Chapter 1

Power, Space and Architecture

It is no coincidence that one of the most enduring ancient stories about human hubris in the face of power is about building. In constructing the Tower of Babel, humanity, united in language and purpose, set out to build their own addition to creation: a tower to heaven. In this way they could join God in His aerial perspective of the world. The story, from the eleventh chapter of Genesis, goes like this:

> And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and lime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people are one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.
>
> (King James Version)

God, apparently jealous, watched as humanity began to build a tower at Shinar. He was infuriated by this effort, sure that these humans would attempt further acts of arrogant defiance. So God invented myriad languages, dividing them among the builders so they could not understand each other, and therefore could not communicate to complete the tower. One can imagine the chaos on the building site – it is hard enough to get a building done when everyone speaks the same language. Obviously the project was abandoned. Then, just to make sure these troublesome humans did not reunite, God dispersed them over the face of the earth.

While the Tower of Babel story is meant to instruct about the dangers of human arrogance in the face of God's power, it also illustrates the ancient association of buildings and power. Indeed, in most of the world one of the most enduring activities of power – political, cultural and economic – is building. Not only building, but building well – extensively, extravagantly, durably. It takes tremendous wealth, time, cooperation and labor to secure, organize and deploy resources in such a way as to make a significant work of architecture. The Tower of Babel is the perfect example of such power. It was perhaps because of this that Hegel claimed this was the first recorded act of architecture. In this way, architecture gets bundled up with power and building from the very foundation of our imagination about human culture.

Few people in positions of significant power can resist the urge to build. Monuments, palaces, governmental centers, corporate headquarters, temples, palatial residences and even entire cities reflect the sensibilities and organization of power long after the individuals and entities that wielded them are gone. By contrast, the humble dwellings of the vast majority of the world's inhabitants are remarkably impermanent – washing away in floods, crumbling in earthquakes, disintegrating over time or disappearing under further layers of building. In these instances, what survives may not be the actual building, but the practice of making and renewing, the patterns of habitation, the craft of ornamentation.

One other lesson endures in the story of Babel: the lesson of the potential of agency. Agency, the power to act on behalf of someone else, or on one's own behalf, is a prerogative of certain kinds of freedom. It assumes that one has the right to pursue what can be imagined, what can be undertaken. In the case of the tower at Shinar, the people imagined a tower to heaven – something they had the power and freedom to pursue on their own behalf. God, however, quickly came to realize that He had given them too much autonomy, and just as quickly took away the agency they had assumed. He made them speak different languages; dividing them through an inability to communicate. Then He scattered them to the corners of the earth; dividing them spatially as if to emphasize in the physical realm what had already happened in the social. In this way, the agency of the people to build the tower was taken

away in the most overt terms. And we are given a definitive lesson on how power operates through the control of agency.

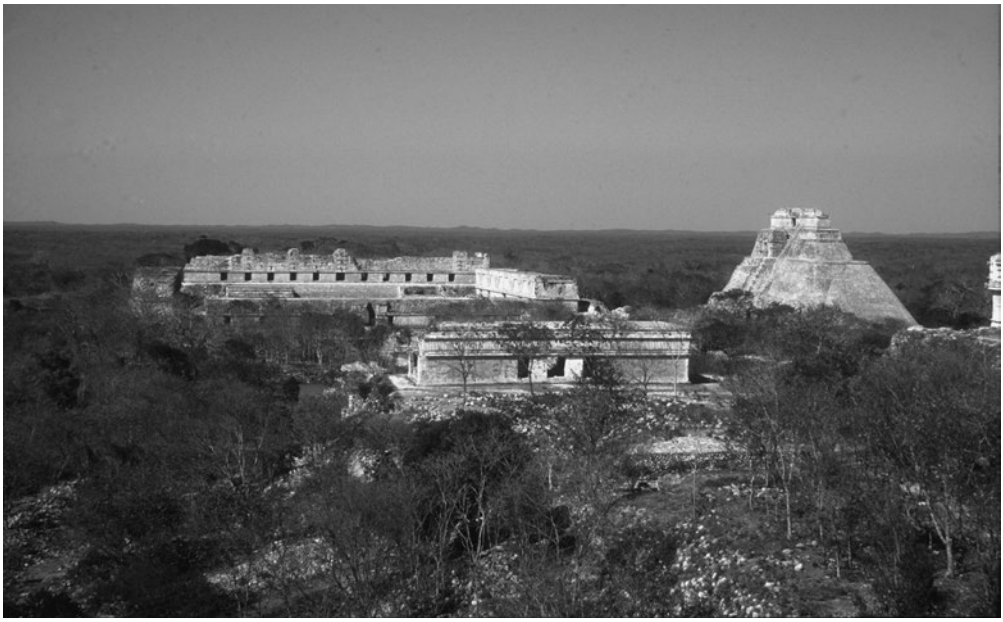
In his book about power and the architecture of national capitals, Lawrence Vale warms up to his subject with a quote from Lewis Mumford on the role of the citadel in a city:

> In the citadel the new mark of the city is obvious: a change of scale, deliberately meant to awe and overpower the beholder. Though the mass of the inhabitants might be poorly fed and overworked, no expense was spared to create temples and palaces whose sheer bulk and upward thrust would dominate the rest of the city. The heavy walls of hard-baked clay or solid stone would give to the ephemeral offices of state the assurance of stability and security, of unrelenting power and unshakable authority. What we now call "monumental architecture" is first of all the expression of power, and power exhibits itself in the assembly of costly building materials and of all the resources of art.
>
> (Mumford 1961 cited in Vale 1992: 13)

What drives this desire of the powerful to build? Some have attributed it to an arrogant need to make physical the power that is wielded. Others think it is a desire to leave a permanent marker of greatness that will communicate forward into history the power of the moment; like procreation, it is an attempt to ward off the annihilation of death by leaving a mark on the physical world. On a more basic human level, as it was for those at Shinar, it is also a way for a person to extend themselves into a larger, built scale – a way of declaring presence in the current moment. Indeed, it may be that the desire to build has little to do with power – but power gives access to the resources to build large and in ways that survive time.

