drawings by the group specifically its response to the country's housing crisis, and finally the built projects. This influence can be verified through the analysis of these projects and writings.

KENZO TANGE AND THE METABOLISM MOVEMENT

- WHAT IS METABOLISM?

The young generation of Japanese architects that witnessed the horrors of the Second World War expressed the impact of the destruction and the losses it created in their behaviors and opinions. This participated in shaping their architectural responses to spatial and social problems, which appeared in the form of a movement called Metabolism. Japanese architect Arata Isozaki said in an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist:

When Japan surrendered in 1945, I was still very young, but I could feel that history was disrupted. At the same time there was a sense of complete stillness, from which maybe another time or another history could start. Like in the movie *The Matrix*, two or three parallel worlds were crossing—this kind of thinking preoccupied me.¹³⁰

The years following Japan's defeat saw the culmination of the reflections on architecture between Kenzo Tange and his colleagues and disciples, in the form of a World Design Conference, held in Tokyo in 1960 that marked the beginning of the definitive recovery of Japan from the War. The World Design Conference foretold the Osaka Expo of 1970, the first World's Exposition to be hosted by an Asian country and the world fair that positioned Japan on the forefront of technological utopian discourse on the international level. The World Design Conference allowed for the young generation of Japanese architects, such as Kiyonori Kikutake, Fumihiko Maki, Kisho

¹³⁰ Arata Isozaki in Koolhaas, R., Olbrist, H.U., *Project Japan: metabolism Talks*, Taschen, 2011, p. 37

Kurokawa, and architectural critics such as Noboru Kawazoe, to present their work to international architects. Essentially, the movement was a reaction of young architects that participated in the organization of the World Design Conference in 1960, WoDeCo 60,¹³¹ to the frustrations they had experienced in the years of the reconstruction. The projects proposed future visions of Japanese cities, houses, urban blocks, and relationships between human beings and technology, and between man and machine. This conference came in an international political and economic situation that created a break, as the art theorist Michelangelo Pistoletto said, of artistic consciousness and autonomy. This consciousness caused architectural and art theorists to attempt to position these fields in conditions that could change the world.

In an essay on Metabolism, Cherie Wendelken, an architectural historian and specialist in modern architecture in Japan, argued that the metabolism movement stemmed from the destruction caused by the Second World War. She said:

Metabolism projects do not seem to acknowledge any siting in a local or national landscape, nor do they address any historical context. Ironically, it is the very denial of time and place that gives metabolism its meaning in postwar Japan. The famous *megaform* cities that proposed sky and sea as habitat were products of the particular circumstances of urban and cultural crisis in postwar Japan. Ultimately, Metabolism was an effort to address fundamental questions about what it meant to be Japanese in the postwar world.¹³²

The Metabolism movement's published manifesto stressed three points: 1) that there was a space scarcity and a strong need for new schemata for land use, 2) that

¹³¹ Supported by the Japanese Government, Tokyo hosted the World Design Conference (WoDeCo, Sekai Dezain Kaigi) from May 11th to May 16th, introducing an enthusiastic group of Japanese designers, architects and industrial designers with their counterparts from Europe and the United States to discuss the theme "Total Image for the 20th Century". World Design Conference 1960 in Tokyo. Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha, 1961.

¹³² Wendelken, Cherie. "Anxious modernisms: experimentation in postwar architectural culture; MIT Press Putting metabolism back in place: the making of a radically decontextualized architecture in Japan." 2000, p.280

earthquakes and tsunamis cause vulnerability especially in urban settings such as Tokyo and Osaka, and 3) that technological and design advances could help address the weaknesses of Japan. The Metabolist architects had been active, since the beginning of their careers in architecture, in reconstruction efforts after the Second World War. The repercussions of the war on architectural theory were also felt throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The component of time is important here, as the general assumption would be to expect manifestations of the effects of traumatic events, particularly in fields such as architecture to happen quickly, yet the most significant architectural shifts (as well as other social paradigm shifts that appeared in cinema for example), occurred 15-20 years after the end of the war. They were deeply connected to the present (meaning the 1960s polemics), but were anchored in the unsolved traumas of 1945. This phenomenon has been well treated by Arata Isozaki, who was a prominent figure of the Skopje, Macedonia reconstruction plans:

The movement of metabolism is inseparable from the tremendous changes in Japan during the 1950s and '60s. The ruins of World War II, and the unexpected economic stimulus of the US-led conflict in Korea from 1950-53, were fundamental to the visions of renewal and change that we find in Metabolism. The optimism that propelled Japan into the second place in the world GDP stakes by the mid-'60s, and which saw university attendance jump from 20 percent of Japanese youth to around 40 percent, was a suitable backdrop for the massive ambition of these architects.¹³³

Rather than being an optimistic take on the future of reconstruction, the Japanese architectural movements after the war, more specifically metabolism, considered themselves a post-apocalyptic, pessimistic byproduct of the loss of Japanese culture

¹³³ Koolhaas, R, Olbrist, H.U, *Project Japan: metabolism talks*, Tashen, 2011, p.37

that both the bombing of Tokyo and the nuclear bombs symbolized.¹³⁴ They proposed an architecture for a post-apocalypse world generated from the moment, and that takes advantage of the destruction that the war left behind to allow for an organic liaison between individuals according to the new social and cultural settings. In order to do so, much thought was given to Japanese culture to bring forth its essential patterns, not in a physical imitation of history, such as through materials, dimensions or style, but in ideas that transcend history, and that could adapt to the new material realities of the new world. The physical result of this exercise would be spaces that would not necessarily be a traditional outcome as the past buildings, but ones that reflect the new habitus and social fields, while still basing themselves on the traditions and the rich past that are common to the collective imaginaries of the string of individuals inhabiting that space, with the same shared history, fears, anxieties, and current aspirations. It is a present architecture that is thick, in Husserl's words, with both the past and the future possibilities. Cherie Wendelken says:

These underlying cultural patterns were generative: they had created the traditional wooden house, but survived its destruction. They would now be studied to generate new architecture on a much greater scale, built on industrialized material. The result would be unrecognizable in form but identical in underlying spirit. Because the reborn cultural organism was alive but nascent, its form had to allow for growth and accommodate the different life cycles of each component of its structure¹³⁵.

The proposed architecture is therefore flexible, and can allow for growth, without being stuck in only visual and aesthetic considerations of what tradition may mean. It rather

¹³⁴ Mangas such as Godzilla, anpanman, Astroboy that appeared in the late 1950s and early 1960s are also byproducts of Japanese artists processing the meaning of the nuclear threat in the new post-WWII world.

¹³⁵ Wendelken, Cherie. "*Anxious modernisms: experimentation in postwar architectural culture*"; MIT Press Putting metabolism back in place: the making of a radically decontextualized architecture in Japan." 2000, p.278

works as a fortified vessel for the essence of culture: a vessel that can survive war or nuclear attacks. By rejecting the visual resemblance to the traditional architecture, the movement also rejects the symbol of the nationalist failure and the totalitarian regime that prevailed in the early Showa.¹³⁶

According to Arata Isozaki, who was one of Kenzo Tange's students and a witness of the Metabolism movement, Tange and his students prolonged and continued the avant-garde that started with Project Japan abroad right before the war. However, they ensured that within their processes of design, there is a change and reevaluation of what Project Japan meant in the light of the events of post-war¹³⁷. The following comment by Kenzo Tange sums up his thought :

I do not believe that regionalism is an expression of the visible idiom which has been applied in a specific region traditionally. Many regionalists proceed like this, but in my opinion it is a mistake to assume that the mere fact of regional differences could elicit creative energy. I believe that regionalism can lead to a result if each region with its own contradictions and difficulties fixes creative standards in order to overcome the local tradition. I believe that tradition can neither be preserved nor converted into a creative impulse. Creative work is expressed in our times in a union of technology and humanity. The role of tradition is that of a catalyst, which furthers a chemical reaction but is no longer detectable in the end result. Tradition can, to be sure, participate in a piece of creation, but it can no longer be creative itself¹³⁸.

The main idea that Tange defends was that tradition as it was understood in Japan is doomed to be fixed in the past, and has no possibility of actively participating in the

¹³⁶ During the short but intensive life span of the metabolism movement, which lasted a little over a decade, the efforts of the group culminated in the maturing of its members into individual careers and different stylistic approaches. The Manifesto itself is in a very flexible form, which is an innovation. This form allowed it to accept polar opposite notions in architecture such as Maki's and Kurokawa's proposals.

¹³⁷ Something to keep in mind was that this group was a very tight community in all aspects of the word. They broke bread together studied together, and were socially and professionally involved in the same questions that were rising in the aftermath of Hiroshima's bombing... no matter how much the outcome seems varied and contradictory, its genesis and influences were the same.

¹³⁸ Udo Kultermann, ed. Kenzo Tange: 1946-1969 Architecture and Urban Design

future unless it is *museified*.¹³⁹ To him, tradition is born in its very participation into moving to a new state. It is from this perspective that the metabolist architects operated, participated in the World Design Conference of 1960, and created their manifesto, *Metabolism: The Proposals for New Urbanism*, which was published during the Design conference that year. The international event where architects gathered to write about and illustrate the situation of the design professions around the world was a perfect platform to launch the new Japanese architecture ideas and gain traction to them. In the manifesto, these young architects explained their visions of post-war Japan through short essays and visionary projects by the members.

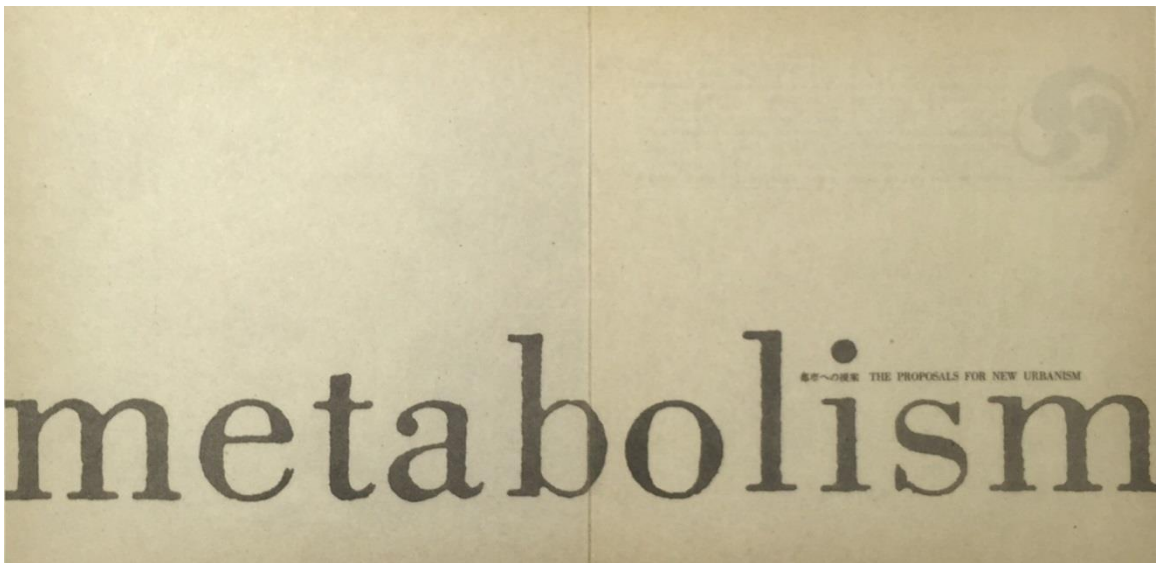


Figure 17: metabolism, first page of the metabolsit manifesto

- METABOLISM AND JAPANESE IDENTITY:

One of the major results of the war was a loss of belief in traditional Japanese values, as the struggle to restore and find a new form for them began. The cultural atmosphere of post-war Japan saw an abundance of artists, photographers, philosophers and writers

¹³⁹ Assion, P. *Histoire, tradition et folklorisme : À propos de la muséification comme tendance culturelle de notre temps*, in L'Homme et la société 4/2002 Volume No 146, p. 101-117

that addressed, through their works, what the destruction of the Japanese cities and the change of the political system meant to the society. The Japanese architects, through their connections with this cultural context, were an intrinsic part in shaping the new culture of post-war Japan. This role permeated the architectural texts and the proposals that were produced during the 1945 to 1969 period.¹⁴⁰

The nuanced text of the manifesto itself can be read on multiple levels.¹⁴¹ In connecting with the contemporary issues of post-war Japan as well as the recent historically charged past, the document took form of a global social critic, an acknowledgement of the levels of destruction of the war and an aspiration of what Japan might look like in the following 50 years. This is clear in passages in the manifesto such as:

[..] We are trying to encourage active metabolic development of our society through our proposals.

The nation's identity, which was used during the war as a discourse to engage and align Japanese citizen behind the ruling power, was rapidly crushed and left multiple questions unanswered. The main notion that was important for the metabolist architects was "the making of the ephemeral", which can be traced to one of the most essential notions in the Japanese culture and for which the Ise shrine stands as a testimony. The Ise shrine illustrates how the Japanese understood memory and construction, as something to be remembered both in its making as well as in its destruction.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ For the architects that are studied here, 1969-70 marked a major turning point in the post-war growth of the country, and the decline in projects with international scope such as the Tokyo Olympics in 64 and the Expo'70.

¹⁴² Adams, C., *Japan's Ise Shrine and its Thirteen hundred Years Old Reconstruction*, in *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-), Vol. 52, No. 1 (Sep., 1998), pp. 49-60

In their essay, *Towards Group Form*, Maki Fumihiko and Ohtaka developed an analysis of the state of Japanese society and architecture that allowed an understanding of individual phenomena (the individual house, the connection to the network of highways, water systems and energy, agricultural towns, etc.) and their underlying relationships, while being aware of the limitations that urban design visual language capabilities can bring to answer the complexity of the issues confronting Japan. They wrote:

We now face a turning point in architecture and painting. Lately however, the criticism of functional architecture, the rise of regionalism, and the intense discussion of the relationship between tradition and modern architecture, all indicate that architects are again becoming interested in individuality and regional expression in building.[...] In architecture and urbanism, as in politics and economics, we must build up new concepts and methods that will not only strengthen the individuality of our visual environment but also endow the physical forms of our world with qualities that truly mirror our rapidly changing world.[...] This is an effort to conceive form in relationship to an ever changing whole and its parts.¹⁴³

They also challenged most of the basic teachings of modern architecture and planning. First, they rejected the idea of a master plan as a static concept, because it does not translate the ever-changing conditions of society and culture, and because it is not understandable until completed and fully implemented, which rarely happens. This criticism stems from the halted infrastructure projects around the country caused by the changes in laws and constitution after the end of the war, which had repercussions for territorial and city planning. Instead, they chose to adopt what they called a *master form*, a dynamic alternative of a city plan, made of parts that could be altered and removed. The master form would allow single architectures to fit in within the group

¹⁴³ Kawazoe, N. et al *Metabolism 1960: The Proposals for a New Urbanism*. Bitjutsu Shuppan Sha, 1960, p. 27

structure, which itself is elastic and dynamic enough to compose an image of the totality of the city while leaving enough freedom for specific alterations and withering.

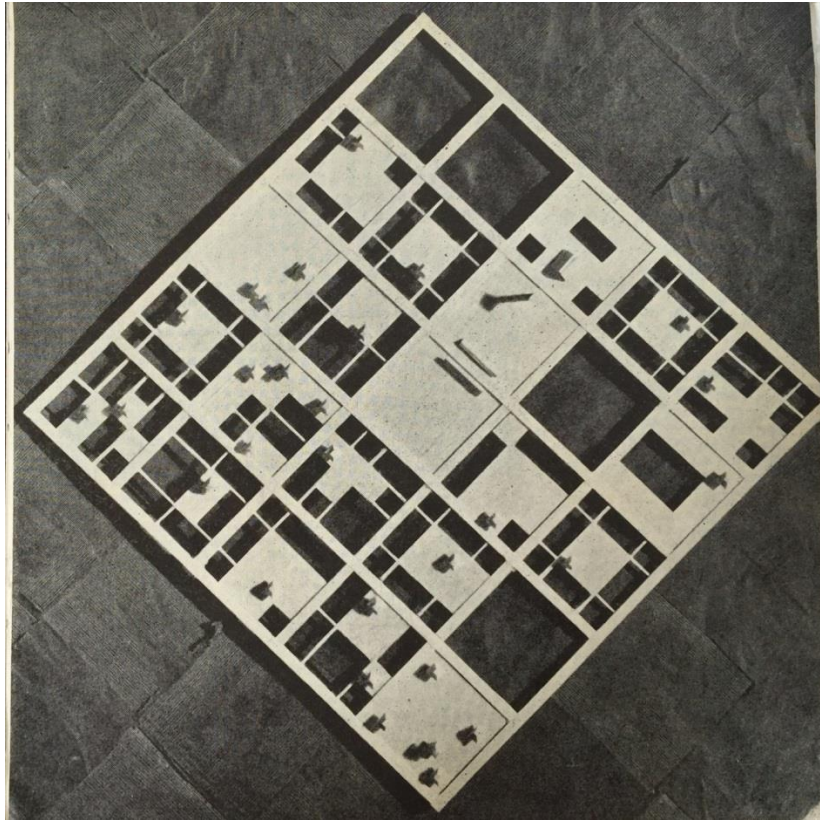


Figure 18: The agricultural city, Metabolism manifesto p 73

In addition to changing their understanding of city planning, they also redefined physical components such as wall, floor, shaft and unit. Their definition of these components is highly generic, and thus serves the purpose of allowing more freedom of material use. Their essay was supplemented with elevations, sections, and conceptual drawings, and photographs of physical models to illustrate their version of the concepts they aimed to bring to the profession of architecture and urbanism.

The manifesto is an example of how architecture can be a manifestation of a new awareness of one's tacit and formal knowledge post-disaster. The impulse that let the metabolist architects to seek creatively and imaginatively to renew their social reality

through architecture can be a critical social place wherein one can begin to establish new focal points of conversation about what long term social and cultural change can be triggered in part by architectural imagination and how. To reach such social awareness of change that happens across time, in the case of the Metabolis architects took 15 years.

This interest in connecting architecture to social awareness was also manifested in a now classic essay and poem by architectural critic Kawazoe Noboru. Kawazoe closed his essay for the metabolism movement manifesto with a literary production that sketched the complexity with which the critic was faced in this new age, regarding themes such as the role of architects, tradition, technological advances, etc.¹⁴⁴ The related poem specifically hinted at a critique of western architecture. Kawazoe understood the assimilation of western model (which he calls kami God) but rejected it and immediately wants to be one with the bacteria, which could be interpreted as wanting to become immediately integral with the culture, so he is merely a presence of the totality, making it present in the built environment.

I want to be a shell.

I want to be a shell. In the peaceful world I do nothing but opening and closing my shell. Nothing can be better than this. This is the “heaven of lazy people.” Soon the time will come that everything will be done by machine. The only thing we have to do will be dreaming.

It seems that I have become a shell, deep into all kinds of illusions. Suddenly I think of a wonderful plan. Yes, let's do it! It get up.

I want to be a god.

