

*1 The plan on the preceding page is based upon  
measured drawings documented by Ecole  
D'Architecture et D'Urbanisme de Dakar in L'Habitat  
Traditional Au Senegal.*

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**SNAPSHOTS FROM SENEGAL:  
Extracts From The Notebooks  
Appendix A  
By Valerie Gaddis Purswell**

***Journey Log: Arrival***  
***Language: "Morphemes" and a Gravestone.***

I struggle with French and my inability to effectively communicate even while I feel immediately at home; the smells, the colors and sounds echo forward from my childhood in Zaire. I remember sitting for hours upon a young European girl's gravestone trying to understand the mysteries of language. How could someone think in Swahili, Lunda or French without secretly knowing and understanding English? And if they knew it why did they know not what snow was?

***Snapshots from the Road***  
***Cases: Variation and Form***

Refugee camps frequent the road. One of the refugee tribes, the Peulh, dwells in grass thatch buildings. They are a nomadic people, who normally traverse the desert throughout Mauritania and Senegal. Following the recent bloodshed and violence between Mauritania and Senegal, the Black tribes are fleeing from Mauritania to Senegal. The White Moors have been deported from Senegal. Slavery has only as recently as 1980, been abolished in Mauritania. However, it is still practiced in the interior, Arab against Black. Race tensions remain high. Border skirmishes are frequent.

Clay block (banco) and concrete houses (called cases) line the road. They are often finished with a mud layer or stucco. Both square and circular windows pierce the walls. On occasion, triangular windows are used. The reason one form is chosen over another is not apparent. Perimeter fences (either wood or mud), shoulder height, bound many of the family units. The residual streets are shaped.

***Journey Log: Desert Soil and Sun***  
***Climate: Responses***

Along the streets, the most notable element is the desert soil. It pervades the landscape, natural and built. The sandy soil is omnipresent in color and texture. Consequently the environs emit a sense of barrenness. Clay molds the roofs, walls and floors, public and private. During the brief rainy season the city floor becomes mire amidst large pools of water.

The dense packing of cubic volumes to maximize shading is a climatic response to the intense sun and desert.<sup>1</sup> It is characteristic of Islamic and pre-Islamic people. Small, sparse windows punched through the walls express



*Peulh Refugee Settlement*

another climatic response. The windows respond to a light that lacks nuance. One either closes out the sun or languishes in its full intensity. Light shifts to shadow suddenly with little transition.

Christian Norberg-Schulz suggests in *Genius Loci, Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture* that a desert town should be compact. This compactness presents a psychological response to the desert. It ought to be a place we enter a locale we are inside. Thus a foothold in the boundless desert is found.<sup>2</sup>

***Journey Log: Islamic City: A Delineation***

***Order: Religious Patterns***

The Islamic City manifests its reverent purpose to preserve religious and social values.<sup>3</sup> Cyrus Meckket states the purpose of the Islamic City's religious core (the mosque alongside associated educational and political institutions) in Middle Eastern Cities:

"Its <religious centers'/ mosque's ><sup>4</sup> role is to put the population in conformity with the Islamic way of life which determines all aspects of the city, conceived as a confraternity of believers."<sup>5</sup>

Most of the merchant class, Soninke and Bambara, follow the Mouride order of Islam, whose center lies in Touba, Senegal. Touba is reputed to be the largest Mosque built in West Africa. Most of the agrarian classes are of the Tidjanes brotherhood, centered on Tivaouane, Senegal.

The Soninke and the Bambara extensively practice the five pillars of Islamic faith. Shahada, the declaration of faith, is the first. Upon the pronouncement of "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his messenger", one is considered a part of the community of Islam, ummah. The practice of five daily prayers, salat, forms the second pillar. The men regularly cleanse themselves and pray, facing Mecca at dawn, noon, mid afternoon (three o'clock), sunset, and dusk. Zakat or almsgiving constitutes the third tenet. The practice of fasting, sawn, is the fourth pillar. The fifth pillar, hajj, calls one to sojourn to Mecca on a pilgrimage.

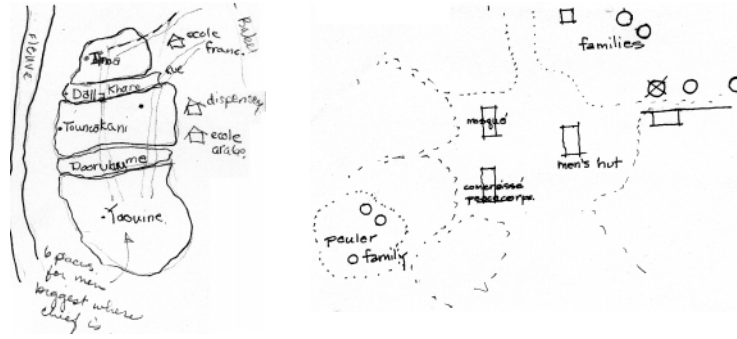
***Notebook: Dwelling Design***

***Cities: Structure***

Amos Rapoport notes in *House Form and Culture*, two traditions of settlement have evolved. In one, the entire settlement is regarded as the context for living. The dwelling is simply regarded as a more private and enclosed element of this. In the other one's home is understood as the predominant location for living, with the larger settlement seen as linkage, almost a wasteland to be crossed.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the manner in which cultures use their settlements affects the form of their dwellings and vice versa. This is exemplified by cultures that primarily dwell in the house, and others that primarily dwell in the public realm, such as in the streets of plazas.<sup>7</sup>