For many architects, the usual discussion about space and power has to do with the organization of architectural space to facilitate vision or surveillance. Most famous is the example of the work of Jeremy Bentham, and his work on the idea of the "panopticon": the arrangement of spaces so that they can be seen, therefore controlled, from a central point. Bentham's theories, usually resulting in a radial plan, were most effectively applied to prison design. François Mitterrand, father of the stunning French "Grands Projets" of the 1980s and 1990s, clearly understood the importance of architecture in this context. He is quoted by Julia Trilling in *Atlantic Monthly* as saying, "an epoch is inscribed in its monuments [so] architecture is not neutral[;] it expresses political, social, economic and cultural 'finalities'" (Goodman 1988: 43).

Architects are deeply embedded in this power structure. We provide services to those who can pay and to those who command the



1.1
The Maya built this temple complex at Uxmal on the Yucatan Peninsula

resources to build the expensive cultural artifacts we design. Yet, this connection between architecture and power is a part of the much larger entanglement between power and the control of space. That is, buildings are only a portion of the way that power operates spatially, since power extends to scales both smaller and far larger. At the smaller scale, power controls human bodies through spatial strategies of segregation (that is, making certain bodies invisible or keeping them physically separated), marginalization, exile, imprisonment and banishment. But of course, these same strategies are extended out to the scale of architecture, cities, landscapes, and even nations. At the scale of a building, architecture can reinforce these strategies, with segregation added to the many roles a single building must serve.

Among the most damaging and difficult to reverse exercises of spatial power, however, are those that operate at very large scales. In particular, the processes of colonialism and globalization have enormous impacts on the way space is controlled, allocated and inhabited within their spheres of influence – they use all the spatial strategies at their disposal to do this. The power of the forces at work at this scale are so enormous that individuals have little leverage to defy them or the attitudes of superiority, cultural disdain and racism that often accompany them. A sense of inevitability and helplessness accompanies such vast reorganizations of space. Such an exercise of power robs people of the ability to act on their own behalf in political, economic, cultural and spatial terms. This denial of agency is both a brutal outcome of repressive power and the seed of effective resistance to it.

Space and Power

> Taking possession of space is the first gesture of living things, of men and animals, of plants and clouds, a fundamental manifestation of equilibrium and duration. The occupation of space is the first proof of existence.
>
> (Le Corbusier 1948)

Le Corbusier, writing in the aftermath of the vast spatial disruptions, displacements and destruction of the Second World War, gives a poetic primacy to the idea of "taking possession of" – that is, owning, controlling and acting within – physical space. "Possess", "own" and "control" all imply the power of an individual over this primal, and seemingly inalienable, space of existence. In the numb silence following the war, this small idea was a premonition of the widespread challenges to political, social and cultural power that would soon rush to encompass the world. The dismantling of colonial structures, the rise of civil rights, the expansion of the rights of women and the painful re-emergence of indigenous peoples from the shadows began breaking down the monolithic power structures that had defined much of history and dictated spatial practices for centuries.

This dismantling continues today, creating ever more unstable, diverse and diffused systems of power relations. While power shifts and spreads, the physical constructs and spatial practices left behind by previous regimes remain as more permanent marks on the landscape. These spatial wounds are not neutral. They were made using strategies to embody particular attitudes, cultural practices and ideologies. They are specifically designed to support and encourage these practices. Rearranging or erasing these spaces to reflect a new set of ideas, constituents and power relations is a long-term endeavor necessary to complete any political, cultural and social transformation.

What does Le Corbusier mean exactly when he talks about the "occupation" of space? The inhabitation of space (and here we must assume he means more than simply replacing some volume of air) is intimately connected to the exercise of individual liberty. Conversely, *not* having control of the space one is occupying is in some way demoralizing – depriving life of one of its essential modes of existence. To remove from a person her or his right to act in space is to deny that person any kind of spatial agency. That is, it is to take away the power of individuals to determine movement through the world and to rob them of the dignity of the spatial aspect of free will. Indeed, throughout human history one of the most effective means of exercising power has been to conquer, circumscribe and control a people's space.

In addition to actual movement through and occupation of space, possession of space might extend to how one represents oneself in space. This representation can happen at multiple scales: from the level of the body, through hair, clothing and adornment, to the level of the landscape, through buildings and gardens. While individuals can exercise some level of control over their body, the degree of control decreases with the increase in the scale of the space where one is attempting to be represented.

Architects take for granted that the term "space" means actual physical volumes of air, perhaps circumscribed by walls and a roof, or by edges of buildings, or even a chain of mountains. Henri Lefebvre's seminal 1971 book *The Production of Space* significantly widened the discussion of space by directly relating social constructions and relationships to the production of physical space at a wide range of scales. This analysis was part of the shift in the use of the term "space". A number of disciplines outside of architecture began to describe as "space" non-physical ideas or social constructions that flow from place to place almost as if they were molecules of air caught on a prevailing wind – and in this way operate as if in a unique world with its own laws of physics. The word "space" then is used to reinforce the ubiquitous nature and fluid distributions of certain concepts and conditions discussed. And the word "flow", with its image of water or hot lava, introduces the element of time to such discussions.

Geography is a discipline explicitly interested in space of all kinds, from the kind of spatial "flows" that political economists address and the "social space" of sociologists, to the manifestations of natural systems, culture, money and power in actual physical space. For geographers the idea of flow reiterates the importance of the dimension of time when discussing space. Geographer David Harvey puts it this way:

> Armed with the right kitbag of tools, it is possible to set up common descriptive frames and modeling procedures to look at all manner of flows over space, whether it be of commodities, goods, ideas, energy, ecological inputs. The diffusion of cultural forms, diseases, biota, ideas, consumption habits, fashions; the networks of communications, energy transfers, water flows, social relations, academic contacts: the nodes of centralized power, of city systems, innovation and decision-making; the surfaces of temperature, evapotranspiration potential, of population and income potential; all these elements of spatial structure become integral to our understanding of how phenomena are distributed and how processes work through and across space over time.
>
> (Harvey 2001: 223)

These flows, however, are slowed down by physical distance: the greater the distance, the slower the flow. A letter containing vital information that used to take weeks to cross the Pacific by ship can now be zapped in an instant via the Internet. Harvey goes on to join in the widely held speculation that much of the human agenda driving invention is to lessen the physical drag of space by continually reducing "the friction of distance".