¹⁴⁴ Lin, Zhongjie. *Kenzo Tange and the Metabolist movement: urban utopias of modern Japan*. Routledge, 2010

I want to be a god. I hear the voice from the heaven. I am a prophet. Well maybe I am a god myself. I order architects to build four-dimensional “universal architecture,” so the plan must be drawn in three-dimensional geometry. Who will draw it? Masato Otaka? Kiyonori Kikutake? Or Noriaki Kurokawa? But the architects can only build three-dimensional space. I am the only one who can grasp the four-dimensional space. So I deserve to be a god.

I want to be a bacterium.

I want to be a bacterium. Mad, dogmatic, and fanatic are the negative words put on me. But being a god is too insipid. Perhaps I stick too much to the image of “myself.” I must cast away my self-consciousness, and fuse myself into mankind and solely become part of it. I have to reach the state of selflessness.¹⁴⁵

In the original Japanese version of the poem, Kawazoe chose to write the paragraph headings: *kai* (sea-shell), *kami* (god), *kabi* (bacteria) in katakana characters, which, at this point of Japanese linguistic history were reserved for foreign loanwords such as television, or foreigners’ names. The more commonly used characters are kanji (the Chinese symbols), which is the usual way to write these particular words. This shift, obvious to Japanese readers, suggests that he was proposing understanding traditional values in a different light without taking anything from their traditional meaning. The words would still sound the same, although they can be complicated to translate and need support from the social context to inform their meaning. In this way, culturally-laden words such as *kami* (god) are given a modern form, an industrial name.

¹⁴⁵ Kawazoe, N. et al *Metabolism 1960: The Proposals for a New Urbanism*. Bitjutsu Shuppan Sha, 1960, p. 27



Figure 19: To the right, a plate from the Sutra on Hell, to the Left, a night view from the Roppongi Neighborhood in Tokyo

Katakana, along with Hiragana, was developed originally in the 9th century, and originated from the Chinese calligraphy's cursive style. It was an aid to read the then newly adopted Chinese system of writing, *kanji*. Both alphabet systems have formed the basic corpus of the Japanese Alphabet. Hiragana, which was originally called *On'nade* 女手, was developed by the women of the imperial court of the early Heian era, and was used by them for their communications and for writing poems and diaries. Men used Hiragana as well, for writing poetry and love letters, and reserved the Katakana as a supplement to the official language and to translate the *kanji* characters in academic and religious documents and government transcripts. Starting in the 19th Century, in an attempt to homogenize the Japanese language, hiragana became used instead of katakana as the indication of the proper reading of *kanji*, but also to indicate the ending of verbs and adjectives, and to write postpositional particles, auxiliary verbs, and words without *Kanji*. Katakana, assumed the role of transcribing foreign words, borrowed words, Japanized English, foreign names and place-names, as well as

technical and scientific words, names of animals, plants, etc. it is still used to indicate the reading of kanji, though in rarer occasions.

Kawazoe was obviously aware of the role each of the alphabets and characters in conveying specific messages. His use of the katakana was therefore an intentional use of linguistic representation to translate not only the anxiety society was living between tradition and modernity, but also to hint towards a solution to the conundrum of tradition. Kawazoe included clues in his poem and his essay, which lead to the main idea that he, Tange, and the Metabolism architects were debating through the decades following the Second World War, which was the notion of modernizing tradition.

It is probably Kenji Ekuan, who was the only industrial designer in the metabolism group, and who was responsible of the design for the Shinkansen, the famous Japanese bullet train, that gave a testimony on the impact of the destruction brought by the war on the question of the national identity:

I thought we all needed to pitch in, to somehow recover the honor Japan lost in defeat so we could be recognized again as a proper member of the world community... yes, I wanted to help save our country both materially and spiritually. [...] Actually, when I stood in the ruins of Hiroshima shortly after the atomic bombing, I was suddenly overcome by a sense of personal mission. This is a true story. I lost some of my family to the bomb. [...] [I went back to Hiroshima after] twenty days. When evening came, the setting sun was just so amazingly beautiful, setting the horrific ruins aglow in its crimson light — it was as if the light of the western sun upon the atomic hellscape transformed it into a dazzling vision of paradise. The setting sun saved the relationship between the realm of things and the realm of people, the scene continued to have a primal significance in all I have done since. Experiences like that redirected my perception of the mutability of life from a sense of vanity and desolation to the sense that change drives new growth. I

vowed to pursue the kind of change that fit the need of Postwar Japan through industrial design.¹⁴⁶

- METABOLISM: BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Just as the war forced the society to rethink its identity, it forced architects to rethink tradition, and reexamine their professional role within via a new philosophical background. Kawazoe wrote in *Metabolism 1960-2011: The experiment of the 21st century*:

[after the war] The city planning method from the west was not effective at all in the face of Japan's reality. The tradition's debate revealed architects' dream for the city, and the desire of overcoming the poor industrialization of low-cost and low-tech patterns to catch up with the standard of America and Europe in terms of architecture¹⁴⁷.

[...]

Even when separated by distances too great to hear one another's voices, greetings were exchanged and answered. That became an incentive to live. I was able to imagine the revival of the town; I built a hut on the ground of a scorched field. Our dream was to discover a middle ground between the individual and the state, a secure frame in which to live. We hypothesized a situation in which traditional state power was partly dismantled and urban society blossomed. That World War II ended with the defeat of Japan was, I think, not at all disadvantageous for conceptualizing the reconstruction of the state, society, and cities after the war.¹⁴⁸

The reconstruction phase opened Japanese architects to various opportunities and challenges that differed both from the modernist teachings and orientations, as well as the traditional practices within Japan itself. In 1955, ten years after the end of the war, the editorial of the Architectural Culture - *Kenchiku Bunka* Magazine stated:

In sum, Japan is now at the intersection of four whirling trends: There are two opposing factions, namely the Ultra-modernism and the

¹⁴⁶ Kenji Ekuan, *Project Japan: interview in metabolism talks*, Taschen 2011 p: 479 - It is worth mentioning that Ekuan studied Buddhism for 5 years, hence this particular way of expression.

¹⁴⁷ Kawazoe wrote in *Metabolism 1960-2011: The experiment of the 21st century*

¹⁴⁸ Kenji Ekuan, *Project Japan: interview in metabolism talks*, Taschen 2011 p: 479

Conservatism while, in between, is found the group that may be called the modified faction. Furthermore, there exists the faction that is seeking to establish its own art on the so-called social realism. With their headquarters in Tokyo, they all are working aggressively, turning out worthy products.¹⁴⁹

Tradition and modernization discourses, up until that point in Japanese history, converged into seeking ways of modernizing tradition. It consisted, from an architectural perspective, either in classical buildings topped with Japanese traditional roofs, or in boxes devoid of ornamentation that symbolized the modernity of Japan. The acknowledgement that both tradition and Modernization/westernization of architecture are both key elements to both the Japanese identity found roots as a direct consequence of the destruction of Japanese cities in 1945. In 1959, when he was asked about his design for the Kagawa Prefecture Government Hall, Kenzo Tange said:

Until only very recently, Japan was under the control of an absolute state, and the cultural energy of the people as a whole, the energy with which they might have created new forms, was confined and suppressed. This was especially true in the Tokugawa period, when the government strove relentlessly to prevent social change. Only in our times is the energy of which I speak begun to be released. It is still working in a confused medium, and much remains to be done before the real order is achieved, but it is certain that this energy will do much to convert Japanese tradition into something new and creative.¹⁵⁰

Although it can be contested that the building has the elements of modern teachings (pilotis, plan libre, etc.), Kenzo Tange puts emphasis on the fact that traditional Japanese architecture was on the forefront of his thinking. A closer look at the building shows various references to traditional buildings, specifically the Ise shrine, the building that influenced Tange Most. The traditional values that transcended through

¹⁴⁹ Tange, Kenzo. *The reality of Japan in 1955 in the field of architecture*, Kenchiku bunka, The Architectural culture. Special Issue, Vol.105, 1955

¹⁵⁰ Tange, Kenzo, *An approach to Tradition*, in Shinkenichiku Vol.34 1959 pp. 55-58

space, found themselves represented in the murals, and in ideas of Japanese culture rather than in actual spaces, materials and techniques. This building was, according to Tange, an example of the rebirth of the Jomon thinking of the Japanese tradition, which Tange relates to some of the aesthetic considerations of modernism such as the use of concrete.¹⁵¹ Unlike the idea of origins of architecture expressed by most western thinkers in architecture, that places the notion of the primitive hut as the quintessential core of architectural elements, the Japanese idea of the origin of architecture is rooted in the notion of the temple. Tange saw the Ise Shrine as the origin of Japanese architectural concepts. Tange offered a reading of the differences between Japanese architecture and Western architecture as a consequence of the contrasted attitudes of the animistic relationship to nature of the Japanese culture, and the heroic attitude seeking to conquer it that characterised the western cultures. He says:

The entire later course of Japanese architecture starts at Ise. The use of natural material in a natural way (hence the familiarity with le Corbusier's *beton brut*), the sensitivity to structural proportions, the feeling of space arrangement, all originated here. I hold the view that there have been two strains within Japanese culture, the Jomon and the Yayoi, the vital and the aesthetic, and that the cultural development has been the history of their interplay. Here at Ise, the starting point of Japanese architectural tradition, these two strains are still insolubly fused¹⁵².

In the book *Ise: a Prototype of Japanese architecture*, first published in 1956 Kenzo Tange and Kawazoe Noboru paid tribute to the oldest shrine in Japan. The Ise shrine is considered the oldest and most sacred pilgrimage site for the Shinto religion in Japan and one of the most prominent buildings in Japanese architecture due to its simplicity,

¹⁵¹ The Jomon (10,000 BC to 300 BC) are named after their distinctive "cord-mark" pottery. Yayoi culture (300 BC to 250 AD) followed the Jomon period and introduced organized rice cultivation to Japan. Stylistic differences are pronounced between artifacts from these eras.

¹⁵² Tange, K. Kawazoe, N. *Ise: a prototype of Japanese architecture*, MIT Press 1965 pp. 98

ancient heritage and uniqueness.¹⁵³ It is also known for its 20 years reconstruction cycle that has been occurring since 690 AD, which is accompanied by more than 30 ritual ceremonies. It is one of the most significant buildings for Japanese culture and held a religious and sacred relationship to the imperial house as well.



Figure 20: a Minor shrine from the Ise Pilgrimage trail. the main Geku and Naiku shrines are forbidden to visitors.
Photo by Author

During the US occupation of Japan, the shrine's rites of reconstruction were put to halt, possibly because of the political unrest but also because of its symbolic political position as the residence of imperial ancestors that was disrupted when the US military administration declared that the emperor no longer held a divine position. It was only

¹⁵³ Adams, C., *Japan's Ise Shrine and its Thirteen hundred Years Old Reconstruction*, in *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-), Vol. 52, No. 1 (Sep., 1998), pp. 49-60

after the end of the occupation of Japan, that it was possible to resume the reconstruction rites and Kenzo Tange was invited to witness the shrine's renewal. Throughout the course of the book, the authors and photographer offer a reading of Ise shrine's importance in the historical continuum of Japan's culture and the site of origin of Japanese architecture. They correlated the creation of Ise's form and history with significant myths and religious symbolisms of the pre-Buddhist era, and highlighted the importance of this shrine as a key political factor in the Japanese collective imaginary, by retracing its form and spatial arrangement as a symbol that translates the beliefs of the early Japanese into space, such as the use of patterns to signify a state of mind, a season or even a deity.

Aside from the content of the text written by Tange and Kawazoe, which sheds light on the type of reflections and conversations that have been at the center of the nation's post WWII discourse on architecture, the fact that such a book was commissioned and took the interest of practitioners in architecture, is an indicator of the questions they were posing. This book shows a birth of interest in tradition, not for its revival but for its continuation. The idea of modernizing tradition required an attempt to understand tradition on a conceptual level that understands the rationale behind the form-making in order to allow it to evolve within the new (and continuously evolving) conditions of Japanese society.

The Ise shrine study prompted Tange's thinking about the place of tradition within the current discourse concerning Japanese identity and history. No doubt, the problematic position in which the Ise Shrine was placed during the occupation period, forced

Japanese society to rethink the mythical origin of the imperial family, and uncover a contemporary narrative more suitable to the shrine, Tange wrote on the subject:

Tradition by itself cannot function as the driving force of creativeness, but it always bears within itself the chance to stimulate creativeness. To find this chance I have roamed through tradition until, at its furthest limits, I was confronted by ise, by the fountainhead of Japanese tradition. I found the form of Ise; behind it lies primeval nature.

Out of it, out of nature's darkness, the vigorous conceptual ability of the ancient Japanese gradually fashioned various symbols of the spirit culminating in the creation of the form of Ise. Here primeval darkness and eternal light, the vital and the aesthetic, are in balance, and a world of harmony with nature unfolds. [...] The form of Ise will always challenge us anew with the question: "What are the symbols of the present?"¹⁵⁴

- METABOLISM, RESPONSE TO WAR AND THE HOUSING CRISIS

Rather than mystifying the movement as were the first reactions in the West,¹⁵⁵ like a non-western avant-garde, launched in the midst of Japan's postwar miracle, we can attempt to understand metabolism in direct relation to the events of destruction that happened in Japan. This can allow using the lessons from it to understand current architectural and identity crises related to reconstruction in post-disaster settings. After the war, there was a need to move away from the political system that reigned during Pre-war Japanese society. The Metabolism movement's creators were the first instigators of a large scale shift in architectural theories that reflected questions about traumas of the war, the technological threats, and the national identity that were posed

¹⁵⁴ Tange, K. Kawazoe, N. *Ise: a prototype of Japanese architecture*, pp. 67

¹⁵⁵ Bogner, Botond. *Contemporary Japanese Architecture, its development and challenge*. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985.

within the Japanese society after the war,¹⁵⁶ and allowed concepts of modern architecture to settle in Japan, while seeking concord with that culture's traditional ideas of space. While there was a need to use the West's economic models in order to reposition Japan in the world market, the debate concerning national identity, particularly in philosophy and architecture, focused not on adopting the same approach as the one that was to guarantee the economic prosperity of the country, but one that was looking back at the Japanese tradition to ensure the distillation of these notions that constitute the Japanese society's essence and recovering them in the contemporary forms of the new world order.

A close look at the proposals by the Metabolism movement along with Arata Isozaki and others shows that there was a serious interest in giving an alternative solution to the housing crisis, and to support the transformation of the Japanese society from a rural to a modern urban, while keeping cultural memory and past trauma within constructive reach. Although they seemed very far from the traditional settings of the Japanese home, these proposals were in fact inspired by them and innovatively channeled their essence.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

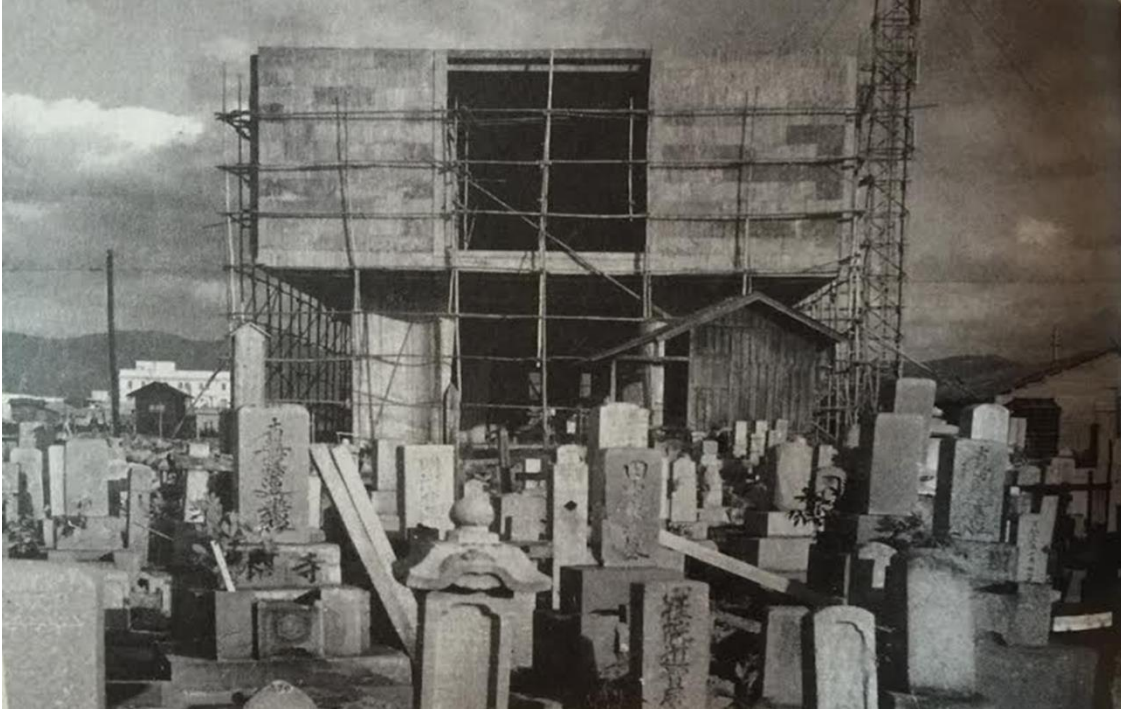


Figure 21: Tange's photographs the tombstones at ground Zero, while his museum rises just behind. This photo is a symbolic juxtaposition between the past and the future. In Koolhaas and Obrist, *Project Japan, metabolism talks*, 2011, p486.

The generation of Japanese architects that emerged after the war used the simple language of modernism, with a high tech set of materials (reinforced concrete, steel, glass panels..), but the details of the relationships between the outside and the inside for example; Kisho Kurokawa's metabolist proposal for a rural house was a mushroom house had similar spatial patterns to the traditional rural house and respected the local historical symbols.

The Metabolists connected losses of the war with the change that occurred. The same Mushroom House that was so culturally connected was also, ironically, reminiscent of the infamous Nuclear Mushroom Cloud, both in name and in form. Therefore they were inspired creating a new theory of architecture in which change itself became a key component. Change is a narrative tool that traditional Japanese architecture has always

used. By doing this, these architects succeeded in bringing the culture of Japan through the impasse of the destruction left after the war.