Rapoport observes that the vernacular and Islamic traditions are examples of the first and that Anglo-American cultures are examples of the second.<sup>8</sup> In each culture the boundary to ones' domain is delineated.<sup>9</sup> The



Sketches Of The Town Tyabo.

threshold becomes a critical distinction between the private inside and public outside.

What varies amid cultures is the method by which they regulate privacy, not their fundamental ability for “self/ other” boundary governance.<sup>10</sup> The means of definition and placement of thresholds differs between Moslem and a Western culture. Their occurrence does not. The Moslem dwellings place the threshold further forward than Western residences. In *Genius Loci, Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, Christian Norberg-Schulz suggest that:

“Whereas the desert is what man has to escape from, and accordingly was related by the ancient Egyptians to Death, the house is a protected world where life may blossom. It is not surprising, hence, that the transition between these two realms becomes an important, “architectural problem.”<sup>11</sup>

The gateway’s importance into the individual residences is indeed notable throughout Islamic communities in Senegal. The Soninke entryway is always marked more elaborately than the rest of the wall. Round rooms sometimes used as gateways through which to enter the family compound.

**Notebook: Mixture of Cultures**

**Cities: African Magic and Islamic Absolutism Join**

The Soninke and the Bambara are Islamic societies who dwell in the eastern edge of Senegal, Africa. Senegal is a country that is ninety percent Moslem. Islamic influence upon the Soninke may be traced back as early as 1068 AD.<sup>12</sup> It is less clear when the Bambara towns began their conversion to Islam. African urban patterns originated and are nourished in cultural, economic and political circumstances fundamentally different from those of Western industrial towns. Scholars emphasize that the majority of West African towns began as centers of political power and authority. Trade and crafts were, however, vital to their existence and development. Most of the towns provided these services in addition to furnishing a refuge for farmers.<sup>13</sup>

Many cities and town in the Sahel of West Africa, due to their strong influence by Islam, contain strong parallels with conventional Middle Eastern cities.<sup>14</sup> Classical Islam, however, has not taken root in any region of West Africa. Rather, one finds a mixture of Islamic communities that exhibit an expanse of compromise between doctrine and the demands of local cultures. Faced with strong indigenous societies, Islam has had to reconcile itself to cultural accommodation during its initial introduction as well as later once it was established. Rene A. Bravmann writes: “Aspects of indigenous life are retained everywhere precisely because they provide solutions that lie outside the universalistic realm of Islam.”<sup>15</sup> Regionally, the pure and absolutism of Islam joins with the magic of Africa.<sup>16</sup>

The practice of Islam has merged with the ancestral religions of both tribes. Belief in spirits and taboos remain a fundamental part of their existence. Children and adults alike wear talismans to ward of evil spirits. Talismans are also buried within new buildings and over lintels for the same purpose. The Marabout, Islamic religious leader, comes and blesses any new building before its dwellers move in.

In *African Cities and Towns before the European Conquest*, Richard Hall relates an ethic common to African life



*Soninke Village*

throughout the continent:

“Community layouts mirrored the laws of nature and the forces of philosophical thought...African towns and cities...were regarded by their inhabitants as concrete expressions of their inner thoughts about man, nature, and the cosmos.”<sup>17</sup>

I found this to be the case with the Bambara and Soninke. The expressions of several oppositions compatible with Islamic traditions are manifested in the towns. Among others, the urban layouts reveal an underlying separation of the male and female domains and a delineation of the public and private realms. Their expression is, however, fluid instead of static.

**Notebook: Phonemes**

**Structure: Opposition and Variations**

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Jean Piaget contends that Structure may be discovered between a set of entities that manifest the following basic tenets: the ideas of wholeness, the idea of transformation, and the idea of self-regulation.

The wholeness of a structure contains an inner coherence. Terence Hawkes describes this as:

“The arrangement of entities will be complete in itself and not something that is simply a composite formed of otherwise independent elements. Its constituent parts will conform to a set of intrinsic laws that determine its nature and theirs.”<sup>18</sup>

Since a structure is not static, it contains methods by which it alters over time. An example may be found in the fusion, across centuries, between the Soninke or Bambara culture and Islamic ideologies and traditions, without the destruction of the basic structures. I was only able to identify a few expressions of these structures that govern the Soninke and Bambara cultures.