> Attempts to deal with these dynamic systems of spatiality – generally under the rubric of the "social construction" or "production" of space – are now legion. The whole history of capital accumulation which, as Marx long ago observed, has embedded within it an historical tendency towards the annihilation of space through time, points to an evolutionary process in which relevant metrics and measures of both space and time have been changed significantly. Speed-up of turnover time and reductions in the *friction of distance* have meant that spatio-temporality must now be understood in a radically different way from what was operative in, say, classical Greece, Ming Dynasty China, or mediaeval Europe.
>
> (Harvey 2001: 224, emphasis added)

Just as technology has allowed physical objects to move faster through space, it has also allowed for information, ideas, capital, communications and other non-physical entities to move faster as well. In these ways, as Harvey says, the general term "space" applies to all kinds of networks: financial, informational, social, intellectual, cultural and so on. However, this now widespread use requires that we now must qualify the word "space": space of flows, economic space, social space, and so on. A common example of the wider applications of the term is "cyber-space" – a conceptual location made very real by the social and cultural interactions and economic transactions that take place through digital connections. This is a growing world parallel to, and often separate from, physical spaces.

While architecture, as a profession, may not deal with non-physical space very often, some of the ideas about "space" from the various thinkers about its different modes have value for our current conversation. This is particularly true when it comes to the discussion of the relationship of power and these spaces. And, indeed, discussions of space and power ultimately return, most notably in Lefebvre, to buildings.

> This analysis leads back to buildings. . . . In their pre-eminence, buildings, the homogeneous matrix of capitalistic space, successfully combine the object of control by power with the object of commercial exchange. The building effects a brutal condensation of social

> relationships . . . It embraces, and in doing so reduces, the whole paradigm of space: space as domination/appropriation (where it emphasizes technological domination); space as work and product (where it emphasized the product); and space as immediacy and mediation (where it emphasizes the mediations and mediators).
>
> (Lefebvre 1991: 227)

Once again, recent work in Geography is of particular interest to this discussion. In a logical extension of their field in the era of deconstruction and postcolonialism, geographers came early to the analysis of the affects of power on physical space. As David Harvey observed in 1973: "Dominant organizations and institutions make use of space hierarchically and symbolically. Sacred and profane spaces are created, focal points emphasized, and space is generally manipulated to reflect status and prestige" (Harvey 1973: 280).[1]

Geographers have also made important contributions toward the analysis of how power is embedded in various representations of space. Harvey writes that "map-making and cartography have been central to the history of Geography. . . . Cartography is about locating, identifying and bounding phenomena and thereby situating events, processes and things within a coherent spatial frame. It imposes spatial order on phenomena" (Harvey 2001: 219–220). Noted cartographic historian, J. B. Harley was among the first to view maps as texts that could be deconstructed with a view toward understanding the underlying motivations within them. This led him, naturally, to write extensively about the connection between cartography and power:

> Cartographers manufacture power. They create a spatial panopticon. It is power embedded in the map text. We can talk about the power of the map just as we already talk about the power of the word or about the book as a force for change. In this sense maps have politics. It is a power that intersects and is embedded in knowledge. It is universal.
>
> (Harley 2001: cover flap)

In describing a map as a tool of power, Harley provokes thoughts of looking past the power itself to the techniques power deploys to achieve its ends. There is a difference between describing the physical results of power in the landscape and addressing the time-based *relationship* between space and power on a strategic and tactical level. By understanding what strategies power uses to affect space, to control it, to possess it; it is then possible to contemplate counter-strategies to undo coercive spatial practices and to restore spatial agency.

The Spatial Strategies of Power

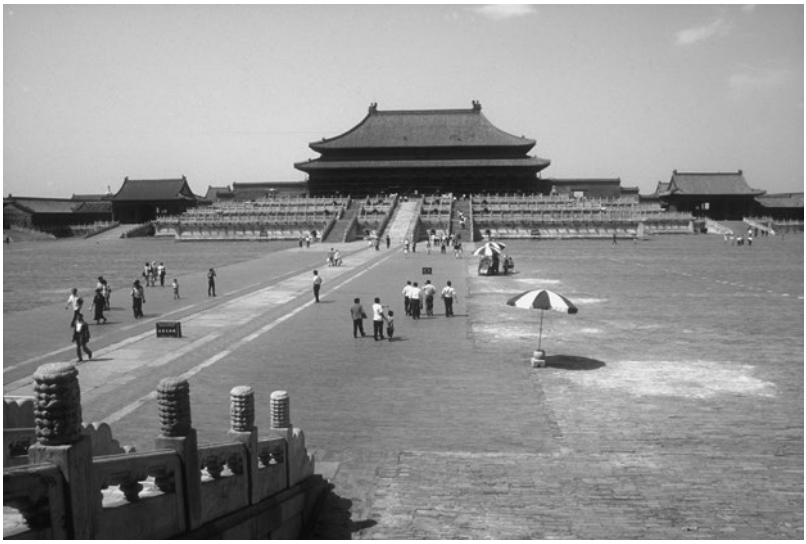
On the level of culture and society, there are four broad categories of spatial strategies of power: (1) the construction of hierarchies, (2) segregation, (3) marginalization, and (4) long-term, large-scale mechanisms of spatial transformation like apartheid, colonialism and globalization. Each of these has a particular paradigm of operation, and each impacts at various scales of physical space. From the scale of the body, up through the scale of buildings and cities to the scale of the landscape, power exercises explicit and implicit control over the shaping and occupation of space.

While separated out here for the sake of discussion, these spatial strategies used by power are often employed in combination. For instance, it is impossible to discuss colonialism without including the construction of obvious hierarchies and the violent racism and attendant segregation that accompanied it in every corner of the globe. And it is difficult to discuss globalization truthfully without discussing those who are systematically placed on a wide range of different kinds of margins by its spatial impacts. Finally, every place is subject to several scales of power at any given time.