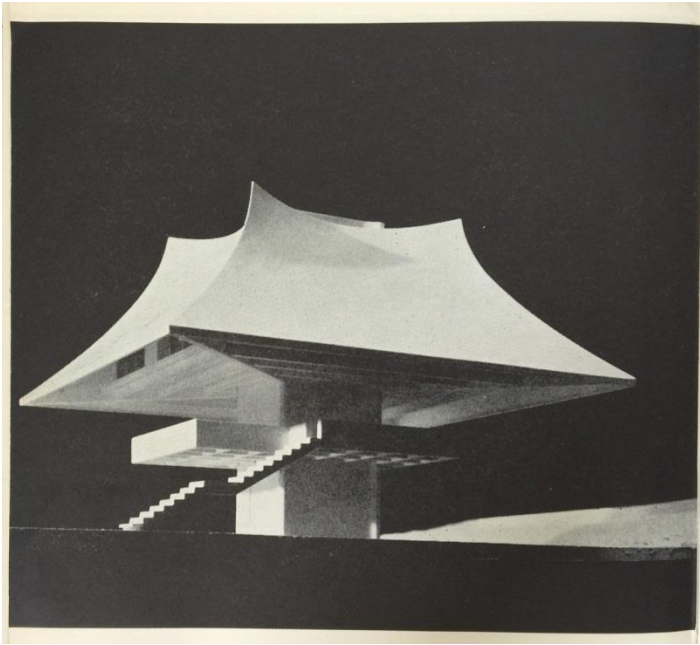


Figure 22: The Mushroom House by Noriaki Kurokawa, in Metabolism Manifesto 1960 p. 76

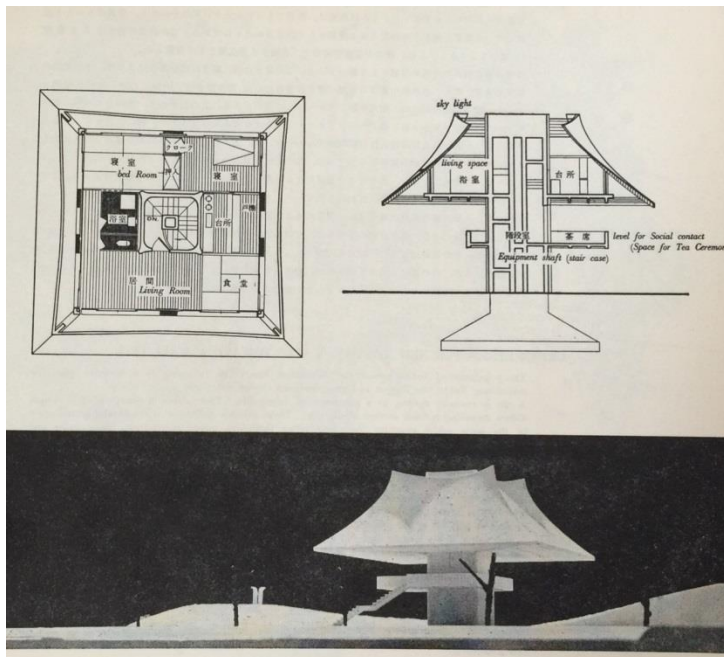


Figure 23: Figure 21: The Mushroom House by Noriaki Kurokawa, Floor Plan, elevation and model in Metabolism Manifesto 1960 p. 79

FINAL THOUGHTS:

A nation that was most faced with an unprecedented question of the possibility of humanity's end – due to the continuing threat of the nuclear war — and that saw its constituting core questioned, evolved, over time, to create, among other things, an architectural theory and practice where architectural creations are tied with memories of the past and hopes of the future. These architectural creations were translated in physical spaces infused with relics of the past that reinvented themselves and participated in setting the tone for what the new Japan was to become. It is through that long transition and boiling of ideas, individual experiences, and collective losses that the country's full recovery was achieved. The Metabolism movement and the architects that participated in its genesis are but some of the catalysts for that final healing of the social sphere as well as for the built space.

This period's influence can be read throughout the years that followed. Evidence of the influences of the post-war ideas and utopias that emerged from them can be seen in projects, writings and competition submissions by Japanese architects all until the late 1990s.¹⁵⁷ Bringing together the Japanese tradition and modernity that would propel Japan to the rank of major international players, was a decisive move from the post-war architects, as it allowed the society, to make peace with its past, and mend its own identity. The local architects' involvement in the housing projects guaranteed products that reflected exactly what Japanese were in the capacity to create, modern housing units that were able to face the challenges of land scarcity, the new family structures, and the booming urbanization of post-war Japan, all the while, preserving essences of

¹⁵⁷ Shin Takamatsu's project, talk about it – also quote the competitions from Shin kenchiku in the following years that mention inspiration or follow the steps of Kenzo Tange, Arata Isozaki, and the metabolists. Toyo Ito's projects often use the same language that was started by the metabolism as well

the traditional way of living (the tatami room, the shrine position, the Jomon purity of material, etc.).

INTERLUDE

What motivates the painter's movement can never be simply perspective or geometry or the laws governing the breakdown of color, or, for that matter, any particular knowledge. Motivating all the movements from which a picture gradually emerges there can be only one thing: the landscape in its totality and in its absolute fullness, precisely what Cezanne called a "motif."¹⁵⁸

The previous part demonstrated how time and change are important elements of the reconstruction continuum, to establish in order to understand how architecture and culture are affected by disasters. However, to draw a complete image of the impact of disasters one needs to address the role of the architect in the inverted realities of post-disaster reconstruction.

I am looking at post-disaster built environments as spaces that hold continuity within change. I argue that the importance of the architect's role in post-disaster reconstruction scenarios is to introduce these two seemingly contradictory notions together on a theoretical level, that of planning, not only physical planning, but in a broad sense of cultural acknowledgment of what the conditions of the social and political bonds become after a shock, and that of the unpredictability of changes in these social bonds after a disaster. Richard Neutra wondered whether planning is even possible, and whether that destiny can be design.¹⁵⁹ Habitus, according to Pierre Bourdieu, allows the analyst to understand how this continuity can be captured and documented, populations define their dispositions via an evolving amalgam of personal choices and pre-ordained cultural norms and values. Architectural habitus, that is the work within a system of architectural

¹⁵⁸ Merleau-Ponty, M. *Cezanne's doubt*, in *Sense and Nonsense*, Merleau-Ponty, M., 1964,

¹⁵⁹ Neutra, Richard, *Survival through design*, 1954

representation and constructive cultures and the understanding of these customs and rules, may be adapted and changed drastically after the shock of a disaster and under the stress of reconstruction, to the risk of it being considered a deviance. This change in the architectural habitus can be directly linked to the shock of a disaster and to the various stressors for those who practice architecture and make decisions related to space-making. Bataille, with his notion of general economy, opposes the classic economy, which is restricted to the use of limited resources to maximize the satisfaction of the material needs of human beings, and brings to light the importance of purportedly unproductive activities of society as a critical component of its equilibrium. This “accursed share”, as Bataille labels it, is the element that is missing from the post-disaster reconstruction processes as they are practiced today. This repressing of the accursed share does not allow for utopian projects, for example, to find their place and influence modes of architectural thinking in a setting such as that of reconstruction, where the scarcity of goods and time defines the material priorities. The two cases that I chose relate to this theoretical framework in two distinct ways: Japan, after World War II, saw an involvement of thinking of what space meant for architects and for society. Architects were prolific in proposing various scenarios of a new life in Japan, proving that taking into consideration concerns of no physical manifestation or direct products, foster a more profound understanding of social concerns. This also offers a case where I can describe the changing (architectural) habitus after a disaster. On the other hand, in Haiti, architects are not yet able to conceptualize the social and political stresses that occurred due to the disaster shock, and that can be explained within the frame of the absence of the accursed share in the case of Haiti, (with certain exceptions) but also can be a proof of a separation

between the modes of social representation and architectural representation. These mirrored each other on the case of Japan, but are disconnected in the case of Haiti, where architecture as a field of knowledge, is isolated from the social and political representation.

This complex notion of the relationships between our representation of our society and our actions within it and the representation of post-disaster space can yield to a significant division between the principles that govern both. As Bruno Latour (1947-present) has argued, the separation between the political and the scientific is an inherently modern way of perceiving the world. Purification,¹⁶⁰ an ontological understanding and separation of entities, and translation, that is a hybrid network of human culture and nonhuman nature, that creates new types of beings, are the two modes by which we make sense of the world. Japanese architectural movements, such as Metabolism, are an example in which both modes of thinking are present. Being modern, according to Latour, necessitates a constant separate consideration of these two modes of thinking. The moment we begin simultaneously to consider the two interacting, we stop being modern. A parallel can be made between the way we perceive our political realms in post-disaster reconstruction on the one hand and architectural practice and theory on the other hand. Latour explains:

The proliferation of hybrids has saturated the constitutional framework of the moderns. The moderns have always been using each of the dimensions (scientific and political) in practice, they have always been explicit about each of them, but they have never been explicit about the relation between the two sets of practices. Nonmoderns have to stress on the relations between them if they are to understand both the moderns' successes and recent failures, and still not laps into post-modernism. By deploring both dimensions at once, we may be able to accommodate the hybrids and give

¹⁶⁰ Latour, Bruno. *We have never been modern*. Harvard University Press, 2012.

them a place, a name, a home, a philosophy, an ontology and, I hope, a new constitution.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Latour, Bruno. *We have never been modern*. Harvard University Press, 2012. P.51

PART THREE: PORT-AU-PRINCE – HAITI AFTER 2010

“La boue rété courant.”¹⁶² (The mud stops the stream.)

“ We need[...] the government valuing architects. We NEED that space. We NEED that respect”¹⁶³

It may be argued that internal cultural mechanisms were strong enough to recover independently in Japan, while Haiti’s post-colonial culture that is part of the neo-colonial construct in which we devalue the local and assume without hesitation that we can and should impose dominant cultures, brought often, unknowingly, by well-meaning aid workers. Haiti is the “poster child” of humanitarian relief and international development, a term that epitomizes the major problems that these two fields often unwillingly create. The January 12th 2010 earthquake was the biggest earthquake recorded in the past 200 years in the region. The epicenter of the earthquake was at about 25 kilometers away from the capital city of Port-au-Prince, caused over 230.000 deaths, left more than 1.5 million people homeless, and resulted in an immense humanitarian crisis. This already severe situation deteriorated in the first year due tropical storms causing more destruction and a cholera outbreak, which raised the death toll at the end of 2010 to an estimated 300,000.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Fayo, N.A, *3333 proverbs in Haitian Creole: the 11th Romance language*. Editions Fardin, Port-au-Prince, p.209

¹⁶³ Matayer, Elrica, Interview by Karima Benbih, *Architectural practice in Haiti*. January 2015

¹⁶⁴ Oxfam report. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/haiti-earthquake-our-response> accessed August 18, 2016

I can vividly recall the seconds when [the earthquake] happened. It was long and motion was distorted. Everything was not flowing the way it normally do. And for days, it was just the continuation of those seconds. Everyone around did not yet understand what happened, the NGOs and the food crisis, the rubble, the corpses in the street... that's why, I think, that for so long, even as far as three, four years later, everyone in the street called the earthquake, not "seisme" (the French word for earthquake), but words like "Goudougoudou", which is the sound the earth made when it started shaking.¹⁶⁵

The earthquake caused an influx of pledged relief and reconstruction money that amounted to 5.6 billion US dollars,¹⁶⁶ while the United Nations reported that \$13.34 billion has been earmarked for both the relief and reconstruction through 2020, with a larger share of this amount being dedicated to long term reconstruction projects. A number of international aid organisations, sought to be involved in the relief period. The number of international humanitarian organisations in the country was 10,000. These international organizations often spent bigger portions of the pledged aid money on overhead and internal charges that did not go toward helping anyone, rather than on actual long term assistance to the Haitian population. For example, the independent non-profit newsroom ProPublica and National Public Radio (NPR) published internal budget documents for a Red Cross housing project in Campeche, a neighborhood in Port-au-Prince of poorly built shacks on the ravines after the earthquake.¹⁶⁷ The project's manager position was strictly reserved for an expatriate, who received allowances for housing, food, home leave trips, four vacations a year, and relocation expenses. "All of

¹⁶⁵ Laleau, Wilson, interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

¹⁶⁶ Schuller, Mark, and Pablo Morales. *Tectonic shifts: Haiti since the earthquake*. Kumarian Press, 2012. p.44

¹⁶⁷ Sullivan, L. *In Search Of The Red Cross' \$500 Million In Haiti Relief*. On NPR, June 3, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2015/06/03/411524156/in-search-of-the-red-cross-500-million-in-haiti-relief>, accessed August 18, 2016.

these totaled a whopping \$140,000. The top local position, by contrast — a Haitian senior engineer — earned just \$42,000.”¹⁶⁸

This is in part because there is an assumption that Haiti either lacks the requisite educational and professional culture, or that if those are available, they are not functional. The search for a local engineer to manage a project like Campeche would have also been a more daunting task to the INGO, specifically because this assumption leads to thinking that local engineers and professionals do not hold any true expertise, cannot function with the same ease as their western counterpart in a work environment provided by the western INGO. The researcher noticed a similar pattern during field visits to INGOs based in Port-au-Prince. One out of the seven qualified, graduate level Haitian architects working for INGOs held a position in which they are managing the design and implementation for new construction or retrofit projects. The rest had supporting roles of administration.

The truth is that Haitian workforce and professional expertise does not fit in what is considered as a valuable asset from the outsider, more dominant cultures. Uncovering what has not been evident to recovery specialists is also one of the purposes of this work. The awareness of a cultural context and an urban architectural tradition in Haiti amongst Haitians was seldom a serious consideration in strategies of reconstruction. However, Haitian architecture manifests itself in the role of local architectural professionals and in the traditions of urban and architectural practices in Haiti – the restoration of Gingerbread houses, Caribbean modernism, the Haitian house, the lakou system, and the Port-au-

¹⁶⁸ Baptiste, N., *Are Foreign NGOs Rebuilding Haiti Or Just Cashing In?* Foreign policy in Focus, July 10, 2015 <http://fpif.org/are-foreign-ngos-rebuilding-haiti-or-just-cashing-in/> accessed August 18, 2016.

Prince cathedral competition projects are examples in which architecture manifested to express the Haitian culture.

The long duration requirement for the assimilation and adaptation of local shifts in architectural and social habitus and cultural capital is essential to truly coming to terms with the social tensions and traumas of disasters, as reflected in the case of Post-WWII Japan. That was possible through an architectural historiography that traced architects' writings and projects over a long period of time, and which showed the impact of long-term social change on architectural thought, and therefore on the spatial outcome in the cities after disasters. We now turn to describe the role of architects' agency in catalyzing that change. Haiti's experience with disaster does not have the benefit of maturation over time as was the case in Japan. However, the professional and academic experiences of Haitian architects, urban planners and thinkers, after the 2010 earthquake, their analysis of them, and their thoughts on the future of their society, space and professions, are in a moment in time where they are being brought together, searching for focus and organization.

The documentation and analysis of architectural thought in Haiti accomplishes two goals: First, it demonstrates the existence of accomplished thinking about space and architecture among the architectural and urban professions and communities. Second, the research provides documentation of the shifts that began occurring after the 2010 earthquake, both on a social and cultural level, as well as in architectural expression. In doing so, this documentation and analysis present potential ways that international aid organizations, and also the local government of Haiti, may assist the burgeoning local efforts to define architectural practice in Haiti.

The history of Haiti, as well as the recent nature of the disaster, makes the sources used in this research based on anthropological research, field research, and extensive interviews with Haitian nationals and persons involved in the early recovery and the ongoing reconstruction. The methods therefore differ from the first part, which treated historical facts and analysis of trends and tried to understand them through the lens of architectural theory's shifts during disasters. By contrast, this second part attempts to collect narratives through the testimonies of Haitian architects and engineers interviewed. As much as the first part was based on architectural hermeneutics, the second part is based on disaster heuristics, speculating on possible results for the undetermined future of the cityscape of the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, and of the practice and thinking of architecture in the Haitian social context.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI, BACKGROUND

The reason for choosing to focus on architects from Port-Au-Prince, aside from the fact that it is the largest city in the country, is directly linked to the perception of Port-au-Prince in the collective imagination of the Haitian society. It is the country's center of intellectual life, art, trends and new ideas. One of the interviewees, a Haitian urban governance professional, said: "Port-au-Prince is not just a city, as by Western standards. It is a living creature, with its own will."¹⁶⁹ He believed that Port-au-Prince holds a symbolic significance in Haitian minds, as the City, an embodiment of Haitian history, success, and pride. In describing his specific interest in the Haitian capital, Mark Schuller, an anthropologist and specialist in Haiti, writes:

¹⁶⁹ Therasme, Kellogge. Interview by Karima Benbih, *Urban Planning Culture after the 2010 earthquake*, October 2015.

Port-au-Prince, for all its overcrowding and inequality and occasional violence, is also where people live, make their homes, earn a living, raise families, organize leisure time, and build communities. While it is crucial to fully comprehend the factors that led to the extreme vulnerability, it is also important to understand people's resilience, their capacity to survive and rebuild after catastrophic events¹⁷⁰.

The city was originally conceived during the reign of France on the island in 1749, on the low lands around the gulf of Gonaives. It was founded by the marquis de Larnage and named after the French ship "Prince," which anchored in the gulf in 1706. Port-au-Prince soon replaced Cap-Haitien as the capital of the French colony of Saint-Domingue. After the Haitian revolution (1791-1804) ended the French rule and brought about both independence and the abolition of slavery, Port-au-Prince became the capital of Haiti in 1804.¹⁷¹

The city was conceived as a grid that can accommodate 500,000 inhabitants and has not expanded since then. The French influence on the design of the city persisted long after the Haitian revolution and independence in 1804. There are currently, for example, over 200 Gingerbread houses in Port au Prince, in the neighborhoods of Bois Verna, Pacot, and Turgeau.¹⁷² Typically Haitian, the gingerbread style houses, with their intricate ornaments and sharp, arrow-shaped roofs reflect an important period of the post-colonial style and are the emblems of Haiti's architectural heritage.¹⁷³ They were designed in the late 19th and early 20th century by French-trained Haitian architects, but gained their names due to their resemblance to the small house-shaped fine pastry made out of ginger. They are known for their intricate design, use of wooden lattice work, large porches,

¹⁷⁰ Schuller, Mark. *Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti*. Rutgers University Press. 2016.

¹⁷¹ Accilien, Cécile; Adams, Jessica, Méléance, Elmide; Jean-Pierre, Ulrick. *Revolutionary freedoms: a history of survival, strength and imagination in Haiti*. 2006. Caribbean Studies Press. pp. 20-22.

¹⁷² World Monuments Fund. *Preserving Haiti's Gingerbread Houses*. World Monuments Fund: New York, 2010.

¹⁷³ Phillips, A. *Gingerbread houses: Haiti's endangered species.* 2000.

balconies and roofs with steep slopes, sometimes pierced through with turrets or towers. They are also distinguished by the presence of columns, cornices, balustrades, and eaves, often enriched with outdoor wooden fretwork. They usually include also galleries and outdoor verandas to lower the brightness and protect residences from strong frontal rain. The importance of high ceilings and oculi over the doors facilitate air circulation to fight against heat, a trait particularly suitable for the Haitian climate.¹⁷⁴ This type of housing model continued to be built until 1925, after which the government of Port-au-Prince changed the code to impose masonry and reinforced concrete for new constructions in response to urban fires.¹⁷⁵



Figure 24: Figure 24: Gingerbread Houses and Details. - HaitiCulture Galerie

The National Palace was built in 1912 by Georges H. Baussan (1874–1958), a prominent Haitian architect who graduated from L' École d'Architecture. It drew on the tradition of classic French architecture and greatly resembles the structures erected in France and in

¹⁷⁴ Pierre-Louis, M. D., *Restauration et valeur sociale de l'ensemble historique urbain des maisons gingerbread*. Museum International (Edition Francaise), 62: pp. 97–105.