Islamic cities are ordered by the dominant axiom of privacy and its strict separation from public urban life.<sup>19</sup> The Islamic concept of spatial urban order results in distinct “territories” with the Public Street and open spaces confined to the residual areas between residences.

The privacy tenet of Islam treats women in a fundamentally different manner than from men. According to Erwin Galantry:

“Islamic tradition assigns separate roles to men and women and goes to great length to safeguard privacy and female modesty. In principle, public space is considered unsafe and “to be eschewed by women” and even within the home private space is layered to permit further reclusion for individual privacy.”<sup>20</sup>

Within a classic Islamic society a dichotomy occurs surrounding private inside and the use of the public outside.



*Soninke Village*

The male resides throughout the settlement while the female is bound to the private domain of the home. It is apparently a strict concentric structure. In contrast, the opposition in the Soninke society appears to be a more fluid concentric structure, with greater ambiguity.

The binary relationship between female/ male and the private/ the public domain exist as a complex system of oppositions with a greater degree of variation. I will try to deal with these oppositions on a phonemic level. This aspect presents opposites within a fabric of critical/ crucial contrasts. These oppositions and variations only make sense in their synchronic dimension, not their diachronic dimension. Again Terence Hawkes writes: "The notion of a complex pattern of paired functional differences, of binary - opposition as it has been termed, is clearly basic to it <structuralism>."<sup>21</sup>

***Journey Log: The Soninke***  
***Partial Expressions: The Search***

"Each system, that is, kinship, food, political ideology, marriage ritual, cooking, etc., constitutes a partial expression of the total culture, conceived ultimately as a single gigantic language. Moreover, "...if we find these structures to be common to several spheres, we have the right to conclude that we have reached a significant knowledge of the unconscious attitudes of the society or societies under consideration."<sup>22</sup>

Thus, I began the search for a few manifestations of the Soninke culture through examining rituals and traditions. The Soninke traditionally live in mud-walled thatched homes in extended family groups. Clusters of dwellings are compactly grouped to form villages or towns. A wall surrounds each dwelling. This pattern found throughout Islamic communities provides separation of domains. The wall effectively separates the house and its life from both the street and neighbors.<sup>23</sup>

Inside the private wall reside several small houses and or one - room cottages. Some are attached to the perimeter wall. Most are freestanding. These rooms provide sheltered areas within a main area. Verandas often provide a transition between the "courtyard" and the rooms. At night the animals are kept in the courtyard around the house.

Wood beds lie on the veranda, where one might sleep. Inside mud platforms with mats placed over them serve as beds. Occasionally wood beds replace the mud platforms.

Traditionally, the boundary walls are constructed from mud and sun-dried brick. This technique is still commonly used unifying immense portions of the Soninke towns' character. The perimeter walls that surround the dwellings appear as continuous, enclosing surfaces. The elements, which break the "regularity" of the residential lanes, are individualized gateways that signal entrance into the private world beyond. Although a clear demarcation occurs between the private and the public, in reality the Soninke allow little physical privacy. They are an extremely social people. In comparison to Western standards, their privacy lies largely within oneself, not with ones objects or ones physical environ.



*Mosque Under Construction*

The labyrinthine paths in the Soninke town evolve from the gradual packing units, leaving the streets as residual places. This reflects the constituent datum of Arabic towns.<sup>24</sup> Built in this manner; the street has a noted human quality, shifting in shape and size in accommodation of desire. The walls are placed topologically, thus making room for humans in an intimate manner, both inside: the private and outside: the walled street. The flowing details and gentle molding of the walls are west African in nature rather than Islamic. This contrasts with the Islamic architecture in the Middle East that emphasizes precise regularity and pristine geometry.<sup>25</sup> The public outside receives its distinct presence from these details and boundaries. Louis Kahn states: "The street is a room of agreement. The street is dedicated by each house owner to the city."<sup>26</sup> Compare this with many walled streets (i.e. a parking lot wall) in the West, which seem devoid of human scale or accommodation.

The resultant streets mold lanes that are narrow and meandering, frequently shifting their direction. Deviations in width, and ruptures in the walls defining the path defy Western desires for Euclidean order.<sup>27</sup> The blind alley, characteristically Islamic, rarely appears in these towns. However the semipublic streets retain the private character noted in other Islamic towns.<sup>28</sup> This character is probably emitted from the narrow width and the high thick walls which form the street. In Soninke villages, the residential lanes frequently allow only three people to walk abreast.