Spatialization of Hierarchy

Perhaps the most fundamental expression of spatial power is when social, cultural and economic hierarchies are translated into physical and spatial hierarchies. These include not only the organization of space for visual supervision like Bentham's panopticon, but also a wide range of other spatial configurations in buildings and in cities and landscapes. These are the most easily perceived and understood of the strategies of spatial power – and many are nearly universal in human cultures. These are powerful strategies because of the way they are invisibly integrated into daily lives. They are so common and so ubiquitous as to be practically unnoticed and unquestioned.

The range of spatial forms this strategy takes is treated thoroughly by Thomas Markus in his book *Buildings and Power*, but here we can discuss a few such configurations. For instance, in almost every corner of the globe a person on a dais or raised platform is in some power relationship over the audience. Those who are more important are raised up; literally elevated. Likewise, the front center of a room is often dedicated to the most important person or event, it is a place of attention and honor. In other places it is the actual center of the room. This occupation of the center is extended in many cultures to include the reservation of the center of an axial approach for only the most important personage. Only the emperor was allowed to walk up the carved dragon ramp that graces the central approach to the Hall of Preserving Harmony within the Forbidden City in Beijing. In the current era the ramp is closed off to prevent the feet of the thousands of liberated comrades and foreign tourists who visit every day from destroying the fine carving.



1.2
The great axis of the Forbidden City in Beijing leading to the dragon ramp at the Hall of Preserving Harmony

This obsession with the power of the center and the axis obviously has numerous echoes at a range of scales. The host of a dinner party sits at the end, capping off the long axis of the table. The Mall in Washington, DC organizes buildings along either side with important monuments occupying spots lined up the middle. At the "top" of the Mall is the US Capitol, clearly in its position, as well as in its scale and design, the most important building in the ensemble. Likewise, some Melanesian villages are organized with the houses lined up along either side of a long open, tree planted *allee*, with the headman's taller house at the end. This house is not only a dwelling, but a meeting house for the leaders of the community.

In equally obvious ways, the size and height of a building, its location within a landscape or city, the materials of its construction, even the sheer amount of space it commands (both inside and outside) demonstrate power. Of course, this commandeering of space, especially large amounts of it, is often directly tied to financial power. That same power buys access to spaces otherwise inaccessible to the public: private clubs, golf courses, expensive restaurants, white sand beaches. The demonstration of this kind of economic power is not without its dangers in a world where the gap between rich and poor is increasing. However, the same money that can buy villas can also pay to secure them from envious fellow citizens behind high walls and security gates – where the inhabitants are enclosed and the premises constantly under surveillance. The exclusive colonial compound, the palace and the "gated community": here the residents are confined by fear within walls and it makes one wonder about the distinction between "security" and "surveillance", between safety and prison.

1.3
Only the Emperor was allowed to walk up the ramp

The notion of center is also routinely applied on a global scale to describe the location of political (London in relation to the British Empire), cultural (Paris in relation to the fashion industry) or economic (New York in relation to banking) power. The rest of the world becomes "peripheral" to that center, occupying the margins of power and, therefore, influence. In reality, of course, there are many centers and the degree of removal of the periphery varies – what is crucial to those who are wielding power, however, is that the hierarchy exists and is implicitly recognized in power relationships. However, being on the periphery, on the margins, has its advantages, as we will soon see.

Marginalization

In recognition of the decreased influence of those on the periphery, another strategy of spatial power is to remove people who threaten those with power, or the power structure itself. Throughout history there have always been people who match the ethnicity, race and religious belief of those in power, but who still criticize the structure of power, who agitate for change or who, simply by position or belief or origin, pose a challenge to power. These critics are potentially quite harmful of power's legitimacy and are most often constrained in some way by those with power. The most enduring constraint is, of course, death. However, less radical strategies are usually employed – ones that simply remove the threatening person or group from the coveted center.

This marginalization might be physical (removal to another location) or procedural (such as the denial of participation in processes like elections), or both. The term "marginalization" itself is a spatial one – a description of being at the edge, out of the center. The point of making sure someone remains in the extreme margins is to reduce their visibility, diffuse their threat, their ability to take action, and their ability to stir others through action or through the dissemination of information. Clearly, this was the strategy God used at Babel: introducing myriad languages was a way of marginalizing through procedure, and scattering humanity furthered this marginalization through spatial action.

A commonly used tactic in marginalization is quite simply removal of access to mainstream society through imprisonment. This is a first line strategy meant to simultaneously silence through removal, while also threatening in unambiguous, physical terms possible larger consequences. Imprisonment is used regularly by all kinds of governments all over the world to silence opposition. A less drastic measure often used by the apartheid era government of South Africa was "banning". This was a kind of house arrest used specifically for political agitators and leaders that confined them to home under surveillance, and forbade them from meeting with more than one person at a time. In Myanmar, the military regime has now held democratic rights activist Aung Sun Suu Kyi under various levels of house arrest for most of a decade. This effort has backfired on the regime, however, since the house arrest has significantly raised her visibility in the international community and has gathered increased admiration and sympathy for her local supporters.

A more effective strategy of marginalization is to physically remove the critic to the actual spatial margins of the territory; to unimportant, remote, and often harsh, locations. This exile might be to camps or prisons, like those in Siberia maintained by the former Soviet Union, or (during colonial times) to penal colonies half a globe away. Three of the four case studies in the later chapters of this book are located in places that were at one time used by their colonial powers as penal colonies: Australia (England), New Caledonia (France) and the US (England). Exiling uses time and distance to dampen the challenge, and is usually accompanied by procedural marginalization through silencing as well. This strategy was particularly effective when the friction of distance was enormous. It would be ineffective in today's world of instant communication through the Internet and mobile phones.

While spatial marginalization acts on the body and on the ability to communicate, procedural marginalization stops critics through institutional action such as the stripping of citizenship, the suspension of voting rights (disenfranchisement), and the silencing of platforms for communication (closing newspapers and shutting down radio and television stations). This kind of action, still commonly used, works in the invisible, but critical, space of political agency and information.