¹⁷⁵ Fondasyon Konesans ak Libète [Foundation for Knowledge and Liberty] (FOKAL). *Saving the Gingerbread: Architectural Heritage in Port-Au-Prince*. Fokal: Port-Au-Prince, 2010

its colonial empire during the late nineteenth century. Before the earthquake, the white building had three floors and its entrance pavilion consisted of a portico with four ionic columns. The roof had three domes and 10 dormers and oculi. The cathedral of Port-au-Prince, consecrated in 1928, is another example of the French-European influence on the city, as is the Town Hall of Port-au-Prince, another creation of Baussan.

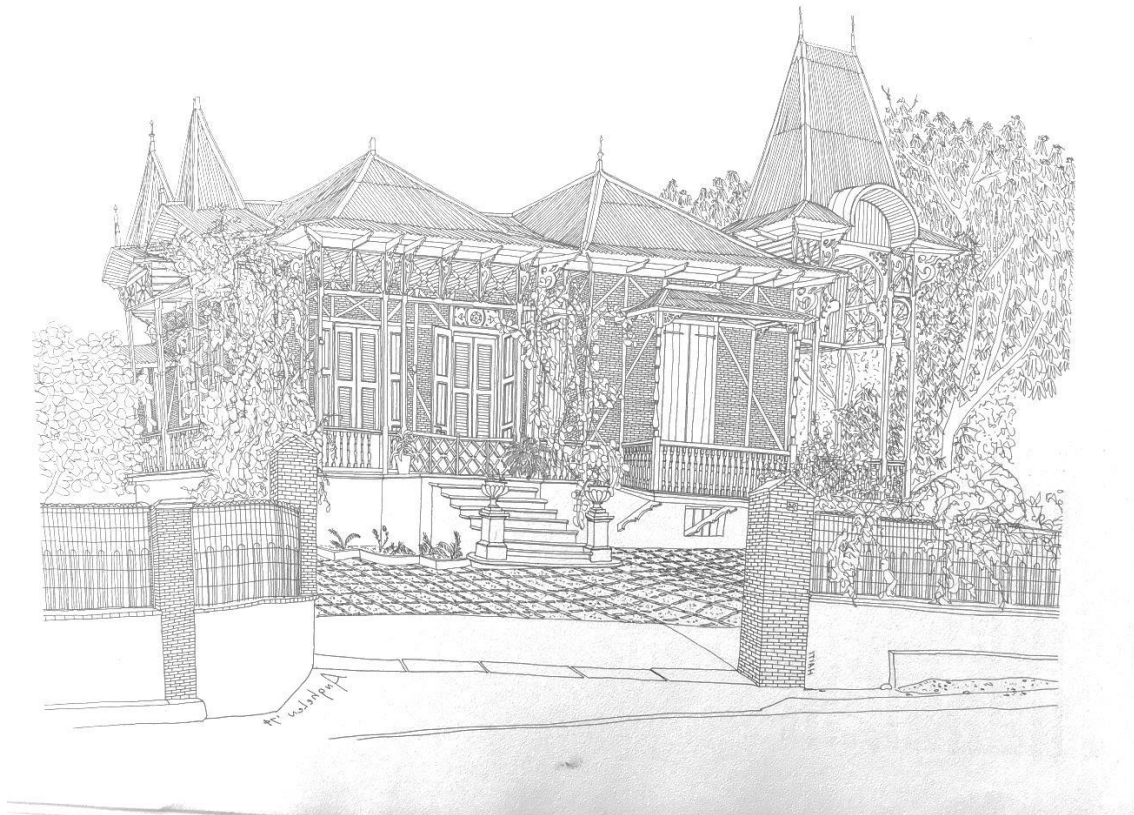


Figure 25: Gingerbread house drawing, by Anghelen Arrington Phillips in: *Gingerbread Houses: Haiti's Endangered Species*. p. 29

Along with the urban grid, the gingerbread houses, and the administrative and religious buildings were among the historic landmarks that distinguished Port-au-Prince from other Haitian cities. In fact, there was a rich tradition of local architects conducting local construction in Port-au-Prince, and leading the cultural and artistic life in Port-au-Prince. This is not to say that the Port-au-Prince of the end of the 19th century and the first half of

the 20th century was an ideal world. There were certainly, issues of class and political instability in the country. These issues did not, however, stop the flourishing of a cultural discourse in the Haitian society. Movements such as Saint Soleil, an art school of thought established by painter Louisiane Saint Fleurant and ceramist and painter Jean-Claude Garoute, had the conviction that culture should be an involved part in the foundation of a country so bruised by over a hundred years of unrest.¹⁷⁶



Figure 26: The National palace of Haiti, before the 2010 earthquake.

After the 1980s, the city, notwithstanding its limited grid and infrastructure, saw a boom in the population to almost two million. The expansion happened without prior preparation. Most of the wild lands, which were *non-aedificandi* zones, and the agricultural lands surrounding the city provided space for the incoming rural immigrants seeking a better life in the city. These no-build areas were taken over anarchically, and soon the city connected with other neighboring smaller conglomerations, through a network of slums. Most of the new residents found shelter in the slums that began sprawling on the mountains' flanks.

¹⁷⁶ Antonin Arnold, *Tiga: Haiti, Dream, Creation, Possession, Madness*, French, 2001.

When the 2010 earthquake took place, these non-serviced neighborhoods and slums,¹⁷⁷ home to most of the population of Port-au-Prince, and much of Haiti's informal wealth, were the ones that sustained the most damage. The middle and upper middle class also suffered severely from the destruction of their homes because the soil on which many of the neighborhoods were built was fragile. After the earthquake, the first reaction of many was to consider the disaster as a boon that would provide an opportunity to lay out a plan for the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince. Most of the neighborhoods that were developed due to the unplanned expansion of the city were being, up until January 2010, overlooked by the government due to political issues.¹⁷⁸ Pierre Attie, director of the Infotronics School of Haiti (Ecole Supérieure de l'Infotronique Haiti - ESIH) recalls during an interview in his office exactly 5 years after the 2010 earthquake:

There was a movement of national and international solidarity. Major services were provided that were not available before the earthquake (access to clean water, access to health care professionals, medication...) These base services are generally provided - or expected to be provided by the government, for a whole year. Water was dispersed around all the camps, [which were] informal settlements that emerged on the grounds of the destroyed grounds. That was a new thing. The first buildings that were rebuilt... were schools and universities... [It was an] excellent signal that [there was an] emphasis on rebuilding differently. But it did not continue due to the multitude of intervening parties... From microscopic NGOs to multinational interveners... Without any supervision from the shaken Haitian government....¹⁷⁹

There were a few untenable and eccentric propositions for Haiti's reconstruction, such as moving Port-au-Prince elsewhere. Eventually, neither the government nor international donors were able to muster the coordination efforts and even the budget to conduct the

¹⁷⁷ This presents a stark resemblance to the Great Fire of London case discussed above in Part One.

¹⁷⁸ Tufani, Noll, Interview by Karima Benbih, *NGOs work in Port-au-Prince*, January 17, 2015

¹⁷⁹ Attie, Patrick Interview by karima Benbih, *Culture and identity in the wake of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti*, January 2015

large projects the city needs. With limited and problematic budgets, the efforts shifted from a holistic perspective to an in-situ approach. The available funding and pragmatic efforts were then directed towards targeted acupunctural reconstruction with an emphasis on the informal settlements that did not receive any government attention prior the earthquake. Describing an interview with a young resident of Port-au-Prince on his experience of the earthquake rescue and life at the camps in the months following the earthquake, Mark Schuller writes:

Robenson, who is too young to remember life outside of Port-au-Prince, didn't say that the quake reinforced already-existing values and practices of solidarity. His new collective life, with even less privacy than in the shantytowns, provided a template for a new, hybrid, urban collectivist habitus/praxis.¹⁸⁰

As discussed earlier, this dissertation employs the anthropological method. Accordingly, the researcher conducted site visits in Haiti for the purpose of collecting data and interviews, as well as first person impressions. Port-au-Prince causes to her new visitor a vivid mix of enchantment and bewilderment. The dramatic change between the plain on which Port-au-Prince was built and the mountains is rivaled only by the tightly woven fabric of makeshift shacks clutching onto the mountain sides, covering their entirety. The color of the city is grey, which is not what is to be expected in a city on the Caribbean Sea. The dusty roads exacerbate the greyness of the shack-covered mountains surrounding the city. The only brightly colored spaces that marked one's movement around town were the tombs. The city has beautifully constructed tombstones with bright pink and green and yellow paint. This method of above ground burial is deeply rooted in the Vodoun culture and can also be found in Louisiana.

¹⁸⁰ Schuller, Mark. *Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti*. Rutgers University Press, 2016.



Figure 27: Port-au-Prince's ravines slums. - Figure 28: Grand Cimetiere de Port-au-Prince.

Ironically, the other brightly painted element of the city is the slum of Jalousie, bordering the new middle class neighborhood of Petionville. In an effort to beautify the slums of Port-au-Prince, the then newly appointed president of the Republic, Michel Martelly, made the highly controversial gesture of painting the facades of the neighborhood in shades of bright greens and yellow and pink.

Moving around the city on the back of a motorbike or in *taptap* buses - brightly colored little pickup trucks is the way most Haitians commute. The hilly nature of the city, the high level of pollution and the bad road conditions make these modes of transportation physically challenging. Nevertheless, they allow for a view of Port-au-Prince residents inhabiting the street corners, the corridors and the steps of buildings and plazas.

The researcher's first week in Haiti was spent meeting with various people of interest, who were not directly part the study, including city administrators, academics, a minister, and representatives of various NGO workers and international organizations. The

conversations with these individuals provided insight into how many educated Haitians perceive post disaster efforts, and their perception that the many of the challenges they face were not caused by the earthquake. They also allowed for an introduction to the big picture of the situation in Haiti, and permitted this researcher an immersive experience myself in the day-to-day life of the working middle class of Port-au-Prince

Many of the initial phase interviewees were interested in the notion of starting with the individual perceptions of their society and their city, in order to construct urban plans, neighborhood plans, and also laws and regulations. When asked about the rural vs urban cultures, many concurred that much of Port-au-Prince is still based on a rural spatial program, but that new family structures are emerging post- 2010 which no longer fit within hierarchy of the traditional Haitian *lakou*, a rural system of family housing units revolving around a central courtyard. It derives from the French word “la cour” – the courtyard, translated to the Creole *lakou*.¹⁸¹ The Lakou dwelling system gradually emerged in the seven decades after the abolition of slavery as an egalitarian alternative to the plantation system of slave housing. By contrast, slave housing was often designed in linear, small group huts, where gathering spaces were not possible, thus inhibiting the emergence of collective identity.¹⁸² In the Lakou system, community bonds are strengthened under tightly woven familial systems, which governed the social, economic and cultural capital and allowed a unique post-slavery habitus to emerge. It also crystallized Haiti’s West-African past, the plantation’s experiences and the revolution’s new hopes of the future together in a present that allowed, for the first time, agency for Haitians.

¹⁸¹ Merilus, Jean-Yves, *Rural Development: The Economic Potentials of Haiti's “Lakou” System*. Vol 58, Issue 1, January 2015, pp.s 36–45

¹⁸² Pierre, Luc, *Haiti : itinéraire et filiation : vodou, lakou, esclavage et identité* p. 151-157.



Figure 30: Entrance to rural Lakou just north of the capital,

The Lakou system has certainly been part of the agricultural economy of Haiti, as it provided for its members' shelter, food, and clothing, as the harvest is shared among the group of lakou residents and transaction of goods produced in the lakou happened regularly with neighboring Lakou. It offered an independent, self-reliant, and neutral environment for rural Haitian citizen to function under the radar of the successive oppressive regimes that controlled Haiti after its independence. As anthropologist Laurent Dubois noted: "everyone is subject to a kind of reciprocal control from family and neighbors that maintain the delicate balance required for an egalitarian existence...conflicts are often softened by intensive habits of hospitality."¹⁸⁴

Just like the urban Gingerbread houses, the rural lakou is a Haitian spatial answer to various issues that unfolded through time via experiences of politics, social relationships,

¹⁸⁴ Dubois, Laurent, *Haiti: the aftershocks of History*, 2012, p.108

and climate. It is a result of the sedimentation of life experiences, and in a sense these are the equivalent of Japanese examples such as Ise shrine.



Figure 31: Mystery reconstruction project in fort-national Ayiti kale-je

The movement of individuals and families from villages to cities, especially to Port-au-Prince, accelerated the city's expansion of slums, in which smaller forms of *Lakous* with modified sets of habits and codes emerged before the earthquake. Family members often joined together in child care and acts of "solidarity," where food and goods were shared by those who have it among the group, with the expectation that one would be taken care of when needed.¹⁸⁵ However, generational gaps have emerged. For example, certain middle aged portions of the population that recently moved to the city from rural areas recreate similar behavioral, and therefore spatial, patterns to those in a rural setting. The immediate next generation, however, is often disconnected from their parents' modes of living, making them more amenable to living in apartment buildings, and cooking in indoors kitchens, after the earthquake in the humanitarian structures designed for nuclear

¹⁸⁵ Schuller, mark, *Haiti: Humanitarian Aftershocks*, 2016.

families. Indeed, the humanitarian aid offered service packages that targeted nuclear families, and in doing so, failed to recognize the various relationships between families or the spatial implications for them, specifically in terms of shelter and medical assistance. One example of this phenomenon is that social norms haven't necessarily caught up with the notion of single mothers, single women, or the elderly living alone. Yet, these groups were specifically targeted with aid assistance, which precipitated the acceleration of the generational transition from a rural family system to an urban one. Unfortunately, the urban realities of the residential stock and the cultural understanding of it need yet more time to absorb such changes.¹⁸⁶

Another element that changed after the earthquake from an urban perspective is the migration of the urban center from the Bas de la Ville (low land) to Petionville. Bas de la Ville lost its middle class after the Duvalier dictatorship. The 40 years prior to the earthquake saw a change in the downtown area structure with the middle class becoming a targeted of gang violence and riots due to its proximity to the main arteries and the palace. This caused existing businesses to remain open only during the daytime and leave the neighborhood at night. This neighborhood, a major part of the original planned grid of the city was heavily damaged in January 2010. Instead of rebuilding their initial boutiques and businesses, the population that was working there mostly decided to move out, given that it was already socio-politically dangerous and non-profitable. Suddenly, the money that was going to be infused into that main neighborhood of Port-au-Prince saw a spatial movement towards Petionville, leaving the downtown to a stark future. Petionville is currently in a period of densification and modernization, due to the movement of economic capital, and also the social and cultural capital towards it. Old

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

structures, villas from the Caribbean Modernism era in Haiti, one and two story buildings from the Duvalier era were razed and gave way to higher rise building (5 to 7 stories buildings) with methods of construction that are new to the Haitian context (examples include the telecom company Digicel tower and the Marriot Hotel). As Martine Clerrobrun, architect and committee member of the national college of Haitian architects (CNIAH) said to this researcher in an interview:

In a way, from an urban planning perspective, investors threw in the towel on the downtown.¹⁸⁷

As a response to this, the government saw this aversion towards downtown as an opportunity to use the land to create an administrative corridor *Cite Administrative* with the “Cour de Cassation”, and the Parliament as small islands in the middle of downtown in the hope that these buildings will drive development in the rest of the urban fabric around them.¹⁸⁸

EXTERNAL EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY EFFORTS:

Major humanitarian organizations focused on specific neighborhoods with funding from large international institutions as the government did not and does not to this day have the capacity to undertake tasks of urban construction or urban renewal. NGOs and entities that have expertise in assisting small informal settlements and rural recovery and development found themselves challenged with functioning in a dense urban environment in need of creating a system to make the city function. These NGOs were in a position to start on smaller scale, retrofitting, and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) projects. When they had a larger budget, these organizations were able to work towards providing

¹⁸⁷ Clerrobrun, Martine, Interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015

¹⁸⁸ David, Odnell, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

schools and clinics in their neighborhoods.¹⁸⁹ These latter projects had a long term perspective, but were isolated and not part of any systematic approach. Governmental institutions, such as the Inter-ministerial Commission of Territorial Planning, (Commision Interministerielle de l’Amenagement du Territoire or “CIAT”), have been working towards setting forth a more holistic vision, such as a general cartography for the metropolitan region, an urban matrix, and a risk cartography. Nevertheless, six years after the earthquake, these remains a lack of guiding documents to lead the reconstruction efforts and organize the civil society, thus leaving the local professionals and international actors, to piecemeal projects and unclear long term strategies.¹⁹⁰

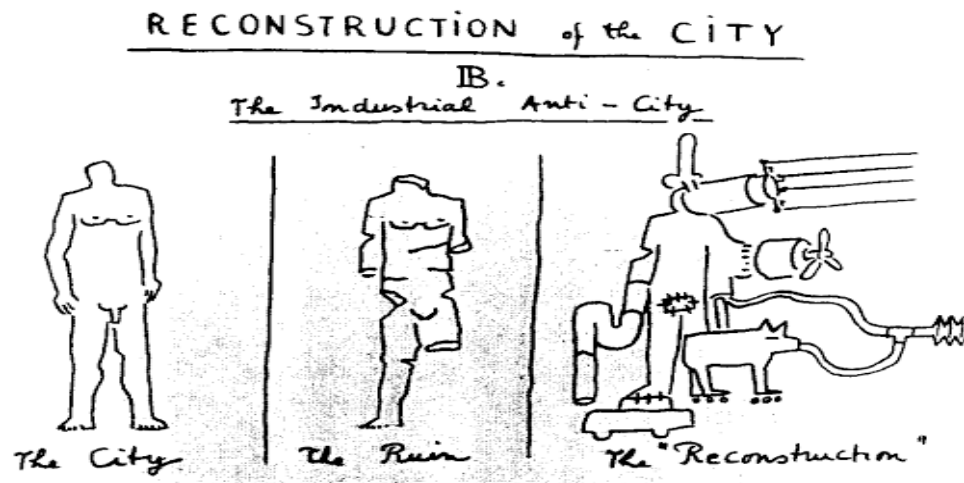


Figure 32: Leon Krier, Found in Marco Frascari’s : The body and Architecture in the drawings of Carlo Scarpa

Independent of external pressure, the government recognized that the funds available for reconstruction projects would allow an opportunity to remake the majority of the city’s arteries, and that this action could be easily justified to the local population. This meant not just repaving the current streets, but creating new ones and enlarging the existing

¹⁸⁹ Tufani, Noll, Interview by Karima Benbih, *NGO work in Port-au-Prince*, January 2015

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

ones, often at the expense of a population that developed their housing and businesses in accordance with the pre-existing main streets and arteries (often infringing on the boundaries of private/public lands). Nevertheless, Haitians were generally satisfied with the approach, because most were aware that the quality of life and the value of businesses would be enhanced.¹⁹¹

Many NGOs had small portfolios and pressing deadlines to disburse the grants allocated to them by international donors, and thus, while they were often aware of the long term impacts and risks, did not wait for longer term, larger perspectives before formulating their action plans. The NGOs that were more successful, acted in a highly localized manner, creating small cartographies and risk maps, design charrettes, roads, access to electricity points and independent water systems, ravine reinforcement, corridor and stair reconstruction, and drainage for their neighborhood of actions. The government, which was overwhelmed and incapacitated during the first weeks after the earthquake, performed an ex post facto, wherein it mapped the activities by the various NGOs with their communities and tried to establish certain principles coordinating and unifying the efforts of NGOs. The NGOs frustration at the government is reflected in this researcher's interview with Global Communities Program Director, Nubar Goudsouzian who stated the following:

This may be considered as an easy criticism, but the different priorities between the donors and NGOs on one side, and the government on another. In a general sense, the government did not have the capability to device proper planning for the actions to undertake after the earthquake, due to the lack of resources, and the obsolete nature of most of their urban documents. So the Government projects are all projects that extend beyond the time frame that limited in time.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ David, Odnell, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

¹⁹² Goudsouzian, Nubar, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

Following the earthquake, the interaction between the international communities and local entities had many consequences for Port-au-Prince's urban fabric. The densification of the informal settlements and consequent disappearance of the urban *lakou* due to the lack of land and the distortion of the housing market towards new forms of housing options such as *Piec kaye* (*piece a louer* – room to rent) are among the most prominent. The humanitarian assistance primarily targeted the poorest of the poor, often to the detriment of other possible beneficiaries, especially the middle class. Thus, NGOs and interventionists poured effort and resources in building, retrofitting and upgrading in slum structures that are sometimes as small as 12 square meters while disregarding 200 square meters houses and businesses. As per Jean Michel, a Haitian engineer at Global Communities:

In my opinion, [the focus on the poorest of the poor] was a continuation of the camp period.¹⁹³ It is a Band-Aid solution to a big wound in the city. If there is a tropical storm, even those retrofitted houses were not going to survive, the areas are just not equipped for rainfall. It was just a lot of energy wasted. And it caused a lot of dissatisfaction among people, because in the meantime there is no incentive for business creation, and it is difficult to get¹⁹⁴

In addition, the international aid community, and the Haiti reconstruction Committee, (which was established in 2010 to oversee the projects of reconstruction) were under criticism from funders, investigative journalists, and the civil society in the West that echoed the frustrations of Haitians. The uproar about the lack of vision and the deteriorating situations in the cities led to a reconsideration of action plans and strategies.