***Journey Log: Analogies and Thought***  
***Structural Contrasts: Male and Female Domains***

"Analogical thought" works by imposing on the world a series of structural "contrasts" or "oppositions" to which all the members of the culture tacitly assent and then proposing that these oppositions are analogically related in that their differences are felt to resemble each other. As a result an analysis of the analogical relationship between the oppositions of "up" and "down", "hot" and "cold", "raw" and "cooked" will offer insights into the nature of the particular "reality" that each culture perceives."<sup>29</sup>

Terence Hawkes

The preeminence of the woman's domain within the home may take different forms between the Middle Eastern home and the Soninke compound, however, the clear distinctions between the public and the private; the male and female realms remain. As with most Moslems the Soninke are a polygamous society. In Soninke communities the African male visits the women's house (his wives' or mother's). He does not have one of his own.<sup>30</sup>

***Journey Log: Tyabo***  
***Structure: Urban Order***

Islamic cities have distinct zoning patterns determined by the three principal activities of the city: residential, commercial / business, and religious, political, and economic governance. Islamic town plans intricately intertwine the main "public"<sup>31</sup> buildings (mosques and the adjacent open squares, schools, clinics, etc.) into the urban weave, linking them with linear markets, other centers and main routes.<sup>32</sup> The markets (suks) are formed by long strings of shops and commercial complexes. The main routes connect with narrow, wandering residential streets that progressively become more secluded. The clustering of private dwellings forms this semipublic domain. I use Tyabo to illustrate and contrast with some of these ideas.





*Soninke Granary*

Tyabo is a small but historically important town situated 8 kilometers from Bakel, Senegal. Tyabo was the Soninke capital of the Goye dynasty during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It lies on the banks of the Senegal River. The town has around 1780 inhabitants. Forty percent of the male population work as farmers.

The district territories that underlie Islamic cities are evident in Tyabo as in other Soninke towns. The main public buildings, the mosque, two schools, and the clinic abide in residual areas and are interwoven with the small market areas, and the main routes. The main routes connect with narrow, wandering residential streets that progressively become more secluded.

In his essay “The Assimilation of Traditional Practices in Contemporary Architecture”, Roland Depret writes:

“...It is religion, Islam to the greatest extent, marked by close links with the religious Community, the Imam, the Koran school, more than by the physical presence of the Mosque. The latter is rarely the central point of the village; it is generally a simple structure.”<sup>33</sup>

The Mosque in Tyabo is placed along the town edge. The men’s huts in the public street supply public meeting grounds, as well as the “inside”. Within each family group the residential streets converge around a center point chosen during the creation of the village by the original inhabitant of the clan.<sup>34</sup>

With each family living in a house or set of houses surrounded by a wall, the streets of Tyabo take on a tone of regularity. Unlike Western buildings where the facade serves to publicize the owner’s wealth, the Islamic house only unveils its richness in the interior. Thus, in the Islamic tradition, the coexistence of the rich and the poor is allowed in the same neighborhood.<sup>35</sup>

From far away Tyabo draws your attention with the silhouette of a solid mass of banco buildings rising from the surrounding landscape. The town spreads out horizontally before you. Christian Norberg - Schultz writes in Genius Loci that:

“The main existential dimension of the desert is the horizontal, and the Arabs in fact have always preferred low, horizontally extended buildings (except in mountainous countries such as Yemen or Morocco). The only vertical element is the slender needle of the Minaret, which reminds man that he does not only live on earth but under the sky.”<sup>36</sup>

These elements are consistently found in Soninke towns. The mosque minarets frequently pierce the strong horizontal dimension of the towns. They constitute the focal vertical elements, eclipsing the telephone antennas. Sparse three or four two-story buildings graced the villages I visited. Repatriates often build the two story buildings from France and abroad. There is only one three story building in Bakel, a town of 10,000.

***Journey Log: Modernization and Changing Building Traditions***  
***Ritual: An Eroding Structure***

Due to the great difficulty of surviving in a desert land and a disastrous economic situation the Soninke as a rule send their eldest son to France to work illegally. The money sent home supports entire families. Repatriates



*Soninke Town Structure Diagram. Plan And Axon Of A Soninke Family Compound. <sup>1</sup>*

often bring home Western aesthetics of progress and modernization. New traditions of building are, thus, emerging.

Concrete homes are much hotter than banco homes, especially those with tin roofs. Mud roofs are significantly cooler than the corrugated metal roofs replacing them. An alternative exists. The addition of five- percent concrete to the banco mixture substantially increases building longevity, while greatly reducing maintenance demands. Such homes stay cooler than those built with concrete. This solution is not, however, perceived as Modern. Thus concrete, tin, and paint are used. And the women sweep.