Of course, those on the margins are not always forced to be there by those in power. Many people choose the margins for the degree of freedom a low profile allows. Others drift to the margins exactly to avoid the constrictive control of those in power. Still others can be found there because they, very simply, do not fit into the center because of beliefs, personality or behavior.

Not everyone on the margin is a noble fighter for civil rights or against a fascist regime. They might not be advocates for women in poverty or for gay rights. They might, instead, be extremists – a term that signals working at the margins of the margins, both right and left – who advocate anarchy or terrorism. A system of power that tolerates and even protects the right of people to noisily occupy the margins runs certain risks, as the US found out with the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building by extremist Timothy McVeigh and his cohorts. On the other hand, a power system that systematically silences all dissent also eventually pays the price. Oppression is a tactic that requires great skill.

A curious aspect of marginalization is that a person or group at the center in one place may be marginalized in another. This is the case with the Southern Poverty Law Center, founded in 1971 in Montgomery, Alabama in the US. The SPLC's programs, which include litigation on issues of constitutional and civil rights, tracking hate groups across the country, and promoting the widespread educational program "Teaching Tolerance", is generously supported by individual donations from all over the US. However, its staff and attorneys must take every precaution to guard their physical safety at their headquarters in Montgomery, a bastion of resistance to civil rights reforms since the early 1960s.

Despite its seeming desolation, the margin has the potential to be a place of great cultural creativity. For it is in the margins that taste, style, and other confining conventions are either not known or can be readily ignored. It is in this context that true creativity can come into play.

> It would be an extremely odd and peculiar history of this part of the twentieth century if we were not to say that the most profound cultural revolution has come about as a consequence of the margins coming into representation – in art, in painting, in film, in music in literature, in the modern arts everywhere, in politics and in social life generally. Our lives have been transformed by the struggle of the margins to come into representation. Not just to be placed by the regime of some other, or imperializing eye but to reclaim some form of representation for themselves.
>
> (Hall 1997: 34)

Here, Hall suggests what will be explored later in this chapter: that the margins are not only a place of huge creativity, but also of potential revolution.

Segregation

Just as marginalization usually works at the scale of the body, so does segregation. This old and enduring strategy of spatial power admits that sometimes it is necessary to have groups of undesirable people nearby due to economic or political need. However, these undesirable people should be, to every extent possible, out of sight, out of contact and, therefore, to some extent, out of mind. Segregation works to make sure this happens. "I am invisible", are the first three words of African-American writer Ralph Ellison in his epic *Invisible Man*.

> No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids – and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me.

In its maneuvering to accomplish this disappearing act, the scale of segregation rapidly expands beyond the body, however, to include buildings, neighborhoods, cities and, even, regions of nations. At these larger scales it becomes increasingly difficult to make entire groups of people invisible, resulting in ever more desperate and elaborate strategies on the part of those in power to achieve separation.

The criteria for segregation has ranged widely in human history to include class and caste, religion, gender, ethnicity and, most commonly and enduringly, race. The word "ghetto" comes from the local name for the enclosed neighborhood where the Jews of Venice were forced to live, locked within the gates after dark. The term rapidly spread throughout Europe as a term for Jewish neighborhoods, only later to be applied to impoverished concentrations of given non-majority ethnic groups in cities around the world. The insidious argument that people prefer to live "with their own kind" has often been deployed to justify religious, racial and ethnic segregation. There is a huge difference, however, between people freely choosing to live close to those who share certain cultural characteristics and people being *forced* by legal restriction to confinement within a bounded place because of some defining characteristic.

Women all over the world have been routinely segregated in different ways by different cultures at different times. In some cultures, women are rendered invisible at the scale of the body by clothing – as in the Muslim practice of *purdah*. When every woman looks like all of the others, each becomes invisible. Women, then, literally all look alike to the (male) observer. Within some cultures, women are separated in certain settings: banished to the balconies or standing on the edges of the room to look on silently, riding only in

the last car of the train or the left side of the bus. In other places, they are simply not allowed in certain places: bars, clubs and other bastions of maleness. In still other places and times women are made invisible by the spatial organization of the domestic realm – the separation of the kitchen and the laundry in traditional house plans in Europe and America are prime examples. Here, once again, there is an argument for the segregation: the supposed protection of women from unwanted attention, even violence, from men. The patriarchal segregation, covering up, shutting up, hiding away is justified as being "for their own good".

Among all the motivations for segregation, race is the most pernicious motivator for segregation the world has ever seen: while ethnicity comes in a close second. In dealing with race, segregation strategies reached heights of ridiculousness during the Jim Crow era in the US. In 1896 the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision in the case of *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* that allowed for the establishment of "separate but equal" facilities for whites and blacks. This resulted in the passage of wide ranging "Jim Crow" laws that codified "separate but equal" into actions that separated the races but did not provide equal facilities.[2] In his incisive essay "Duality and Invisibility", the architect Craig Barton shows how these laws extended into city planning and policy to reinforce spatial segregation at the larger scale as well.

But what happened in the inevitable situations when blacks and whites could not be separated?

> Whites and blacks often were required to inhabit the same physical space. The necessity to co-exist in the same room, building or city required strategies for the construction of space, which by delineating social and spatial hierarchies could differentiate visibility. These spaces reiterated the relationships of power to space and obscured the presence of the black population.
>
> (Barton 2001: 4)

What developed was what Barton goes on to call a "double landscape" of separate drinking fountains, separate benches at the bus depot, separate entries to the theater (where blacks were relegated to the balcony), seats in the back of the buses and separate communities confined within given boundaries by city legislation. In Montgomery, Alabama the bus company added the theater strategy to the buses: black riders would enter the front door, pay their fare, then exit the front door to re-enter the bus by the back door to take their seats.

Invisibility takes a toll on those rendered invisible through racism and its attendant segregation. Barton, writing on the affects of racial segregation on cities of the American South, argues that: "Negotiating both the concept and the realms of invisibility became central to a construction of black

cultural identity." This invisibility expanded far beyond the body to reach all the way to the scale of the landscape. Barton continues: "In Selma (Alabama), the spatial legacy of *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* and the various ensuing Jim Crow statutes led to an urbanism of duality, and a city of two distinct urban landscapes, which as they evolved became codified by race" (Barton 2001: 5).