¹⁹³ Right after the disaster more than 150 emergency tap camps, most of which were spontaneous emerged in and around the public spaces in Port-au-Prince, as well as private empty lots. It took 4 years for all camps to be dismantled and for more durable housing solutions.

¹⁹⁴ Michel, Jean, engineer at Global Communities, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

The international donors focus now on infrastructure programs and long term solutions such as the rehabilitation of public infrastructure, the improvement of community spaces and access to basic services such as water and sanitation.

THE HAITIAN ARCHITECTURAL COMMUNITY AND THEIR STATE OF MIND AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Following the preliminary investigation, which provided clues for the direction of this research, I established three main themes around which the investigation revolved: Haitian identity; changes in the practice of architecture in the years that followed the earthquake; and the political and social issues present in the minds of architects during the process of designing and constructing their projects. The focus on Haitian architectural practitioners and academics, as well as architects working for NGOs, aims to capture any possible similarities with the Post-War Japan case, of how architects process and perceive the traumas resulting from disasters. The individual local architects and local architecture professionals interviewed for the purpose of this research was decided upon nationality, availability, and was spread between three main sectors: governmental agencies, private sector, and international development. At the time of their interviews, five of the architects were working at a high level capacity within governmental agencies such as the Housing and Public Buildings Construction Unit *Unité de Construction de Logements et de Bâtiments Publics* or “UCLBP”, the Ministry of Public Works, Transportation and Communication, *Ministère des Travaux Publics, Transports et Communication* or MTPTC, and the Inter-ministerial Committee for Territory Planning *Comité Interministériel d’Aménagement du Territoire* or CIAT. Another five were partaking in private practice and education and the remaining five

were working for International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) working directly on the reconstruction of Port-au-Prince. The expertise of the interviewees ranges from young architects with 5 years or less experience, to senior architects and professors at the State University of Haiti. This set of 15 interviews aimed to capture a wide range of opinions and political views as well as coverage of new trends among different architecture coalitions and groups.

A questionnaire was developed based on the lessons garnered from the study of the Japanese post-disaster reconstruction. The items of the questionnaire aimed to analyze changing thoughts and practices of architecture in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. The methodological choice was semi-structured interviews, which allowed for open-ended questions and conversations rooted in trust and sharing between the interviewee and the interviewer. This allowed for in-depth discussions around the three major themes that were selected in the historical study, and their manifestation in the Haitian context.

The interviews took place between January 2015 *in situ* in Port-au-Prince, and in the months of September through December 2015, over phone and via Skype. The majority of the interviews were led in French. The audio records were then transcribed, translated, and then each transcript was reviewed. Key words and ideas were identified from these transcripts and categories we formulated based on them. Some of these categories are: local definitions of architectural utopias in Haiti, change in urban practices, architectural education and practice, etc. Verbatim examples that explain both the context and the opinion of the interviewees were selected to be included in the writing of the dissertation.

The interviewees were unanimous in their eagerness to discuss the reconstruction of Haiti. Most participants were happy to have the opportunity to voice their concerns about social change in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. It was difficult for some participants to provide clear answers regarding certain issues given the current frame of thought in architectural practice and education. Accordingly, there were instances in which certain questions were rephrased. Nevertheless, there was a sense that all the interviewees were on the same page on the crucial questions regarding their profession and how it is to play a critical role in the social shifts that in Haiti in the near future.

As noted above, the interviews were centered on questions of Haitian identity, changes in the practice of architecture following the earthquake, and political and social issues relevant to the process of designing and constructing projects. These themes mirror the researcher's findings from the historiographic study of Post-war Japan. The well-documented change that occurred in Japan, manifested through a long stretch of time, and was later recognized as providing a unique perspective on the impact of disaster on architectural theory and practice. Haiti on the other hand, is in the midst of that change, with a different environment and outside factors that are playing a major role in this critical moment of the history of the country. It has also passed the emergency phase and is now attempting to rebuild itself after the disaster. Accordingly, it is an ideal candidate to assess how disaster, and its framing within a historical continuum allows for change in the expression of architectural practice and theory. A Haitian architect, working for an NGO after losing her practice due to the earthquake best explained this vertiginous change over a short span of time that happened to most Haitians:

The earthquake changed everything for me and my family, and for my practice. The earthquake changed our day-to-day life in ways that I am

still learning to deal with. I am very pessimistic about the future, because the present situation is just not right.¹⁹⁵

Another interviewee, who is a private practice architect with over 25 years of experience, started the interview with a complaint:

There is a hospital in Jacmel that is being built right now, funded by the Canadian Red Cross and the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). It will replace the General Hospital of the city that collapsed and that was looted after the earthquake. The company that is in charge of building it has a Canadian engineer that oversees the project; with a Japanese architect and a Spanish contractor company ... of course they are hiring Haitian workers to carry bricks.¹⁹⁶

These reflections offer a fertile ground for investigating how architects incorporate their lived experiences in their current practice, and how practices changed in the years after the 2010 disaster. The turmoil of the earthquake's consequences has not settled yet, and many architects are still struggling to adapt and find new patterns of action and agency around realities that are often dictated by outside forces.

LOCAL ARCHITECTS AND HAITIAN IDENTITY UNFOLDING THROUGH TIME:

The question of Haitian identity was the most contentious among the architecture community. Nevertheless, there was a distinct recognition of mistakes that have led to the disappearance of memory and heritage since the earthquake, especially due to the opening of the construction market to international competition, and to the urgency of implementing projects with a short funding life span and with heavy requirements imposed by donors. Elrica Matayer, a Haitian architect working for an international NGO, commented on the current practices of building:

¹⁹⁵ Beauboeuf Joie, Marilyne, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

¹⁹⁶ Delatour, Patrick, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

Because of the rebuilding of Haiti, people have forgotten about architecture. Everyone started focusing on how building had to be earthquake resistant... So there are a lot of boxes everywhere and that's it... And there is no architecture, they don't understand that all what we are rebuilding is a way to give us a face, a name [...] and also I guess, an identity specific to today's Haiti.¹⁹⁷

The slow disappearance of memory is exacerbated by grafted outsider notions related only to disaster safety, such as seismic building design and resilient design, which became in order to have access to grants.¹⁹⁸ These concepts are often implemented in space by designers from outside of the country, who, although having the best intentions, still attract the anger of the local construction professionals, who feel they do not have the possibility of expanding their knowledge and practice in their own country. As Haitian architect Patrick Delatour said:

Of course there won't be any architectural "cachet" to the new Haiti, as long as our schools and public buildings are designed by people who are not Haitians. Their agenda is different. You get a project commission, if the only thing you know about its context is its last earthquake and its poverty, and your mandate requires that you do a para-seismic building; you are not going to bother with any truly architectural design.¹⁹⁹

Elements from the arts, architecture, language and social practices are associated with a notion of identity, and can be tracked in order to determine whether they underwent changes because of the sociopolitical crisis caused by the earthquake. These elements included the model of the *lakou* house, the rituals and music of religious ceremonies, the struggle of *Kreyòl ayisyen* (Haitian Creole) over French as the official language, and the

¹⁹⁷ Matayer, Elrica, Interview by Karima Benbih, October 2015

¹⁹⁸ The UNOCHA defines resilience as the ability of communities and households to endure stresses and shocks. According to the organization's position paper on resilience, communities and households are resilient when they are able to meet their basic needs in a sustainable way and without reliance on external assistance. Resilience is therefore an end state that implies that vulnerable communities and households have: 1) the capacity to maintain basic functions and structures during stresses and shocks; 2) access to a range of skills and resources that allow them to adapt to changing circumstances; 3) the ability to anticipate, prevent, prepare for and respond to stresses and shocks without compromising their long-term prospects.

¹⁹⁹ Delatour, Patrick, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

language of culture, and the dilemma of immigration and its effects on the notion of one's sense of place. On language, Wilson Laleau, Haitian Minister of Economy and Finance said:

The *Kreyòl ayisyen* is an important part of our culture, and as long as we do not recognize it for its true value, we will never be able to rise as a society with its own culture. That is why, since the earthquake, you see that all the government ads and most of the documents that circulate are attaching a special value to using Creole as the main language of communication.²⁰⁰

About half of the interviewed local practitioners believed that traditional values in Haiti did not suffer radical changes due to the earthquake, and point out that this change had started earlier during the dictatorship era. Mark Schuller, however, has observed a radical change within the Haitian household since the earthquake, particularly among camp and slum dwellers. He argues that this change results from the way humanitarian aid was provided. The typical household, which formerly extended organically based on housing arrangements, such as the traditional *lakou*, is now divided into multiple single-parent families, often with young women, responsible for young children, serving as heads of households. One of the quintessential and unique elements of the Haitian constructive culture, the *lakou*, is therefore on the verge of disappearing in the urban Port-au-Prince, partially due to the earthquake emergency response consequences on the Haitian social fabric.²⁰¹ This structure remains in the cultural mindset of the Haitian collective consciousness. When asked on the subject of the *lakou*, the architects interviewed responded that while the space can be changed, the concept has not disappeared. In other words, simply viewing the *lakou* as a rudimentary rural spatial

²⁰⁰ Laleau, Wilson, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

²⁰¹ Mark Schuller, Haiti: Humanitarian aftershocks. 2016.

arrangement neglects its important role in fostering social bonds. According to David Odnell, an architect with the UCLBP:

The *lakou* spirit still exists in the city. I disagree with people who say that it is a rudimentary form that you can only find in the village. It is more than that and it is finding ways to reinvent itself. We may not find the same spaces, but its principles are still finding way through our solidarity. We [UCLBP] have been working with various neighborhoods, organizations and construction specialists to avoid the denaturation [deculturation] of our urban fabric, and it is visible through a lot of the projects that the UCLBP spear-headed²⁰².

The *lakou* form has emerged under different forms in the new buildings that these architects are designing and building after the earthquake, projects for which they face a tremendous amount of pressure from various stakeholders. For example, one of the interviewees, Marilyne Beauboeuf Dejoie, an architect working for an International NGO as head architect and project manager, designed an apartment building in the context of a slum upgrade project in Ravine Pintade in Port-au-Prince. She first led an inquiry in the neighborhood for which funds were secured through the NGOs and found a group of nine families that shared a common understanding of solidarity and friendship, and who were willing to relocate together, perpetuating the *lakou* solidarity spirit. She says:

It has been a struggle for our project to take off at the beginning, because so many ideas are new to the people that we are building these small apartment buildings for, such as a two story building, or the request we had of them to give up the land their shacks were on in exchange for the finished apartments. It required from them to relocate to their neighbors shacks sometimes and was not an easy thing to accept. The design tried to recreate the social pattern that the neighborhood has developed since the earthquake. There is a collective semi-private open courtyard that the residents can use for social gatherings, laundry and cooking. Another aspect was that the residents living in these two story buildings are neighbors, or have some familial/social ties, since they had been living in a commune for a long time before we intervened.²⁰³

²⁰² David, Odnell, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

²⁰³ Beauboeuf dejoie, Marylin, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

The project consists of building two story apartment buildings to replace the shacks that families built on the ravine after the earthquake. It responds to the resilience and seismic preparedness requirements, but through locally unique characteristics of social housing. The project found traction among the slum dwellers after the success of the pilot phase. The strength of the building, its servicing possibilities, its legitimate aspect (and the promise of land titles by the government), as well as its openness to decision by the inhabitants distinguished this project from other housing solutions offered as reconstruction programs. Given the scarcity of land in the Haitian capital, each group of 8 to 9 families living in a certain plot of land, gave up their claim to that land and the structures they lived in, in exchange for a new construction on the same spot that is earthquake resistant and in accordance with the city's building regulations. The design suggested a two to three story buildings, with a common area that recalls the *lakou* yard shape, with almost all of its functions. According to Jean Michel:

Inside the apartment, there is not much space. Due to the climate, people spend a lot of their time just outside of the house. So we tried to include features of semi-private, semi outdoors spaces between apartments.²⁰⁴

Although most *lakou* are created due to family bonds, usually with a patriarch in the main house and extended family members surrounding the yard, the effects of the disaster caused neighborhoods, particularly in slums, to form solidarity among various families. Some of these families agreed to rescind their claim on the land on which they lived, in exchange of ownership of apartments in the new buildings. The design and construction were carried out successfully. This project is one of the manifestations of a physical shift - building higher -which was not a possibility before, and it reflects an attempt to recreate the *lakou* with a different spatial- vertical approach. It also is formalizing areas that used

²⁰⁴ Michel Jean interview by Karima Benbih January 2015

to be slums. This new spatial configuration of the *lakou* seems to be a direct effect of the disaster.²⁰⁵ Moreover, because the project has been designed and implemented by a local team, the imposed outside standards fit with the local existing habitus. Another interviewee, Nancy Laconte, Haitian architect with Build Change, an international NGO specialized in retrofitting, in answering the question about the design of the Haitian house, says:

A Haitian house is very special, you know, just basic things that you can find in the rich villas as well as in the poorer neighborhoods, in one form or another. It is more about the outdoor space than it is about the enclosure. We have a gallery, an indoors kitchen and an outdoors kitchen, we have yards and spaces for airing laundry, and guest living rooms. The levels of intimacy, where you are invited as a guest of the house determine how familiar you are with your host. Our living room furniture has plastic on it because it has to be spotless for when visitors come. Those are small things, but they play a major role in how you interact with your neighbors, and with your social circles. And that is *how* we do things. Even on a city level, you know, as a child you know that on Sunday afternoon you do a promenade, after church and lunch. Sunday afternoons and early evenings all around Port-au-Prince are special. I do not know if you remember in you visit here, but Sundays are days where we dress up and go to church and have a whole set of activities around that institution. Now, since the earthquake, it is something I cannot do anymore. It is something that will be lost for my children. The whole culture of Sunday... It is those small things that make big differences.²⁰⁶

She continued to discuss her feelings about the reconstruction of the city after the 2010 earthquake. She expressed a deep frustration with the way the rebuilding of the city was handled. This is a feeling that was not only shared by many architects, but that also resonated in many of the local media as well, Laconte said:

The reconstruction now is going really badly. A number of companies from all over the world started to implement solutions that are not suitable

²⁰⁵ Rebecca Solnit, Alexandre Dupuy and Mark Schuller point the shifts in the family structure as well as the solidarity surge among the disaster survivors after the 2010 earthquake.

²⁰⁶ Laconte, Nancy, Interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015.

for us and do not apply to how we live or do things. And then when things do not go well, we are told that we are doing wrong. But we have our own culture and our own way of constructing our space. Let me take the example of the rebuilding of the cathedral. When I saw the winning [design], it looked like a mosque, not like a cathedral. I do not see any relation to anything Haitian about that design.²⁰⁷

Laconte's statement underscores the current thinking about what constitutes an appropriate design for Haitians, hinting at a deeper – maybe subconscious, and society-wide — questioning of what constitutes Haitian identity, in this case through architecture.

The social canvas in Haiti has dramatically changed over the past thirty years, but it changed even more so after the 2010 earthquake. It is worth remembering here that Haiti is still economically dependent on international aid. Market liberalization and massive numbers of imports do not allow national production to recover. Haitian rural farming communities, which are the spaces of conservation and transmission of what is essentially the Haitian culture suffered greatly from the economic consequences of international involvement in Haiti. Most Haitian intellectuals that were interviewed fear the *deculturation* of Haiti, as a result of the confusion caused by the multi-lateral involvement in the recovery of the city as well as multi-layered social and structural issues that the country inherited from its tumultuous past.²⁰⁸ Martine Clerrobrun, another architect with a Masters in Slum upgrading and planning, currently teaches at the State University of Haiti in the capital training young architects. She is not only an active

²⁰⁷ The cathedral in question is the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption (Cathédrale Notre-Dame de L'Assomption or Cathédrale de Port-au Prince) The first-place winning team is headed by Puerto Rican architect Segundo Cardona, FAIA. The second place design was submitted by Diego Ramos from Tacubaya, Mexico; third place by Steven Fett, Miami; and fourth place by Christopher Glapinski, Coral Gables, out of 134 submissions. The Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, the Arlington, Virginia-based Kerns Group Architects has been selected for that reconstruction project. These two landmarks of the city were designed and will be built by architects and engineers from dissimilar milieus than the Haitian one.