Once a year, before the rainy season, they patch up and perhaps “repigment” or repaint. If they mix the banco with 5% concrete, yearly maintenance is not required. The clay is traditionally mixed with termite hill dirt, dung, straw, rice hulls, and / or thatch from the sorghum, millet, or grains that they grow. In *Reading the Contemporary African City*, Labelle Prussin writes about the tradition of annual resurfacing throughout the Savannah – Sahel:

“I also believe that this rendering has more than a physical, technological function. It reflects an involvement with the built environment over time.”<sup>37</sup>

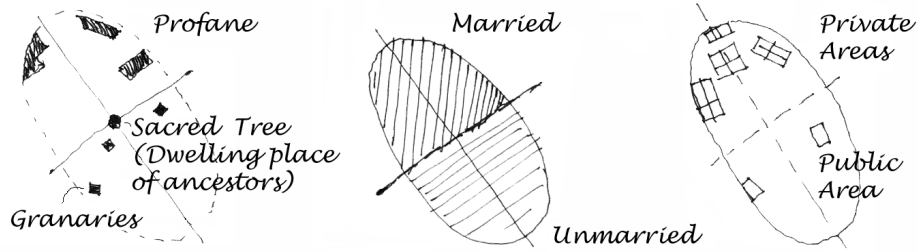
During the yearly maintenance or the construction of new buildings, the village was organized according to age groups and the woman’s / wives age group all help the prospective builders in their endeavors. They move from one case to the next. Men do a similar kind of thing.

Historically, women were in charge of surface designs, inside and out. The women had secret places where the best pigments could be found. Nydary Toure indicated that the women were responsible for the designs on the front of the houses, the relief breezeblocks and grillwork. The wall facing the interior courts was decorated with “breeze blocks”. Traditionally houses are decorated inside with different colors and designs. Painted with different soil pigments. As many as four or five colors are used in triangular and or rectangular patterns. Bathily indicated that the men designed the breezeblocks, while the women did the detailing. The men make the mud block. They also do the underlying plastering.

Virtually every Soninke knows the traditional means of construction. In some instances “even” women will build roundhouses. The masons, however, know the means in greater detail. Historically men made the bricks and built the walls. The women were responsible for the surface detailing and decoration. Women harbored secrets surrounding the places where different soil pigments were found. Sophisticated rituals for both men and women encompassed the construction of new buildings and the required yearly repairs. Many of the males’ traditions continue on while the women’s vanish.

New values and standards of aesthetics are emerging based upon Modernization. Concrete and tin are replacing banco (sun-baked clay and grain chaff bricks). Many of the Soninke rituals and traditions surrounding building are disappearing. Individual expression within the built structure vanishes. The emerging tendency is

<sup>1</sup> The plan and axon are based upon measured drawings documented by Ecole D’Architecture et D’Urbanisme de Dakar in *L’Habitat Traditionnel Au Senegal*.



*Structure Diagrams Of The Soninke Family Compound*

to construct a building in concrete and add a few decorative touches at the surface level to give it a Soninke and or an Islamic flavor. This is happening in varying degrees throughout West Africa and the Middle East.<sup>38</sup>

While much of the personalized expression and diversity is being lost, an intimacy remains. The West largely lacks this kind of intimacy. Because masons and clients share a common way of living, they can individualize and vary residential and ceremonial building designs, while considering the traditions that the models embodied and the roots from which they come.<sup>39</sup> The dwellings are, thus, intimately those of the people who dwell in them.

Perhaps materials are not the only measure of permanence in architecture. Societal continuity needs to be considered as well. These indigenous cultures contain a kinetic nature essential to their architecture. To freeze one of many possible manifestations and variance of form may well be eroding the very structure from which it sprouts. Historically, as relationships alter over time, so do the configurations of built form, within the family compound and ultimately the community. As the clay is malleable, so are the configurations of the community.

**Notebook: Thoughts**  
**Regionalism: Its Role**

It is important to study such cultures and their fusion with external influences so that architecturally, Modernization and progress do not mean uniformity of urban character. Regionalism retains cultural influences and expression. An attitude valuing Regionalism can humanize our cities for us instead of alienating us from them. Modern does not have to mean losing oneself while gaining progress.

**Notebook: Thoughts**  
**Formal Unity: The Autochthon**

“89 years after Gauguin ventured out to Tahiti, 73 years after Picasso opened his eyes to African art and painted *Les Femmes d'Alger*, the architect's world has hardly widened...Each period requires a constituent language – an instrument with which to tackle the human problems posed by the period as well as those which from period to period stay the same, i.e. those posed by all of us primordial being.”<sup>40</sup>

It is through Aldo van Eyck's writing and studies of the autochthon that I was introduced to Structuralist architecture. Through the study of the autochthon, we can better understand our own time and societal needs. Within human existence there is a continuum of basic human qualities intrinsic to us, immutable. There is a formal unity to indigenous cultures, their homes, villages and society. Their formal language illustrates their understanding of the cosmos. A way of being is reflected throughout their formal language. Van Eyck strives in his architecture and writing to encourage a twentieth century counterpart to this way of life. He encourages us to do the same.



*Banco Wall*

***Journey Log: Built Form***  
***Bambara Village: Alahina.***

I interviewed the Chief of the village, a retired mason. Triori interpreted from Bambara to French. Then Tanya and Magnus translated the French into English for me.