As Barton notes, ethnic and racial segregation is often readily visible at the scale of the city. Those meant to be invisible live in degraded areas that tend to be below the radar of city services – streets go un-repaired, median strips unplanted, and infrastructure un-maintained. It is very clear, in most American cities, when one moves from the "white" part of the city to the "black" neighborhood.

In South Africa, with the black population in an overwhelming majority, the radical racist segregation strategies of apartheid are written at all the scales of segregation in America – but extend even further and more graphically across the entire landscape. Here, from the air, one sees that each city and town are quite literally two slightly separated towns: the well-maintained and perfectly-serviced white town and, some distance away, the poor black town with dirt streets, outhouses and wild tangles of illegal electrical lines. Under apartheid, a black person was forbidden in the white town unless she or he had explicit business there, and a written pass to prove it. While such legal segregation is no longer in place, the Barton's "double landscape" with its separate towns remains (see Figure 4.4, p. 134).

In terms of culture and community, segregation has a curious double edge. For any group of people who lack power in a larger culture, the removal to a parallel world can provide important opportunities for cultural development and production. The pressures to conform with the norms of the culture in power only exist when a segregated person is visible to that culture. "It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen", Ellison continues on the first page of his book, "although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves". Invisibility can allow for a secret life that no one notices, and therefore is not interfered with.

Segregation, when not based on class, also often erases class boundaries, making lively communities out of people thrown together by social and spatial constraints. This has the salutary effect of allowing certain cultural forms and practices to survive and thrive. Nathanial Belcher, in his work on Miami, Florida's "Colored Town" discusses the vibrant cultural developments that took place there. In the final analysis, however, this sense of community is bittersweet:

> A bustling community of commerce, cultural exchange, and housing that continues to evoke strong memories today. Colored Town was also a product of vicious labor practices, rank opportunism and

> inconspicuous manipulation. It emerged as an essentially quarantined community, whose physical area failed to expand proportionally with the dense population growth of a booming city. Strangely, Colored Town was a vital product of the segregation that existed during the first fifty years of Miami's existence, and it is ironic that it was destroyed by the effects of desegregation and the tremendous physical and cultural changes that occurred in its wake.
>
> (Belcher 2001: 37)

This sense of community was small compensation for the isolation, degradation, disenfranchisement, denial of spatial freedoms and reorganization of space that segregation supports. In such situations, once active segregation ends, and the community disperses, people who were once part of it are left stranded in a world where the attitudes that led to segregation continue. Also left behind is the physical imprint of the spatial practices of segregation. Both the attitudes and the spaces take a long time to change.

Transformation of Space at Larger Scales

There are certain categories of activities of power that operate on space with such systematic and widespread effects that they demand a focused discussion here. These include national strategies like apartheid (that take the strategies of segregation and marginalization to extremes), and international strategies like colonization and globalization. While apartheid has been discussed in the context of segregation and marginalization and is treated in greater depth in Chapter 4, we focus now on those activities whose spatial impacts happen at the sweeping scale of geography. The strategies power uses at this scale are brutal and lasting.

> If there is anything that radically distinguishes the imagination of anti-imperialism, it is the primacy of the geographical element. Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control. For the native, the history of colonial servitude is inaugurated by loss of locality to the outside; its geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored.
>
> (Said 1993: 225)

While colonization of one place by people from another has gone on throughout the history of humankind, the period of European colonization from the sixteenth through the early twentieth centuries reconfigured the entire world. This reconfiguring was done from a position of assumed superiority on the part of European colonizers.

> If the period of the Renaissance marks a qualitative break in the history of humanity, it is precisely because, from that time on, Europeans became conscious of the idea that the conquest of the world by their civilization is henceforth a possible objective. They therefore developed a sense of absolute superiority, even if the actual submission of other people to Europe had not yet actually taken place.
>
> (Samir Amin as quoted by Perera 1998: 18)

This certainty of superiority framed the spatial as well as racial, political, economic and cultural consequences of the colonialism that followed. It affected huge areas of the planet. And we continue to live with the fallout of its violence.

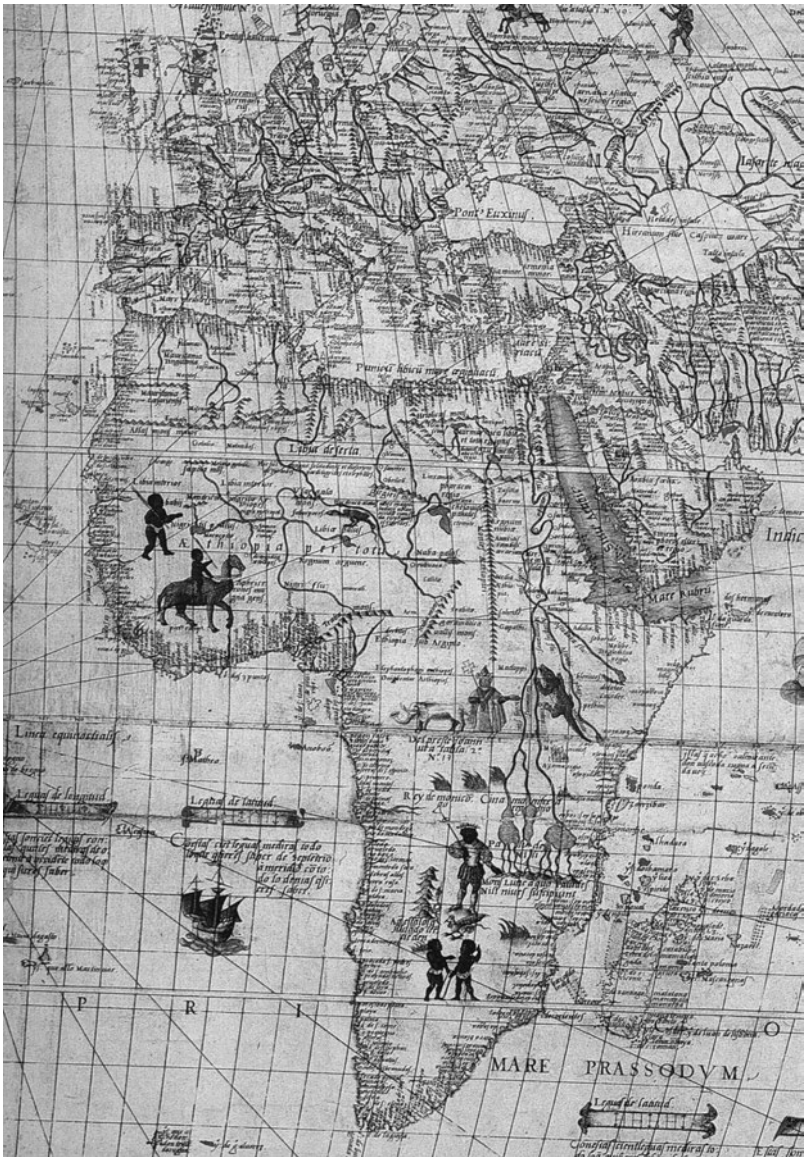
Nihal Perera, in his excellent analysis of the spatial effects of colonialism and its aftermath in Sri Lanka, discusses the importance of maps to the colonial endeavor (Perera 1998). He argues that the great leaps in cartography in the sixteenth century, brought about by the new information being brought home by explorers, allowed Europeans to understand exactly how large the world was – and how small their own particular corner was in comparison. However, through mapping, the relative smallness of Europe could be counterbalanced by placing it at the center of the maps, thereby literally marginalizing the rest of a world growing larger with each exploratory expedition.