²⁰⁸ <http://ayibopost.com/ces-foutus-missionnaires/>

member of CNIAH, but is also part of the current board of directors, and she describes this fear of loss of culture as follows:

We have to understand this. at the beginning there were Tainos, then Africans, along with the various white colons, that does not make Haiti's culture that or the other, or even a mix of them! Similarly, now, Haiti is invaded with these various international cultures, in addition to an opening to a global culture that is highly Americanized. The dominance of these diverse cultures at this moment does not leave space for the Haitian culture to recover. And the more we put pressure on it, under the current circumstances, by saying that Kreol Ayitien is not a developed language, or that our religion art, cinema, architecture, are not sophisticated enough, the more it is painted as "half" a culture, the more Haitians will feel at loss of identity. The world's diversity of cultures will be lost to us.²⁰⁹

Religious Vodoun rituals and the rich history and art behind it, as well as the Creole language, have long been devalued in the Haitian society. The interviewed architects shared a common understanding that the language and the religion are both pillars in the construction of Haiti's identity. Yet these two elements have been misunderstood by the west, which shaped the local narrative of Vodoun. This occurred because there were no local champions to defend vodoun and its symbiotic relationship to Catholicism or to create a narrative and a spatial understanding in which a contemporary notion Haitian identity is defined from within. Nancy Leconte, another Haitian architect interviewed for this study said:

Still, there are clashing forces in Haiti, now more than ever. It seems to me that the Haitian is in conflict within himself. For example, Religion, the country has Catholicism as an official religion, but the reality is the majority practices Vodoun at one level or another. But we are told that Vodoun is a bad thing. The one thing that is supposed to be a point that unites us all becomes a point of disaccord and shame. Yet it is so engrained in who we are... and as practicing architects, we really feel it. Site selection in many areas is still subject to rituals that seem to those who don't understand, as mere acts of sorcery.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Clerrobrun, Martine, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

²¹⁰ Laconte, Nancy, Interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015

For example, traditional healers played a major part in the recovery of Port-au-Prince's slum dwellers, not only because of disbelief in the western medicine, but also because of the inaccessibility of the latter over the first months. Nancy Laconte, who worked on the construction of a hospital in the northern city of Gonaïves, in the north of the country, retells the story of how the proper functioning of the hospital was hindered due to the reticence of patients to use its facilities. The grounds on which the hospital was built were not previously consecrated and were considered as a space where the evil spirits laid, leading to the hospital having to change sites after the foundations and most of the masonry were finished. There is no doubt that as long as the dichotomy of Vodoun and Christianity is not addressed in terms of social awareness and cultural practices, the dephasing between the collective imaginaries of Haitians and the practices of official architecture will not be resolved. Again, according to Nancy Laconte:

The thing is, the situation is complicated. Let's see for example in health, people would only resort to modern medicine as a last resort. They would rather first go to their local herb doctor, or as we say here *medsin fey*, and by the time they get to a hospital to seek professional advice, their situation is often critical. So that's a problem. Yes, economically the situation is getting harder by the day, which causes people to decide which their priorities are. This does not leave us professionals with possibilities to influence or implement our ideas. Working in retrofitting houses after the earthquake, I am faced with this struggle on a daily basis. More pressing matters that require investing in rather than working on one's house are our first struggle.²¹¹

The understanding of culture is what Laconte calls for when she talked about investing in Haitian culture, which has, as many other different cultures, spoken and hidden elements to it. French and creole, modernity and locality, Christianity and Vodoun have since the beginning of Haitian culture been engaged in a dialectic that allowed the accommodation,

²¹¹ Ibid.

through time, of notions that are uniquely Haitians. It is the existence of this gap itself that allows the continuation of the Haitian culture and it can only be manifest through a time duration in which foreign influences, traumas and breaks in the social structures are processed and adapted into restructuring habitus.



Figure 33: "Anwo tab, anba tab" (Sur la table, sous la table) -Auteur: Gérard, Paul - Date d'exécution : inconnue.
Musée Ogier-Fombrum.

SHIFTS IN LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

The majority of the architects who were interviewed for the purpose of this researched did not describe any major shift in local practice in the five years following the

earthquake. They did, however, describe a sense of urgency regarding the state of the reconstruction, the loss of the country's cultural strengths, and the difficulty of translating Haitian values in spatial terms. The role of the architect as a professional who can participate in a new constitution of the city faces various challenges in the current social and political landscape. As Sabine Malebranche, a Haitian architect, professor at the State University in Haiti and director of urban studies for SODADE, a Haitian urban planning company, explains:

The profession is suffering from a lack of graduate level architects and engineers. The reasons for this failure date back very far. Haiti has never prioritized technically proven outcomes, and rigorous, innovative methods. The education system, though producing brilliant members of the society, fails to reach its full potential; this positions us weakly vis-a-vis society, as well as in competitions. In addition, the legal terms and references of the profession make for a profession that is perceived as weak.²¹²

The profession's self-organization and promotion within society had been one of the key elements that precipitated the strengthening and broadening of the architectural profession's in the Japanese society. A similar pattern is slowly starting to emerge in Haiti as well, in which architects are trying to crystallize the collective experiences that the earthquake has introduced in social structures, and be strongly positioned to enjoy enough legitimacy to play the role that their historical counterparts played in Japan.

Organizationally, the profession has made progress towards that goal. In July 2012, the three main organizations regulating the professional practice in Haiti, namely, the CNIAH, the ASSHAU (Association Haitienne des Architectes et des urbanistes) and the AHEC (Association Haitienne des Entreprises de Construction), addressed a public letter to the Prime Minister Laurent Salvador Lamothe, denouncing the state of recovery after

²¹² Malebranche, Sabine, Interview by Karima Benbih, December 2015

the 2010 earthquake. Specifically, the USD 4,275,000.00 agreement between the Haitian government and the Republic of China (Taiwan) concerning the design, construction and supervision of 5 public buildings: the Court of Cassation, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the General Direction of Taxes, the General Administration of Customs and the Superior Court of Auditors and Administrative Disputes. The three institutions contested the arbitrary bid on these particular projects and brought the government's attention to architecture contracts and execution contracts that have gone to foreign companies, at the expense of local architecture, engineering and construction firm, all without a proper bidding process, competition or consultation with local professions. The letter expressed the associations' concern that these contracts were signed, and separate projects were being commissioned without consideration of the urban future of the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, in terms of infrastructure, services, and a sound master plan.²¹³

Aside from relief aid, Haiti received international aid to lead operations of architectural conception, feasibility studies, and execution of public works. However, unlike many other countries that receive such aid, the government of Haiti of 2011 did not have a provision for local professionals to be adjuncts to these projects. However, by law, foreigners with degrees that are not recognized by the Haitian government are not allowed to practice architecture or engineering in Haiti, or need to have Haitian counterparts to participate in the project's management. The organized collaboration of the architects' institutions certainly has not matched the broad, wide-ranging actions that occurred in Japan had at the end of its reconstruction period, but it is displaying early

²¹³ Lettre ouverte au Premier Ministre: Appel des ingenieurs, architects, urbanistes et professionnels de construction, published in Le Nouvelliste newspaper, published on July 17th, 2012 <http://lenouvelliste.com/lenouvelliste/article/107209/La-chronique-du-College-national-des-ingenieurs-et-architectes-haitiens> accessed August 20, 2016

symptoms of an organized movement. Indeed, this researcher's reflections on Japanese architecture were possible because decades have passed since the post-World War II period that have allowed for sedimentation of experiences and events, and their establishment in the cultural mindset and the architectural habitus of Japan.

Harry Adam, Executive Director of the housing construction unit and public buildings (UCLBP) stressed in the fact that it is crucial for the sector to be valued, and he advanced that that is mainly going to be possible for Haiti if new techniques and best practices are known and applied. He said:

We were off to a rocky start after the earthquake, and it is absurd to expect any different. One should remember that our government lost up to 90 percent of its functioning resources. We are more than ever aware of the cultural dilapidation that we have been suffering through over the past decades and we can only be able to mitigate these changes by first have the strong human infrastructure for it. For that to happen, change is inevitable. We do need to make peace with that fact, and work within the new paradigms that we have now.²¹⁴

This is also indicative of the awareness among architects that the idea of change is inherent to their culture. This means that the profession is seeking new venues of expression and evolution other than the traditional ones (academia, private practice, and governments) and tackling different types of architectural design projects than those it was used to.

Such patterns can be traced in the post-earthquake architecture job market. In fact, most young architects find job opportunities working for reconstruction projects under international supervision or with international partnerships. In the next decade, this is likely to affect the thinking of the generation that may have had their professional experience shaped by interacting with NGOs, and focusing on a very specific subset of

²¹⁴ Adam, Harry, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015.

the architectural production of the city of Port-au-Prince. However, without the possibility of making a real contribution to the building of Port-au-Prince, through interaction with other local architects and construction specialists from the government and the private sector, these architects stand in a position in which they feel that they are alone in establishing their profession's value in society. Elrica Matayer, when talking about whether there is a popular awareness of the importance of architecture in constructing society, said:

You know, I do not believe that people understand what architecture is. At most, we are technicians.²¹⁵

And Jean Michel another interviewee, a civil engineer with the NGO CHF said:

The chaotic situation that our economy is putting the population through is affecting our practice. First, in the general opinion, when you talk about an architect, most people think about an engineer. The architect per se is not really valued. People often come to me and ask me questions that are not related to structure.²¹⁶

This is an example in which architecture plays the role of the “accursed share,” an unrecognized, non-celebrated practice that is closer to that of a simple than an action that brings together past and future experiences and expectations in order to create spaces that allow cultural flourishing and the expression of the self and collective. When asked whether she feels that there was a shift in the modes of spatial practice from before the earthquake to the present, Elrica Matayer, says:

I don't think there is.. Let's just say.. in our heads, yes, there is a shift. But in reality, in the field, there isn't any. Because it is all government. It is

²¹⁵ Matayer, Elrica, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

²¹⁶ Michel, Jean, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

going to require more for it to change. It's requiring implementation rather than just knowledge. I have to admit that in 2010 and 2011, we did see the enthusiasm of changing but 5 years later, people have forgotten. People don't talk about it anymore, people forgot that there was an earthquake. but, I had also to admit that as far as I am concerned, we have a biennale of architecture.... This was the FCAA (Federation Caraibienne de architectes) 9th biennale of architecture and, I mean, I had been to one of them before, which was in Cuba, and it was more, It was bigger, It is an organized country in a way. So, but then the one that happened in Haiti was a good thing, although it wasn't as big, or grandiose, but it was still a great thing that happened to us because for once we were talking about architecture, and not about construction.²¹⁷

The generation of Haitian architects that graduated in the few years before and shortly after the 2010 earthquake, are shaped and will be defined by their work in the specific conditions of the reconstruction. Moreover, most jobs that were, and still are available for young architects with 10 years or less experience, are within international organizations that focus on fragile neighborhoods, slums, and alleviation of poverty in the country. This perspective, not being part of the mainstream architecture teaching, may create a practice of architecture that is different, both in process and in outcome. The interviewees with shorter work experience, showed two trends. They expressed clear understanding and commitment to the focus on slum-upgrading as the necessary step for Port-au-Prince's development. However, there is no consensus on the repercussions on innovation, creative outlets and evolution of the design and construction processes. When asked about translating Haitian cultural values in their day-to-day practice of architecture within the development sector, most showed sincere concerns about the matter: "I cannot help but think that what we do today, though it does help in the betterment of our thinking of

²¹⁷ Matayer, Elrica, Interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015

architecture, will impact dramatically our design practices, thinking of architecture and perception of urban considerations.”²¹⁸

This anxiety is an expression of pronounced social shifts, with more visible outcomes. The civil society organizations are not a byproduct of the elite’s work in developing the country anymore. Rather more grass-root organizations stem from various neighborhoods and are supported by international organisations seeking to help the poorest of the poor.

It can also be seen in other intellectual spheres. Radio shows and journals have been exceptionally active in exposing the failures of the international aid organization experienced by the Haitian (particularly Port-au-Prince) population.²¹⁹ The culture of demanding transparency from the government, and the notion of governance slowly started to be part of the everyday discourse, feeding on the general interest in the informal settlements of Port-au-Prince, after the earthquake, and fueled by the presence of international NGOs who are solely focusing on the rapidly growing slums²²⁰.

One of the biggest events related to architecture that occurred after the earthquake offers an interesting parallel to Japan after the Second World War, the Pan-Caribbean architecture and design conference. The city of Port-au-Prince and the national Council of Haitian Architects (CNIAH) hosted the first biennale of Caribbean architects in October 2015, with a large emphasis on architectural education and cultural identity²²¹.

Anybody can come from anywhere in the world, call themselves architects and set up shop here. The college of architecture is only realizing this now, five years after the earthquake. We are finally witnessing a change in the legal structure of the practice of architecture.²²²

²¹⁸ Oriol, Michelle, interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

²¹⁹ Dupuy, Laurent, *Haiti: The aftershocks of history*, 2012

²²⁰ Interview with Kelogue Therasme, Octobre 2015

²²¹ CNIAH website. [www. Cniah.org](http://www.Cniah.org). accessed August 20, 2016

²²² Laconte, Nancy, Interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015

These testimonies show how there is a conscious understanding that the role of the architect needs to be defined and put in the forefront of the country's effort to move forward after the disaster of 2010. It almost perfectly mirrors the discourse that Kenzo Tange and the Japanese architects had in the years following the end of the Second World War, as they too, sought to define their role in society in a way that gave them legitimacy and offered them ways to positively express the changes their society was undergoing. Physically, the shifts in the practice take form in the introduction of different morphologies and typologies of buildings to the architectural and building vocabulary, as well as the introduction of new materials and techniques such as steel, which triggered a conversation about the reasons behind the usage of material and the meaning of each to the Haitian realities. As per Elrica Matayer:

The other subject that I am interested in is material, the research of material, the exploration of it. Because there is this crazy thing happening now in Haiti, since the earthquake, where there are metal structures everywhere. I would never do metal structure in Haiti because nobody here is an expert in metal structures in Haiti!! I don't trust anybody here now to do a metal structure because we never built with it. They started building all in concrete and now that everything is collapsed they are moving to the next trendiest thing. But when we discuss this with my colleagues and we dig in deep, just the fact that it is a metal structure would not make it earthquake resistant. Even if you build in metal, it's still going to collapse! Maybe there will be less damage, but that does not make it earthquake resistant. So why don't we have a more constructive dialogue?²²³

One of the projects launched by the government is the Site and Services initiative, is a new development in the urban structure of Port-au-. The idea is to bring an alternative to the slums by the conducting site preparation activities on empty land with sanitation, water access, electricity, and roads, but without any building action, and then subsidizing

²²³ Matayer, Elrica, Interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015.

this land to slum dwellers. This project is being currently (as of 2015) piloted in Canaan.²²⁴

Considered alone, these small events may not seem to be the swooping actions that can dramatically change the face of architecture and culture in Haiti. However, they are precious clues reminiscent of the events that took place some seventy years ago, when a country still grappling with notions of modernity and westernization was under stress due to the destruction of the Second World War.

HAITIAN ARCHITECTS BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

The concern over the loss of Haitian identity was a common denominator not only among architects, but also across a range of professionals. Patrick Attie, director of the Ecole Supérieure d'Infotronique d'Haiti (ESIH), and Marlene Sam, Deputy Director of ESIH,²²⁵ explain this phenomenon through the lens of digital technology as one of the indicators of modernization in the Haitian society:.

When we started this project, the digitalization of government data, we were faced with disbelief that this project is a Haitian initiative, coming from a Haitian school and led by our Haitian graduates. In fact, most of the students that come to us come with the belief that people from abroad are better at it than them. Which is wrong! [laughs] Haitians are natural born hackers! So on one hand we have this untapped knowledge of information technologies, coming from the youth and on the other there is no confidence in the local product – we still believe that things made abroad are better.²²⁶

Still, most architects are faced with the idea that everything Haitian is traditionally static and not evolving, and that can be traced, among other things, to the degrading state of the

²²⁴ David, Odnell, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015.

²²⁵ Patrick and Marlene kindly invited me to the ESIH in the first day of my field work and spent a morning

²²⁶ *ibid*

cultural heritage sites, such as the Fort-National and the gingerbread houses introduced earlier. This puts stress on how architects perceive tradition, although some believe that in order for it to be a constructive part of the collective imaginaries, its perception in the minds of Haitians needs to be radically changed. According to Haitian architect, Farah Hyppolite, who volunteers for an association trying to save the gingerbread houses:

They [the gingerbread houses] have to be rebuilt. But it is not just physical reconstruction; it is also a reconstruction of memory. The Haitians have to remember how they used to live and how it was nice! Why do we have to look elsewhere and neglect our own architecture? The characteristics of the bigger houses in Pacot and Turgeau can be found in the lower hills which is more of a middle class neighborhood. Those houses are not as big, but they are little jewels. They are lower houses, with a lot of decorations like doll houses. Unlike popular belief, that these are buildings built by the French, these houses were [built] by Haitians for Haitians in a purely Haitian socio-cultural [way].²²⁷

The change in Haiti may just be the radical recognition of the poorer class as an equal asset that must be invested in. Indeed, it is the primary beneficiary of the government's recent efforts, as opposed to the long-standing tradition that privileged the elite and allowed them power over the resources and land. Since the revolutionary war in 1871, binary segregation has been one of the major issues of the Haitian society: between lords and slaves, creoles (island-born) and *Bossales* (African-born slaves), between *mulattoes* and blacks, between the military and the mercantile strata, and later on, between the elite and the poor, and these forms of segregation drove all social structures in the country. Scholars have written extensively about this schism within the Haitian Society. Haitian author Gerard Barthelemy (1934-2007) said in an interview with Le Monde magazine, that "[...] the singularity of this small country holds on three phenomena, inscribed such as founding myths in and by its history: 1) the non-completion of the nation, 2) the

²²⁷ Hyppolite, Farah, Interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015.

refusal of the state and 3) the instinctive repulsion towards what is proposed under the term: “development.”²²⁸

Three years before the earthquake, in 2007, Myrtha Gilbert, the famous Haitian writer analogizes Haiti’s urban dwellers to a foreign-imposed second story of a building. This part of the population, according to Gilbert, does not partake in reinforcing the foundation of the house/nation. They only cause that slab to crack. She asks how Haiti can avoid the collapse of the second story. This metaphor was transformed into a reality after the earthquake, which begs to question the roles of each of the classes that Gilbert discussed.

But perhaps the situation is changing in the aftermath of the earthquake, as more and more people rise up to demand governance and participation in decision-making. Unlike the riots and the social unrest that characterized the early 2000’s, which impeded the evolution of an urban practice and an architectural thinking proper to the Haitian community, the interest in supporting various forms of governance, both grass-root

228 (...) La singularité de ce petit pays tient à trois phénomènes, inscrits comme des mythes fondateurs dans et par son histoire : le non-aboutissement de la nation, le refus d'Etat et une répulsion instinctive devant ce que nous proposons sous le vocable de « développement » (...) Depuis deux siècles, une partie du pays - son élite créole occidentalisée - n'a cessé de manipuler les faux-semblants d'une démocratie de façade pour mieux asseoir son propre pouvoir sur la grande masse afro-paysanne des campagnes. (...) Pendant deux siècles, l'armée et l'Etat ont constitué un binôme indissociable de frères ennemis rassemblés par leur seul intérêt commun : contenir un pays structurellement indocile et éventuellement menaçant. Ce système séculaire a été brusquement détruit en 1994 après la suppression de l'armée à l'initiative, fondamentalement antiétatique, du prêtre président Aristide. Aujourd'hui, c'est la situation créée par l'interruption brutale de cette gestion bicéphale du pouvoir qui pose problème. L'Etat, brusquement privé de son complément, s'est transformé progressivement en non-Etat(...) Le troisième paradoxe fondateur permet d'expliquer, peut-être, pourquoi Haïti, économiquement, ne cesse de reculer depuis plus de dix ans, malgré une aide internationale conséquente. (...) Ce peuple, en 1804, en rejetant le lien colonial, n'a pas rejeté la seule dépendance politique mais bousculé l'ensemble du système économique et social fondé sur l'esclavage. En ce sens il est parmi les premiers de l'ère postcapitaliste.