The round banco buildings are easier to build. A mason is not required for the construction. The round roof is also easier to build. The round windows or triangular windows are also easier to construct. They are used when an enclosure – such as a shutter or a screen that opens is not necessary or desired. Both men and women know how to build these.

The round casses (houses) are hard to furnish. Wasted space is left around the furniture. The square huts are preferred, although they're more expensive and difficult to build. They require a mason, who squares the walls and the roof. Or someone who is experienced in making them is used.

There is a man's casse in the center of the village. Men only. This is where they rest and meet.

***Journey Log: Broken Stories***  
***Partial Myths: Practices***  
***Pottery Mysteries***

Pottery is considered a woman's trade. The wives of the men who are the blacksmiths, those who make charcoal, are the ones who become potters. Great mysteries and beliefs surround potters and their relation to the world. For example, potters are believed to be able to keep the rain away. Traditionally pots are fired in an open-air kiln. If it rains, the pots crack. Upon the appearance of rain clouds, the farmers request the potters to allow the rain to fall. She subsequently "decides" depending on whether she is firing pots. The potters' skills are renowned as precise and amazing. They can line the interior of a pot with linen, followed by wood, then charcoal. Next the cannery is fired inside and out. Once the firing is finished, the entire clothe remains intact, unsinged.

Making brick that is not fired is generally considered man's works. It is the firing of the clay that relegates an object into the woman's domain.

***Eating in Kadiel***

The Bambara strictly follow Islamic eating tenets. One eats only with their right hand. The woman pulls apart the meat with someone's help and distributes it around the bowl. Then the men eat – first, separate from the women. Guests are asked to eat separately in a different room. This so that they will not feel pressured to eat too little or too much. Soap and water are also given for washing your hands. When you are full and asked if you want more. Harie Tip is your response; "I am full".



*Bambara Village*

***Journey Log: Circumcision Rites***  
***Ritual: Practice***

On the edge of town, by a tree, lies a public ancestral sacred burial ground. Several hundred years ago around 200 people from the village ate fruit from this particular tree and died. Stones are laid by the tree marking the ancestral grave.

After an evening dance the Soninke boys, who have prepared for the rite of manhood; circumcision, are led into the desert hills. The elders, the boys and the men who will perform the circumcision, stay in the hills for twenty-four hours. Those boys who die are immediately buried in the hills, never to "return" home. Secrets, known only to men, are imparted to the new "celibates". The young men follow their elders' back to the town in a straight line. Most of the elders ride on donkeys or horses. Some of the young men also ride on animals. Their young women greet the new celibates with flowers. Their mothers also wait to greet their sons along with the rest of the tribe. The new celibates are led to the stones, by the tree, because it is the place where the ancestral spirits live. The new celibates are presented to the ancestors. A sacred dance is performed, followed by circle dances and a feast. During a different season, girls are also circumcised in a secret ceremony where they are given the wisdom of women.

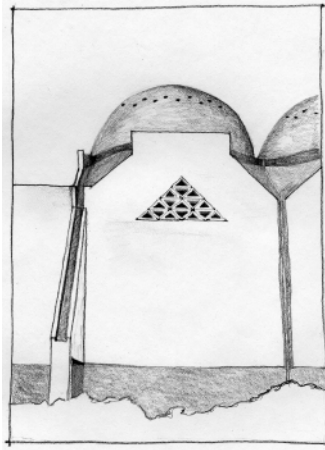
Young women stay in their mother's house until they are married. In some villages upon circumcision (around fourteen years old) they can move in with an older woman who is "separated" from her husband (perhaps in France). All celibates return to their mother's home for meals.

When young women or girls stay in their mother's house, they either live in the same room or in the salon. The young boys might live in a room adjacent to their mothers, but on the exterior edge. It is a separate additional room (see sketch). Or they might move to a separate case within the family units.

***Journey Log: The Celibate and The Married.***  
***Structure: A Concentric Opposition***

A concentric opposition exists between the celibate and the married. There are many variations on the physical location of the separation, but it always exists. The male celibates (circumcised) move into a one-room cabin within the family compound or elsewhere in the village where there is a spare room. Rarely, will they occupy a spare room in their mother's house. The celibates' rooms are built up against the wall or into the wall. Sometimes they are round; sometimes they are square. They are housed separately from those family members who are married or uncircumcised. Boys are frequently circumcised around the age of fourteen years old.

A Soninke wife most often has a room to sleep in, a salon and a veranda. This area is considered her realm. She shares the douche (outhouse), granary, common yard and kitchen with her husband's other wives and other family members living in the compound. Young women and girls live in their mother's area. In larger towns like Bakel, a wife might not have a separate house, but would have separate rooms.