> New dimensions of the world dismantled the cardinal directions and erased the spatial inscriptions of old power centers. Placing Europe firmly in the middle of the world map and naturalizing it through the institutionalization of the prime meridian and a dateline – later, by West European powers – produced a modern but familiar world for them. Such a map would provide both geometrical and power based frameworks within which to locate existing places, as well as new places that were yet to be "discovered". . . . In producing a centralized world, west European powers eventually constructed radically different forms of spatial boundaries, frontiers, centrality, and marginality. In the process, the historical space of west European supremacy was invented through the naming, ordering, and classifying of places and, most crucially, the bringing of this knowledge into cultural circulation in Europe. World space was represented as something that could be read and explored, and, in the long run, re-structured. In the future, any child brought up in this context, whether in Europe or Ceylon, would automatically learn that western Europe occupies the center of the world.
>
> (Perera 1998: 19)

Maps from the early European colonial era clearly illustrate that the land the colonizers imagined from their ships anchored offshore was seen by them as empty. Just as *terra incognito* lurks as wide red zones at the edges of knowledge coinciding with the edges of the parchment sheets, *terra nullis* occupies the interiors of vast continents. While coastlines are minutely drawn, these interiors are blank except for illustrations of fantastic creatures and improbable "men" placed there as if they might erase the anxiety of the huge gaps in the mapmaker's knowledge. This blankness was a kind of invitation. In *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad's tale of the brutal colonization of the Congo, Marlowe remembers: "At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there." Geographers call this desire generated by maps "the geographical imagination". And, of course, the emptiness that colonial powers saw on these documents also led to what J. B. Harley calls "the image of a dehumanized geographical space – a land without the encumbrance of the Indians – whose places could be controlled by coordinates of longitude and latitude" (Harley 2001: 187). Maps, then, became crucial tools of very large-scale thinking about the acquisition, control, dividing up, and taking theoretical possession of huge tracts of completely unknown land. They were a political and cultural representation of attitudes about the space that would, ultimately, become colonies.

Edward Said, in his critical work on postcolonialism, *Culture and Imperialism*, lists three primary ways that colonization spatially changed the colony (once the landscape was brought under colonial control): first the introduction of foreign plants, animals and building habits and methods imprinted the culture of the colonizers on the landscape. Second, since colonialism was primarily about economic gain, the landscape was radically transformed in order to yield profit. These first two strategies led to the third, which is more general and even more lasting: "colonial space must be transformed sufficiently so as to no longer appear foreign to the imperial eye" (Said 1993: 226). All three of these strategies had the direct consequence of displacing indigenous people from their lands and, often, their uses of the land. Sometimes this displacement happened rapidly, through direct removal, and sometimes it happened more slowly, as the entire political and economic structure of the landscape was transformed. This displacement was usually done with little regard for, and great ignorance of, the differences among indigenous people that might occur even within a small geographical area.

It is only natural that someone far from home for an extended period of time might long for the familiar. But the goal of colonization went far beyond this simple desire. The colonists were not merely visiting, they were there to stay. And their actions in transforming the landscape from its indigenous state were meant to make the new place represent home as completely



1.4
Portion of sixteenth-century world map showing the detailed coastal knowledge of the continent of Africa and the relative ignorance of the interior

as possible. One visitor to New South Wales commented in 1821, only thirty-three years after the arrival of the First Fleet to Australia: "I could hardly believe I was traveling in New Holland this day; so different – so English – is the character of the scenery – downs, meadows and streams in the flat – no side scenes of eucalyptus" (Lines 1991: 49).

Since colonization was primarily an economic endeavor bent on expanding the resource base of the colonial powers, it is not surprising that the other goal in the widespread modification of the landscape was to organize it

in order to maximize profit. This prosperity, in turn, fueled European wars and power struggles as well as great building and cultural booms in the home countries. The impact of the blunt mind-set of wringing profit from the colonized landscape and peoples demolished local spatial practices, landscapes, towns and dwellings. The "blank" space on the map of the colony was seen by the colonizer, quite simply, as a potential producer of economic value. As an economic tool, it was to be maximized. And, since it was "blank", the native people who happened to live there were thought of as part of the economic package: as conveniently available labor to extract the economic value from the land. The colonists, as a whole, lacked any sense of sentimentality, reverence or reserve about the native landscape and the accumulated wisdom about living in it.