In : Les deux Haïti de Gérard Barthélémy, Le monde, Published august 06th, 2007 <http://papalagi.blog.lemonde.fr/2007/08/06/gerard-barthelemy-au-pays-des-hommes-sans-chapeau/> accessed august 20, 2016

governance and government-led efforts, from these architects, is a sign of overcoming the segregation between the elite and the middle class on one hand, and the lower class on the other. The tradition and modernity power play is to be seen as a drive towards the strengthening of the Haitian society. Following are excerpts from interviews that discuss modern life in Port-au-Prince, identity, memory, and the passage of time:

The “Culture of Orality” is predominant in the Haitian context. This orality impacts directly the capacity and the will of the society to use and make the most of systems such as the legal system, technological systems.... Contracts (work contracts, lease contracts...) for example fail to be recorded often cases and become verbal accords and most of the information systems are used in a primitive way.²²⁹

The services that were provided after the earthquake, by the NGOs, changed the social discourse, where the population started slowly and timidly, to demand the continuation of such services from their government. And that to me is a big sign that we are gradually breaking from a tradition of oppression and distrust towards the government, into one where governance is possible.²³⁰

What is the Haitian identity? It evolved quickly and changed a lot during the past years... you can qualify it as social schizophrenia – we have difficulty accepting failure as a collective. But it is time to come to terms that the failures of the past are something we have to deal with, together, and I mean everyone. When people sit out of the game and blame the corruption and the government’s failing, they only participate in perpetuating a social practice that should be obsolete by now.²³¹

That being said, this year, a couple of colleagues and I decided we were going to participate in a competition in China, because, exactly! I saw people doing that and was more open to participating even if I knew that I was not going to win. Yeah, I did not win, but I think it was a great exercise. It was amazing to create something like that. And when we talked to people in the biennale and said that we participated in that

²²⁹ Attie Patrick, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

²³⁰ Therasme, Kellogue, interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015

²³¹ Laleau, Wilson, Interview by Karima Benbih, January 2015

competition, people looked at us like we were crazy. But it felt great to do so.²³²

²³² Matayer Elrica, Interview by Karima Benbih, November 2015

POSTLUDE:

The interviews with local Haitian architects yielded to several discoveries. The Haitian architects express frustration with the unrecognized role of their profession as a civil resource to be harnessed in the betterment of their society. Like Japan, awareness of the possibility of a disaster is embedded within the minds of Haitians. Three main recommendations emerge from the study of the history of the Japanese architectural practice and from the current state of the profession in Haiti. First, architects, prior to being able to have a positive impact on the recovery processes, need to define the role of architects from the public's perspective but also from the government and international actors perspective, this will expose the international donors, and governments to these architects not as employees of NGOs (as the majority of young architects are now) but as an independent entity. They also can engage in architectural criticism through forums, design conferences, movements that allow local architects to challenge their ideas. Finally engaging in architectural exercises allows architects to foster a culture of local and regional competitions. These are only indicative through the Japanese experience. Other innovative venues certainly can be explored that can allow the strengthening of the professional presence of architects after a disaster.

As the previous part explained, the earthquake in Haiti was a driving force for change, on various levels. The architectural community in Port-au-Prince is on the forefront of that change, despite the lack of structural support and a disbelief in the role of architects in the social, cultural and physical healing of the nation. American essayist Rebecca Solnit holds the opinion that because the established systems tend to repress imagination and

collective desires, shocks such as disasters offer an unfortunate way to liberate them. She wrote:

Disasters are, most basically, terrible, tragic, grievous, and no matter what positive side effect and possibilities they produce, they are not to be desired. But by the same measure, those side effects should not be ignored because they rise amid devastation. The desires and possibilities awakened are so powerful they shine even from wreckage, carnage, and ashes...glimpse of who else we ourselves may be and what else our society could become.²³³

There seems to be a powerful surge of collective imagination right after a break in time and in the social structures that tries to restructure social practices and emerge new cultural capital.²³⁴ This view holds true here, through the interviews with the local architects, as well as through the example of Post- World War II Japan in Part Two of this dissertation. The optimism in the metabolism movement's manifesto symbolized architecture's gift of optimism toward the future through the act of continuous design and building. Although Solnit's opinion is directed towards utopian communities and the creative social bonds that emerge in times of crisis, the same pattern can be seen in the practice of imagination and knowledge of local architects. Reading the transcripts of the interviews with the Haitian architects strongly hints to similar viewpoints and hopes regarding a better future for the practice of architecture in Port-au-Prince, not only for the sake of the city or the country, but also for the individuals and their smaller intellectual and neighboring communities.

One of the conclusions from the analysis of Haiti's architects after the earthquake is that the architects seem to be struggling to fit within any possible framework that is available,

²³³ Solnit, Rebecca. *A paradise built in hell: The extraordinary communities that arise in disaster*. Penguin, 2010. p.

²³⁴ Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge university press, 1977.

and under any umbrella. The established system does not seem to acknowledge this young, changing workforce as a potential driver for positive change in urban Port-au-Prince. This change has also not been recognized yet by the decision makers – Government, International Donors, etc. — and the refusal from the NGO community to work with local professionals²³⁵ the preference of American products due to tax rebates and the use of technicalities to hide an ideological position from the side of the international communities towards the Haitian hierarchical social pyramids. Although this may seem as a valid point to take into consideration, particularly in contemplating policy issues, looking at the particular will of local people, can open various interpretations of possible futures for architecture and design, and design education in the country.

While it is true that there is a distinction between architecture in Japan and in Haiti and while, empirically, the local conditions, the time components (both in the span of time and local perception of duration and its meaning), the nature of disaster, and external influences, the discourse of architects in both cases renders a discussion about Haiti in terms of learnings from Japan relevant. These learnings raise contemporary questions about the legitimacy of local architects to play the role their counterparts played in Japan,

²³⁵ In an interview with Victoria Stodart, Lead of the IFRC’s Shelter cluster after Hurricane Yolanda, that hit the Philippines in 2012, she expressed similar thoughts on the openness of the international community to work with the local community, particularly in terms of urban planning and government zoning of the city of Tecloban. To her, including local professional legal and urban planning firms was simply an impossible task because she, and other IFRC workers, believed that the underlying corruption problems in the country would prevent “fair negotiation and positive influence on the government.” In Haiti, similar trends appeared in the first years after the earthquake, in which various NGOs refused to work with local construction companies, and deciding to import material independently from the local structures. This led to a crisis in imported construction materials and to the demise of few NGOs active in Haiti. (Edmonds, Kevin. *Beyond Good Intentions: The Structural Limitations of NGOs in Haiti*, sage press Critical Sociology, 2012, p.1 –14)

and triggering thanks to architectural imagination, cultural and social processes through time.

The research also raised the issue of how the local architect, who can be the vessel of memory and culture, is perceived through the lenses of international disaster relief. For those believing that Haiti needs foreign architects and experts to build the country,²³⁶ stories such as Haiti and Japan's interviews ought to have them realize that what Haiti needs is more of her people acquiring skills that will allow them to perform better, without forgetting their culture. There have been multiple serious attempts at a constructive dialog between professionals of post-disaster relief and reconstruction and the architectural profession. These conversations often have very short lives and are carried out in environments very far from the locale in which local architects are needed.²³⁷ To put it simply, NGO workers, particularly in developing countries, are tied with specific agendas and timelines and financial responsibilities to their donors, while on the other hand, local professionals often need longer term involvements and structural assistance, in order to create positive change within their own communities. This implies lower rates of deliverables and finished projects on the part of the international humanitarian community, which makes the local architects claims to the importance of their role in the self-continuity of their society and country strike the international humanitarian community as naïve since it does not have any recognized immediate and tangible outcome as per the standards of projects funding for the relief and recovery

²³⁶ Proponents of this view range from Humanitarian actors on the field, to researchers and even local professionals.

²³⁷ Design for Urban Disaster Conference at Harvard 2014 – none of the local architects in Haiti and the Philippines was involved, yet several presentations were focusing on the work of INGOs in these countries were highlighted, by non locals, and almost none of them was an architect. One would think that a conference with such a title –design- would be focused on the matter of architectural projects in these areas hit by the 2010 earthquake and the 2013 typhoon

period. On the other hand, as demonstrated through the interviews with Haitian professionals, there is a frustration at this same well-meaning international community because of its lack of recognition of social patterns and changes inherent to the society that lived the trauma of the disaster. This frustration is often misconstrued from the NGO side either as naiveté from the side of architects, or as opportunism. While the reticence of NGOs to explore newer venues of action that involves local professionals is often seen as lacking imagination, disrespectful of the local culture and other misrepresentations of the societies they are to serve. The premise here, however, is that there are shifts on an epistemic scale that occur in collective imaginaries as a result of disaster experiences.

Architecture may not necessarily have to mirror them, on an immediate basis, leading to immediately visible changes in practice, but rather can express them on a longer term basis, if the environment allows it. It can allow evolving a new habitus, through its practice and through the spaces it creates and the interaction of people with and in them. It is an imperative to rebuild, but to do so while allowing for a possibility of the accursed share, that George Bataille cleverly called the necessary excess. It is only that excess that can drive individual creative forces that Bergson called *l'elan vital* to restructure social bonds in unique and context appropriate ways. Wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill, when faced with the rebuilding of the House of Commons in 1943 said that we make architecture, but that thereafter, it is architecture that makes us.²³⁸ In his speech, he discussed how determining the form of the building has a direct relationship and will influence the new political life in Britain after the Second World War, and that the design of the building will shape the quality of the people dwelling in it. He also demonstrated,

²³⁸ Winston Churchill, in a speech in the House of Commons on October 28, 1943
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NX5xX1uTWQA>

through a series of explanations of practices that are part of the foundation of the British parliamentary habitus, how the design of the House of Commons is something to be performed locally, for it is a “a puzzle to uninstructed outsiders.” Here is an excerpt of his speech:

There are two main characteristics of the House of Commons which will command the approval and the support of reflective and experienced Members. They will, I have no doubt, sound odd to foreign ears. The first is that its shape should be oblong and not semi-circular. Here is a very potent factor in our political life. The semi-circular assembly, which appeals to political theorists, enables every individual or every group to move round the centre, adopting various shades of pink according as the weather changes. I am a convinced supporter of the party system in preference to the group system. I have seen many earnest and ardent Parliaments destroyed by the group system. The party system is much favoured by the oblong form of Chamber. It is easy for an individual to move through those insensible gradations from Left to Right but the act of crossing the Floor is one which requires serious consideration. I am well informed on this matter, for I have accomplished that difficult process, not only once but twice. Logic is a poor guide compared with custom. Logic which has created in so many countries semi-circular assemblies which have buildings which give to every Member, not only a seat to sit in but often a desk to write at, with a lid to bang, has proved fatal to Parliamentary Government as we know it here in its home and in the land of its birth.²³⁹

²³⁹ Ibid. Churchill goes on to state that the second characteristic is the size of the chamber, which should not be a larger structure in which every parliamentary member has a seat. He explains that the reason is that most of the debates will be conducted in an empty room, which can be a depressing and demoralizing thing for the members. He continues:

“We attach immense importance to the survival of Parliamentary democracy. In this country this is one of our war aims. We wish to see our Parliament a strong, easy, flexible instrument of free Debate. For this purpose a small Chamber and a sense of intimacy are indispensable. It is notable that the Parliaments of the British Commonwealth have to a very large extent reproduced our Parliamentary institutions in their form as well as in their spirit, even to the Chair in which the Speakers of the different Assemblies sit. We do not seek to impose our ideas on others; we make no invidious criticisms of other nations. All the same we hold, none the less, tenaciously to them ourselves. The vitality and the authority of the House of Commons and its hold upon an electorate, based upon universal suffrage, depends to no small extent upon its episodes and great moments, even upon its scenes and rows, which, as everyone will agree, are better conducted at close quarters. Destroy that hold which Parliament has upon the public mind and has preserved through all these changing, turbulent times and the living organism of the House of Commons would be greatly impaired. You may have a machine, but the House of Commons is much more than a machine; it has earned and captured and held through long generations the imagination and respect of the British nation. It is not free from shortcomings; they mark all human institutions. Nevertheless, I submit to what is probably not an unfriendly audience on that subject that our House has proved itself capable of adapting itself to every change which the swift pace of modern life has brought upon us. It has a collective personality which enjoys the regard of the public and which imposes itself upon the conduct not only of individual Members

The idea is that architecture can encourage such possibilities, which many contend, is appropriate and necessary following many disasters.

My point in this dissertation was also not to enter a debate about the comparative measurement of immeasurable human suffering, whether the destruction of the Japanese cities, since Japan was part of the Nazi, should or should not be studied similarly to the destruction of the Haitian cities. Nor is it to offer a cause-and-effect narrative—that the loss of the war is an indirect blowback of earlier Japanese imperial designs at the end of World War II. Rather, it wants to highlight the importance of the local, both individual and collective, memories and how they have direct impact of how local architects perceive and practice architecture. Foremost, it is not the intention of this dissertation to give full credit of disaster recovery to architecture professions.

Rather it aims to show that architects, local architects in particular, very often unknowingly, and through their practice, actively participate in their society's dealing with disasters and loss. It is very often, only after decades that they go back and reflect on the relationship between their actions, projects, and attempt to make sense of them. It is not a claim for architects' lucidity that I make here, rather a claim of a tacit knowledge, that which we know but we do not know that we know, that manifests itself in disaster-scapes. The Japanese Metabolist architects spent the decades following the end of the Second World War actively and consistently investing in new ways of doing architecture, through their participation in competitions, design conferences, utopian exercises, etc. It is only later that their role in the long strenuous effort to bridge the gap between tradition

but of parties. It has a code of its own which everyone knows, and it has means of its own of enforcing those manners and habits which have grown up and have been found to be an essential part of our Parliamentary life.”

and modernity and to recreate the lost identity, was clear. Similarly, Haiti's architects, who expressed frustration on various points, rather than a well-thought agenda and long term plan of action, expressed sparks of possibility for change. It is currently an environment, which, if given attention and support, could increase the chances of local architects to translate whatever shifts occurred to the Haitian identity in the past years into the new realities of Haitian social structures and architectural habitus.

Three major themes have been unearthed through the study of the Japan post-war architectural experiences and then demonstrated in Haiti's interviews with its local architects in this dissertation. First, that the conception of time after a disaster is essentially modified, and that its effects on the victims are different from the outsider's perspective. That means applying a new method of thinking about time in post-disaster societies, precisely in allowing environments in which the gap between the lived time and the institutional time can allow for the flourishing of the local population's creative power, instead of stifling it with international interventionism. Such is possible for example through international assistance to local architectural competitions as part of the assistance, as well as the creation of opportunities for local architects to be considered by their governments as actors in the construction of new buildings. Unfortunately, very few projects are being implemented in Haiti that have a remote resemblance to this.²⁴⁰

Second, this distortion of time due to the dislocative nature of disasters, affects the architectural knowledge that is built in through the habitus of the society that lives it, and therefore affects professional practices linked to social and cultural representation.

Architecture is a vessel of culture and translates the cultural values of a society. This

²⁴⁰ The programs that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has funded over the last 6 years in Haiti to promote local professionals have only started in the past year. In architecture, there are two conference and seminars series programs, both led by CNIAH.

change in cultural and social values is built up and takes physical forms (through architecture, among other forms) over long spans of time, as it was exhibited in the case of the evolution of the Metabolism movement after the second World War in Japan, or that of the lakou system of housing after the revolutionary war in Haiti, and the beginning of urban transformation that the country is now witnessing. These breaks in time and social continuity, unpredictably gave in both cases, the strength of creating more complex social and spatial forms that did not restore their societies to their previous form, but that opened them and introduced new sets of values and regulating habitus to them, and participated greatly in their evolution.

Third, this change can only be captured by local professionals that have that tacit knowledge and an access to the pool of collective and tacit memories and experiences by which a community is formed, and which is directly linked to the perception of time of individuals in their particular social and cultural context

This theoretical investigation has practical results implications - both on a policy level and on the level of physical space making- and the hope is that, by the end of this paper, architects and practitioners in disaster reconstruction will acknowledge the part of architectural practice and processes of thinking that are imbedded within the cultural appartenance to a society. By doing so, they can create a different approach to disaster reconstruction. On the policy level, a shift in the core funding strategies of disaster recovery by prioritizing an establishment of working relationships with local professionals, particularly in the construction, and incorporating long term perspectives in the early recovery planning, is a key aspect for a successful international assistance to rebuilding after a disaster.

there should be a clear recognition of the local architectural culture, that there should be an inclusion of the local institutions of architecture, of the schools, agencies, and show how to make use of them and how to support the process without preempting it.

dissertation addressed to? How do we provide support without stifling? There is an advocacy element that would not be inappropriate, how do we do that?

The conclusions reached in this dissertation address architects and educators of architecture, as a way of bringing to light the possible roles in the healing of a society after a disaster. This could mean allowing the availability for platforms and opportunities for participating in a constructive understanding of the post-disaster realities of their societies. NGOs, international donors, and local governments on the other hand, can benefit greatly from an understanding of the local potential, which they often do not engage with – particularly INGOs and international donors. It is a common knowledge now that the current approaches of disaster reconstruction have limitations that not only relate to the operational and systemic larger issues of humanitarian relief and reconstruction, but that struggle to encompass the uncanny aspect of disaster that can only be processed by and through the experience of the disaster itself, by the individuals surviving it. The expert, coming from outside of this specific time and space frame, or using methods that belong to an outside condition, automatically, sets the tone that the local cannot cope with the effects of disasters. Architecture can allow the components of disaster (ruin, loss, abandonment, wounds,...) to be placed as ethnographical evidence of the disaster in the new built space.

There is a commonality between Japan and Haiti. I do believe that, just like Japan and the west, Haiti has a material culture that predisposes it to architectural expression. The *Lakou* system, the gingerbread houses, the *Vodoun* rituals and the overall history of the city's construction and survival to various types of disaster proves a long tradition of architectural thinking that deserves to be considered in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake. After over 6 years of international exposure, caused by the earthquake and the subsequent trial and errors of international efforts for the reconstruction of Port-au-Prince, in which state are the Haitian architects left?

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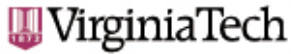
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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
email irb@vt.edu
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 12, 2015
TO: Fred Krimgold, Karima Benbih
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires July 29, 2020)
PROTOCOL TITLE: Impact of Disasters on Architectural thinking, practice and frame of profession.
IRB NUMBER: 15-730

Effective August 12, 2015, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7
Protocol Approval Date: August 12, 2015
Protocol Expiration Date: August 11, 2016
Continuing Review Due Date*: July 28, 2016

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Semi-Structured Questionnaire:

1. What is your architecture and urban planning background and years of professional/ academic experience?
2. What was the extent of your involvement in the recovery after the earthquake?
3. What is the Haitian identity according to you? And do you feel it shifted after the earthquake?
4. What is the predominant view point when it comes to tradition and modernity in Haitian architecture and urban planning?
5. What are the subjects you would more likely engage in a conversation with fellow architects, urban planners, artists, philosophers, economists...?
6. Do you engage in critical analysis of social issues since the earthquake?
7. What part of the trauma of the destruction after the earthquake sticks most out in your practice today? Can you compare that to what you used to do before to before the earthquake?
8. Do you engage in utopian exercises with fellow architects and planners?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SAMPLE

2nd Interview - Elrica Matayer - Octobre 2015

Karima Benbih: Hi, Thank you for agreeing to do this, Elrica,

Elrica Matayer: Hey, No problem.