*Mosque*

In the public realm, within the town centers, there are “huts” for the men of the village to gather. These meeting places are for men only. The public constitutes the males’ domain. And although Soninke women appear much freer to transverse the public domain than North African women, the cultural view is clearly that the women’s realm lies in the private domain. There are also clear distinctions as to male and female trades.

The granaries are generally round structures raised above the ground. As the source of the family’s continuance, they are considered one of the two most important buildings in the unit. Rice is generally stored in the granary by the kitchen. On occasion, rice might be stored in the house, but not the other grains. I was not able to pursue the oppositions between rice and the other grains and inside versus outside, furthers. Cooked foods are eaten on the veranda. Perhaps there is also an opposition of the raw and the cooked operating here.

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The douche, toilet, and shower were separated from the house. They are lined up against the outside wall of the compound. Endra Tourme indicated that the kitchen area mainly occurs in the front portion of the court. To please her husband a wife may, however, cook a special evening meal behind her house. In the larger family compounds the kitchen lies in the center.

***Notebook: Thoughts***  
***Design: Work in Progress***

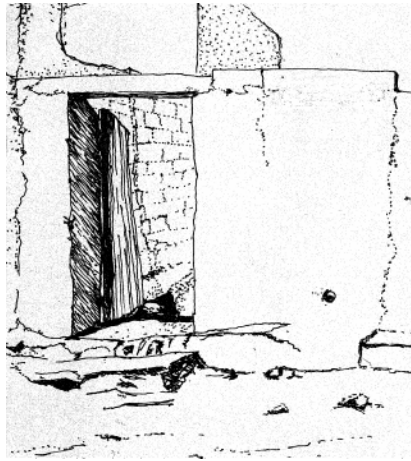
Considering a home as a possible place of birth and of death provides definite determinants within the design process. Although homes are infrequently places of death and birth, they need to be able to support them, along with the occasions in between. Twin phenomena are opposites of equal value, which are reciprocal and often paradoxical. Through testing the cross alliances involving twin images, one can explore the design consequences of their choices. The process requires designing relationships over time and a range of opportunities. Collage – like networks of layered systems, kaleidoscopic in nature, are built in active service of us, making the ordinary magic through generosity and the presence of interpretable architectural elements.

<sup>1</sup>Ervin Y. Galantry, “Islamic Identity and the Metropolis: Continuity and Conflict in the Middle East City”, in The Middle East City: Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World, ed. Saqqaf (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), p.7.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Norberg - Schulz, Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1979), p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Irwin Altman, Martin Chemers, Culture and Environment (Monterey: Brooks/ Cole Publishing Company, 1980), p.218.

<sup>4</sup> The bracketed section is my insertion.



*Walled Entry*

- <sup>5</sup> Cyrus Mechket, "The Islam City and the Western City: A Comparative Analysis" in The Middle East City: Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World, ed. Abdulaziz Saqqaf (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), p.31v.
- <sup>6</sup> Amos Rapoport, House Form and Culture (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin, 1969), p.69.
- <sup>7</sup> Rapoport, p.69.
- <sup>8</sup> Rapoport, p.72.
- <sup>9</sup> Rapoport, p.80.
- <sup>10</sup> Altman, p.84.
- <sup>11</sup> Norberg - Schulz, p.116.
- <sup>12</sup> Stride Ifeka, Peoples and Empires of West Africa (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1972), p.31.
- <sup>13</sup> Anthony O'Conner, The African City (London: Hutchinson & Co, Ltd., 1983), p.30.
- <sup>14</sup> O'Conner, p.30.
- <sup>15</sup> Rene A Bravmann, Islam and Tribal Art in West Africa (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.31.
- <sup>16</sup> Bravmann, p.29.
- <sup>17</sup> Richard W. Hull, African Cities and Town Before The European Conquest (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976), p.45.
- <sup>18</sup> Terence Hawkes, Structuralism and Semiotics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p.16.
- <sup>19</sup> Mechket, p.30.
- <sup>20</sup> Galantry, p.10.
- <sup>21</sup> Hawkes, p.24.
- <sup>22</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, Anthropologie Structurale [Structural Anthropology] (Paris: Plon,1958) trans. by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (London: Allen Lane, 1968; Penguin Books, 1972), p.87.



*Soninke Facade*

<sup>23</sup> Rapoport, p.66.

<sup>24</sup> Norberg - Schulz, p.120.

<sup>25</sup> Norberg - Schulz, p.129.

<sup>26</sup> Louis Kahn, "Credo", in *Architectural Design*, 5/1974, p.280, quoted by Christian Norberg - Schulz, p.184.

<sup>27</sup> Norberg - Schulz, p.118.

<sup>28</sup> Norberg - Schulz, p.131.

<sup>29</sup> Hawkes, p.52.

<sup>30</sup> Rapoport, p.65.

<sup>31</sup> Public is in quotation marks because certain places are open to men only. For example, women are, as a rule, excluded from the mosques until after they have gone through menopause.

<sup>32</sup> Galantry, p.11.

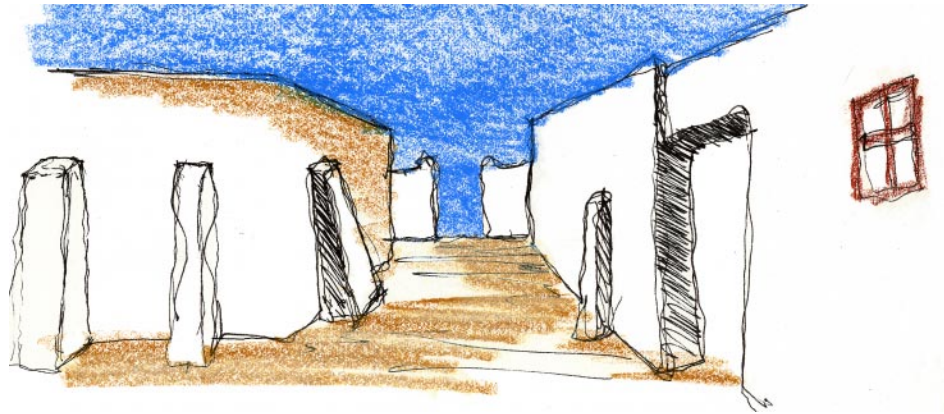
<sup>33</sup> Roland Depret, "The Assimilation of Traditional Practices in Contemporary Architecture", in *Reading the Contemporary African City: Proceedings of Seminar Seven in the series Architectural Transformations in the Islamic World, held in Dakar, Senegal, November 2-5, 1982*, ed. by Brian Brace Taylor. (Singapore: Concept Media Pet. Ltd., 1983), pp.60-61.

<sup>34</sup> Ecole D'Architecture et D'Urbanisme, *Etude de L'habitat Rural* (Dakar: Ecole D'Architecture et D'Urbanisme, 1976), p.51.

<sup>35</sup> Galantry, p.11.

<sup>36</sup> Norberg - Schulz, p.118.





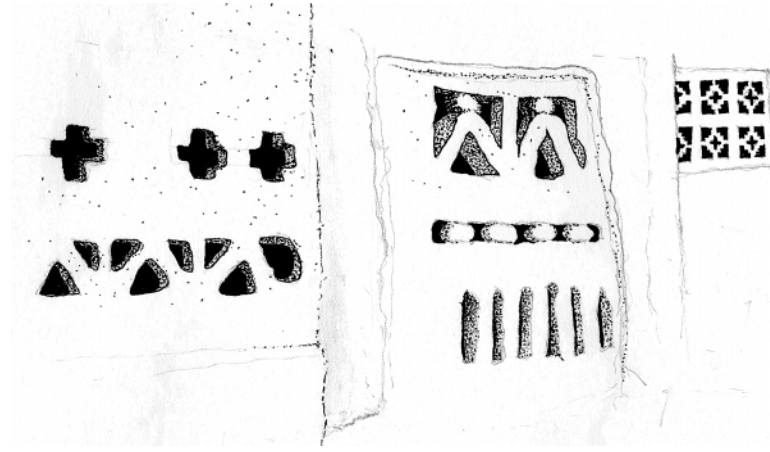
*Street In Bakel, Senegal.*

<sup>37</sup> Labelle Prussin in Reading the Contemporary African City: Proceedings of Seminar Seven in the series Architectural Transformations in the Islamic World, held in Dakar, Senegal, November 2-5, 1982, ed. by Brian Brace Taylor. (Singapore: Concept Media Pet. Ltd., 1983), p.161.

<sup>38</sup> Meckket, p.45.

<sup>39</sup> John Zeisel, Inquiry by Design: Tools for Environmental – Behavior Research (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.34.

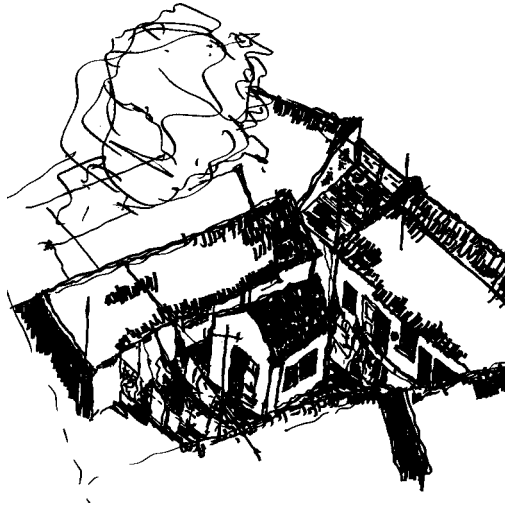
<sup>40</sup> Zeisel, p.34.



*Breezeblocks*

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