KB: Hmm, so the way we are going to structure this is that I am going to ask you a couple of questions and, you know just feel free to give me your opinions, change the subject.. I just want to capture the state of mind of the architectural community at the moment. I remember we spoke about this when we met in Port-au-Prince last year, I am finishing up this part of my research. It is pretty much the same question if you remember a bit what our conversation was about in the last interview. So, can you, just for the sake of the recording, can you just give me a little bit about your background, and professional and academic experience?

EM: Okay.. Um, so my name is Elrica Matayer. I have a bachelor in Architecture and a masters in urban design, um , I worked in a private firm as an architect for a year and now I work at an NGO after the earthquake. The NGO Build Change. We build, we reinforce houses for earthquake resistance and.. let's just say disaster resistance..

KB: So, What was the extent of your involvement in the recovery after the earthquake?

EM: Um, What do you mean? Personally or professional participation?

KB: Your participation as an architect, if that was the case.

EM: Ok, participation wise, I newly graduated when the earthquake happened, There were not many opportunities for a young person to get involved, but then when I started working for Build Change, which provides training in retrofitting and disaster resistant reconstruction to masons and homeowners and appropriate material for construction. I believe that this is where I believe started participating (actively) in the reconstruction of Haiti.

KB: That's fantastic. So what is the predominant viewpoint when it comes to, you know, Haitian architecture, urban planning, between what is a traditional way of building, to the

more modern way that comes with the newer generation of architects, and how do you see this affected by the learnings from the earthquake. Do you feel that there is a shift between the modes of practice of space from before and now? given that you guys exert a certain influence because you work in..

EM: um..I don't think there is.. Let's just say.. in our heads, yes, there is a shift. but in reality, in the field, there isn't any. Because it is all government. It is gonna require more for it to change. It's requiring implementation rather than just knowledge. I have to admit that in 2010 and 2011, we did see the enthusiasm of changing but 5 years later, people have forgotten. people don't talk about it anymore, people forgot that there was an earthquake. but, I had also to admit that as far as I am concerned, we have a biennial of architecture.

KB: This is great news, can you tell me more about it?

EM: It is fantastic, Yes, This was the FCAA (federation caraibienne de architectes) 9th biennale of architecture and, I mean, I had been to one of them before, which was in Cuba, and it was more, It was bigger, It is an organised country in a way. So, but then the one that happened in Haiti was a good thing, although it wasn't as big, or grandiose, but it was still a great thing that happened to us because for once we were talking about architecture, and not about construction. Because with the rebuilding of Haiti, people have forgotten about architecture. Everyone started focusing on how building had to be earthquake resistant (sarcastic tone) so there are a lot of boxes everywhere and that's it. and there is no architecture, they don't understand that all what we are rebuilding is a way to give us a branding, and build better, and also I guess, an identity specific to Haiti.

KB: You mentioned earlier something about the change happening in your heads but not happening physically in what was being rebuilt after the earthquake, can you tell me more about this change that was happening, and whether it translated in the way you think about space?

EM: In my head, well, when the earthquake happened, I was in my last year of architecture so it.. Let's just say it reinforced what I was learning. And facing the reality of how things are being done in Haiti and how they are different from what I was taught. Alos realised that for some reason, you know, you learn all these rules and ways of doing things, but after a certain time, you forget the rules. It's not that you didn't learn it, but

you bent it once because you thought that nothing is going to happen but it becomes the rule before you know it. It only takes a few times of thinking that you can bend that rule without consequences. And that practice becomes the rule. Therefore, in my opinion, this is one of the reasons of the chaos of 2010. When I say it's in our head, it is because as architects or engineers we are conscious of that reality, both the rule and the changes in behaviors, but there is nobody to reinforce it, or to lead the way and say for example "no you need an engineer to calculate the addition, and you need an architect to supervise the construction site and enforce the regulation. We are the most able to do that yet nobody consults us. A lot of people build big large buildings without even consulting an engineer for structure. They mostly do just hire workforce on a daily rate. And so they think, the last major earthquake happened 100 years ago so they can get away with unsafe construction.

KB: Well this loss of the memory of a disaster happens everywhere else in the world. People tend to focus more on the immediate day to day disasters, poverty, social inequality... because they is a sense of emergency to them. I wonder if these subjects, you would be more inclined to discuss with your fellow architects, urban planners, engineers... I am curious about what are the types of conversations you lead now about architecture and urban planning?

EM: Well, most people talk about earthquake resistance. It is not my most favorite subjects. But that's what they talk about. And I think it is a mistake. My most favorite subject is how can you build, earthquake resistant, typhoon-resistant.. Whatever-resistant building, that has an architecture – a soul to it, rather than just being a box, but it is so difficult. The other subject that I am interested in is material, the research of material, the exploration of it. Because there is this crazy thing happening now in Haiti, since the earthquake, where there are metal structures everywhere. I would never do metal structure in Haiti, because nobody here is an expert in metal structures in Haiti!! I don't trust anybody here now to do a metal structure because we never built with it. They started building all in concrete and now that everything is collapsed they are moving to the next trendiest thing. But when we discuss this with my colleagues and we dig in deep, just the fact that it is a metal structure would not make it earthquake resistant. Even if you build in metal, it's still going to collapse! Maybe there will be less damage, but that does

not make it earthquake resistant. So why don't we have a more constructive dialogue? Five years later, there is no conversation about the earthquake. I mean. I am biased because I work for an NGO that only focuses about the reconstruction after the earthquake, so there is a continuous conversation about it. But when I go out of that circle, I feel that I was working and living in a small bubble, because there is no conversation about it. For urban design [urbanism], I am not sure that people have taken into account its importance in the new city that is to be built. I believe there is a plan, but it does not cover all the elements that a master plan has to. To me, unfortunately, I think it is all talk, because I think that... if someone, an architect says that they will build me a house, they must show me what this house is going to look like, what material it is going to use, what are its specifications, how much it will cost, by drawings, by estimations, etc. The same this goes for the government, if they say they are going to build me a city, they need to show something for it. How about they let me see those plans? How about they try to get our needs expressed in those plans? How about letting the locals participate in the inception of those plans and the population see its processes? I understand that it is not easy to get 3 million people to review a plan, but there are a lot of engineers, urban designers, architects in the vicinity of the city. But most of these ideas that the government is talking about are produced outside, and if we act according to these plans, the architecture will not be ours. Just let me tell you, we will have glass facades everywhere! Are you kidding me?? It is bright and hot every single day. I don't get it; I don't understand the logic behind it. I mean, I understand we want to be modern, sure, but how is somebody going to be able to work in an environment like that!

KB: where do you think this kind of thinking comes from, in your opinion? [call dropped]

EM: First of all, I believe that the government has a lack of, let me correct myself, not just the government, Haitians over all, do not value their own. All those proposals were designed by outsiders. And If I talk to these architects saying that I want to have a contemporary building, - which doesn't mean that they are good architects, there are good and bad architects in every country- they don't necessarily will understand what I deal with on a day to day basis. They may have a vague idea about how we don't have a solid infrastructure, but it's never a real knowledge, they don't live in it. So they would

give you this basic concept, but it can never really deal with the real issues we have. I live in Haiti, I know my lack of infrastructure, I don't have electricity 24 hours 7, I do not have water running in front of my house, I do not have a WASH system that I can just plug my building in and that is provided to me by my government, I do not have safe roads I can use to go to work. There are so many things that are lacking and so I do not take for granted in when I make my drawings for a house for example. There is a way to build to seize that reality and really deal with it. So I those contractors, or whoever designed these buildings, are looking from far away, thinking that Haiti is just like any other poor country, you know, and I am not saying that we are the poorest country, but I am saying that we are poor in certain ways and maybe we are rich in others.

KB: and so how do you think that your practice and knowledge of these realities can be geared towards, supporting the creative power of the Haitian community in architecture? Earlier you said that Haiti does not value very much its own. I researched a bit on the Master plans proposals for the city of Port-au-Prince and could not find any but the master plan by the American architect Andres Duany. I do not think it is going to be implemented right?

EM: No no, I analyzed a lot of the entries for the master plan proposals and he was by far the best one for me. Because, I think he was the one that took into account how difficult the question of infrastructure is in the city. Our neighbor country, the Dominican republic, where I did my bachelors, has this question already settled, so when you think about the conception of a building, you do not have to really take the whole infrastructure question into consideration, while here, the government has not, and will not in any foreseeable future, so we architects need to solve these issues on projects basis. That is the reality of things. The master plan proposed by Andres Duany's team, was thorough in that sense because he addressed this issue on a block level and he presented a complete set of explanatory plans as well as drawings of details and possible scenarios by which each bloc evolve and can have its own identity. I do not know if any competitors from the Haitian side that participated in this exercise, I do know that the prince William Foundation and the Andres Duany firm were committed by the government to present proposals for the downtown area of Port-au-Prince. I do not think that Haitian architects were invited to participate.

Side-note: The Andres Duany Master Plan

The innovation that Elrica is talking about is that this proposal suggests the idea of the urban village, and treats every block as an independent unit with its independent infrastructure. “The master plan emphasizes numerous state-of-the-art, sustainable design features including a beautiful waterfront park that also provides tertiary water treatment; block by block, multi-fuel, micro-turbine power generation; and rain water collection and processing. The plan also balances immediate recovery needs such as housing, schools, and clearing of unsafe structures with historic preservation goals.”²⁴¹



²⁴¹ <http://www.dpz.com/Projects/1013>



Urban village evolution (fig. XXXX)

KB: So, I understand that the major issue now in Port-au-Prince now is, as you said the lack of infrastructure, and if I am putting it correctly, a sort of misguided effort to gloss over the deeper issues that the city has. On the other side of the spectrum though, is there an engagement for a critical analysis of social issues that is happening now in Port-au-Prince, especially from you, the younger generation of architects, who are working, almost exclusively on issues of reconstructions, working in slums, but also in knowledge management and expansion. I am curious how you address, not only the building part of architecture, but also the social and cultural component, and how that translates into your own practice.

EM: the truth is, I am not sure if there is any organized effort to do that, if it was, I would have heard about it. But I have to tell you about this, the equivalent of the US AIA, there is the CNIAAH - College National des Ingenieurs Architectes Haitiens – So they were, like the AIA, established some 50 years ago, but they were sleeping for the past 30 years. With this, they are trying to rebuild themselves back up. About two years ago, they made a big effort to gather all the engineers and all architects, not only for the purposes of dissemination of information, but also to start to talk. So this is why the Biennale happened this year. They were funded by the USAID. The message was that we can have a position and be able to guide all architects and engineers to a better future of our profession and country. Some tough discussions have started as a result. Most of the events around the Biennale were around urban space and public spaces and we had a seminar also about the same topic last year. It was a great way to talk about architecture and urban design without necessarily talking about building. If you have a better public space it can improve the buildings around it. So it was a nice and different talk. One of the other reasons behind choosing this topic was that when the earthquake happened, all the public spaces were full because that's where the people went. It took a long time to get people out of them, a little over two years. These were the public spaces that we, my generation and even that of my parents grew up with. I think there was a decided politics to focus on rebuilding these spaces. Part of them has been rebuilt. So I guess the topic became about how do we consider and conceive of the public space and how do we use it and implement it in Haiti – and what's the relationship of this space to the buildings around it and with the city. In the biennale we ended up having a history about the public space. The fact is, we never took into consideration the creation of public space. They were ... the leftover spaces.

KB: What do you think were the elements/conclusions that spoke to you most about in the biennale?

EM: huh, It's funny you say conclusion. We ended up having more questions than what we came in with. But it is a great start. One of the participants was an architect from Switzerland called Jerome Chenal had an interesting presentation about what constitutes a public space. To him, sidewalks were public space, the road as well.. we as Haitians we were complaining about how the merchants were invading them and they were not

leaving anything for the rest of us. He then told us a story about how in Switzerland, there are not enough people in the streets or in the parts or on the sidewalks. So after this, a colleague of mine and I were discussing which ones we would prefer? Our problems? Or theirs? Or is there an ideal/ the right about of people with the right about of the public space. Our country is not regulated enough, so therefore people tend to bend the rules and that becomes the status quo. While elsewhere, people can bend their rules once in a while, but the system is solid enough .. we live in the 'bending the rule' era. And it has a bad effect on how we live and how we practice architecture, or how we are perceived... I am not sure I answered your question.

KB: absolutely, I'd be happy to hear more.

EM: I think that there is a matter of boundary making. A lot of us do not feel like we have our place in the city anymore. Because the streets and open spaces, leftover spaces as said before, are invaded in an anarchic way. When you think about the locations of these spaces like parks for example, there is no reason to go to them, their locations are often terrible. It's likely that they are in the middle of high traffic, with a ravine next to them, with a high level of noise, etc. Just a leftover land that they used as a public space not thought within a scenario of use.

KB: Do you think that this idea of public space in Haiti exacerbates a lot of feelings of disconnection between social groups, because the public spaces are not designed in a way to bring people together, but as residual spaces? Also there a part of the biennale dedicate to architectural projects?

EM: yes definitely! Regarding your second question, yes, there was a focus on public spaces designed and built in Haiti after the earthquake. We talked about one of the parks that were created in [name of the neighborhood unclear]. It's a new park designed in a residual land, but I believe that it was quite innovative and thoughtful design. It's a noisy area so they created ways to lower the noise; they made spaces for people to enjoy quietness. It is a great intent.

KB: were there any student competitions or events during the biennale?

EM: There were, but not a lot. Not many students applied. I think it is the first time that students were allowed to participate in an event dedicated to professionals. So I guess we are not used to this yet. There were maybe over 20 scholarships for students in Haiti to

participate in the conference, just to attend presentations and learn from the seminars. But not a lot of them came, because they did not know what it was. I think the information was not disseminated well. Like I said, I think it was the first time that something like this was happening, so unless you studied somewhere else or you have been introduced to this type of architectural event somehow, you do not know what a biennale is. It is kind of new to us.

KB: there is this idea that when you are facing an environment, where resources are scarce, it is difficult to engage in exercises that do not conserve or produce resources. Do you think that that applies to the case of Haitian architecture? Can that be a cause for why for example there are not a lot of competitions in Haiti, as they are in other places in the world? And that the few competitions that we see, have a large participation from the world and are won by foreigners, but not as much from Haitians?

EM: Well I think that maybe that can be a cause, [phone call drops] maybe a lot do not have the possibility to set aside a lot of time to work on a competition, especially if they do not have their practice. So yeah, scarcity is an important element, but we have to define what scarcity is. For example I went to the biennale in Cuba, now we can say that Cuba is also a very poor country, and I can assume that the same comment would apply to it. But the level of projects that were presented, by the students as well as by the architects was spectacular. It was a priceless experience to me I'd say. I think it is a mindset and yes, there is no such thing as architectural competitions in Haiti .. so we kind of learn that you cannot give what you do not have. It's kind of hard to ask someone to produce something when they have never seen it. As in interesting architecture in Haiti... If you want to only build houses, what are the things around you that you look up to, your idols? What are the famous architectural projects? Who are the famous architects? Now I can tell you some, but when I was growing up I did not know who were the architects of the city. Most of those architects had a second job! As in you would know them through a different job and you would see a drafting table and that's when you realize that they are also architects. So yeah it is more like a matter of not having any role models in the Haitian context, because architects have been so devalued. When I was in architecture school, which is a decisive moment of an architect's moment, I did not even know of the CNIAAH (AIA equivalent) because they had no interest in reaching out to the student

community. Right now they are CNIAAH is putting itself together, so they are still not in a position of influence. So yeah, scarcity is a major part, but also of all these things. That being said, this year, a couple of colleagues and I decided we were going to participate in a competition in China, because, exactly! I saw people doing that and was more open to participating even if I knew that I was not going to win. Yeah, I did not win, but I think it was a great exercise. It was amazing to create something like that. And when we talked to people in the biennale and said that we participated in that competition, people looked at us like we were crazy. But it felt great to do so.

KB: that sounds fantastic! in your opinion, in an ideal world, for you to practice architecture in Haiti, in Port-au-Prince and have you creative side flourish, can you describe to me the things you would want to be in place and the environment you would want to be in to be able to replicate that feeling that you had when you participated in the Chinese competition?

EM: I would say infrastructure, and more importantly, the value, as in the government valuing architects. We NEED that space, we NEED that respect.

KB: How would you describe that infrastructure? Is it still the physical infrastructure? Or is it an infrastructure that will allow you to exert your power?

EM: the non-physical structure is the government. Once they recognize our role, and giving us that value, that we are a critical piece of the puzzle.

KB: two more questions and I promise I will let you go. Just to give the Haitian society its worth. What I am writing now, is nothing pretentious like what you can see on ‘how to save Haiti’ pamphlets, I am only just trying to understand how local thinking, not organizations or development, just the thinking from locals with local knowledge, can better society. So in order to do that I would want you to tell me a bit about what your views on your society is and how you see your own identity as a young female Haitian architect working in Port-au-Prince, working in an international development organization fit in society now.

EM: There are a lot of questions asked in one in this question.

KB: yes, sorry! Let’s say, what is Haitian identity to you as of today?

EM: ok, well, in my opinion, right now in 2015, we lost our identity and a lot of people are looking for it. I am not sure that there can be any possible and specific identity to

Haitians anymore, but we definitely lost it. It's hard because there are so many things I am unable to answer, and it comes from being exposed to a lot of things that there is no real Haitian, and our identity is very confused. For example, everybody wants to be like the United States because we are so close to it, everybody wants to be like the [Haitian] expats, because [we think that it's better than what we have]. Although we are attached so much to the land, we try to find ways to get out of it. It is understandable, because it is miserable to live here compared to developed countries. People would rather go and suffer somewhere else, than stay here and work hard to make the situation better.

KB: what does this do to Haitian culture in your opinion?

EM: It kills it! My kids will not know what Haitian culture is. There will be so little left of it, and it will take so much to be exposed to it.

KB: can you give me an example?

EM: ok, I can give you an example. There was an article that came out some time ago and it was shocking. It said that a lot of Haitian kids are born in the US or in Canada. So once a whole generation is born in another country, what is considered Haitian? Yes, thank god we have this thing called blood. As long as you have Haitian blood you are Haitian, but what is holding them to this country? So this is why I am telling you that it is going to be lost. It is a question everyone faces, if a Haitian has a chance of having their kids somewhere else, they will. You want the best for your child, so in this case, you are faced with choosing between your child or your country. It is a hard choice. Art, literature, religion, language! It's just the usual day-to-day life, it is still there. But it is disappearing. For example, when people talk about Haiti in the 1980s, they say that Haiti was so powerful and so well represented whenever they go to another country. They were such a role model. And we are not that anymore. It is so.. The education is so low right now. I am worried that nobody can even go to college if our education system is the same as today. When you are here in Haiti, you can feel some Haitiness, through the dance and the music and the food, but people for example speak English like they were born in America.