There were colonial situations where the landscape of Europe was not able to be established due to climate or due to the fact that the landscape was required to produce economic value. For instance, in colonies where climate and landscape were suitable to produce an agricultural commodity for the colonial power, monoculture plantation systems replaced highly varied subsistence agriculture. Displaced farmers became plantation labor. If these were not available or uncooperative, labor was imported from other places. The result was a radically altered landscape. Tea, coffee, rubber and indigo were among the most desired of these commodities from the colonies. And they were all products that could not be produced in Europe.

The plantations became microcosms of the colonial project, reflecting spatially – through their layout, allocation of space and architectural design – the relationships of power, the assumptions of cultural superiority and the preference for things European. Nihal Perera's description of a British coffee plantation in Sri Lanka illustrates this point.

> Forming the plantation complex, each estate was organized as a production unit with processing facilities and with the factory and office at the center of the estate. . . . Each estate was organized both hierarchically and as a divided settlement, spatially evident in the forms of accommodation and their location. The types of accommodation these estates produced, both for planters and estate laborers, were evolved forms of shelter particular to metropolitan and colonial cultures.
>
> (Perera 1998: 70)

Perera goes on to describe the luxurious living of the planters or their representatives in dwellings that were "political- and culture-specific forms known as bungalows". These grand houses had "spaces for domestic servants and individual services such as water, sewage, and later, electricity".

They were set apart "on spacious sites", and "built for the conspicuous consumption of space, views, scenery, time, goods, and money" and surrounded by gardens "landscaped with 'exotic' plants".

By contrast, accommodations for the plantation laborers constituted "a completely different world".

> Accommodation was in "lines", narrow rows of rooms up to about one hundred yards long and ten feet wide. Each block was divided into approximately 10′ × 10′ rooms opening onto a common verandah, in each of which lived six to ten people. Unlike the extensive consumption spaces of the bungalow, lines were mere "shelters" of a purely utilitarian nature, with cooking done mostly outside. Some used the verandah to keep cattle while others enclosed it . . . Without windows and doors, but having a mere opening to enter, rooms were gloomy, dismal, and unhealthy.
>
> (Perera 1998: 70)

Perhaps the most lasting of the spatial practices of colonialism is the introduction of the spatial practices and types of the colonizer to the colony. These go far beyond the actual results of modifying the landscape or introducing building types, to the embedding of certain spatial practices – through education and habit as well as through actual construction. When combined with the routine degradation of indigenous spatial practices, such as village and house forms, the colonizers' modes of spatial habitation were not only constructed, but then became the preferred "civilized" models for all future construction.

There were some spatial practices, however, that very clearly did not make any sense in some of the colonies. Some of these had to do with materials of construction and the way buildings respond to their climates. Others had to do with the way that people lived in spaces, particularly domestic ones. Eventually the very different conditions of the colonies caused a modification of usual spaces and building techniques so that a hybrid architecture emerged, usually better adapted to the climate of the colony. In the case of the British in India, colonization continued for so long that a particular architectural style evolved. This exotic British colonial architecture was later transplanted into Malaysia where it made little sense in the tropical climate.

The same is true of practices and the scale of the landscape. At some point the colonized place pushed back in a way that could not be overcome. For instance, while European plants and animals survived, even thrived, in the temperate environment of Australia's southeastern and eastern coasts, they did not do well in the less well-watered inland mountains, the damp hot tropics or the vast deserts. And while the gardens around the big house on a

British rubber plantation in Malaysia may have contained many specimens from Europe, rose bushes would often rot and the rows of scarred rubber trees marching in grids across the surrounding rolling hills were clearly not a fruit orchard.

The sense of entitlement of the colonist to transform the space was, to some extent, based upon the arrogant belief (or justification) that European culture and religion were undeniably superior to those of any other place. One of the goals of colonization, therefore, was supposedly about giving the great gift of that civilization to the entire world, regardless of whether anyone wanted it or not. With encountered cultures, the degree of respect they were given was, to some extent, based upon features of the native culture that were understood as "civilized" by the European invader. Did they have cities, recognizable religious practices, compassionate family lives, agriculture, animal husbandry, art and craft? How was leadership exercised? Of course, the measuring stick for all of this was the British or French or Spanish or Dutch culture of the time. The colonists were looking for what they recognized as culture.

However, this recognition often did little to actually protect the native culture. Hernan Cortés, in a lengthy report home to Charles V of Spain, described how the city of Tenochtitlán, the great Aztec capitol, appeared in 1520 when he first arrived in what would later become Mexico. With a population of 200,000, the city was larger than any in Spain at the time. In the following sentences excerpted from the letter, Cortés tries to describe the city in relation to the Spanish cities the king knows.

> The city is a large as Seville or Cordoba; its streets, I speak of the principal ones, are very wide and straight; some of these, and all of the inferior ones, are half land and half water, and are navigated by canoes. . . . There is one square twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded by porticoes, where are daily assembled more than sixty thousand souls, engaged in buying and selling; and where are found all kinds of merchandise that the world affords . . . Different kinds of cotton thread of all colors in skeins are exposed for sale in one quarter of the market, which has the appearance of the silk-market in Granada, although the former is supplied more abundantly. . . . This great city contains a large number of temples, or houses for their idols, very handsome edifices, which are situated in the different districts and the suburbs. . . . Among these temples there is one which far surpasses all the rest, whose grandeur of architectural details no human tongue is able to describe; for within its precincts, surrounded by a lofty wall, there is room enough for a town of five hundred families.

The report ranges from descriptions of the wide array of goods for sale in the bustling market, the splendor of the palaces and temples, and the great aviaries kept throughout the city, to the fine clothing, good table manners and extensive ceremonies that surrounded Moctezuma, the Aztec king. It also includes a description of Moctezuma's hospitality toward the Spanish, and willingness to consider Catholicism to replace the traditional Aztec religion. Not long after Cortés wrote this praise, Moctezuma was dead and the Spanish had systematically razed the splendid city building by building. In just 30 short years, Mexico City, built on the ruins of Tenochtitlán, and with some of the same stones, was the thriving capitol of New Spain.

Of course, colonial control and Said's three spatial strategies of colonialization were far easier to implement in places where the local population was not urbanized, was split into tribal groups who did not trust or did not communicate with each other or was sparsely settled across a large landscape. These places, where immigration from the colonizing nation was encouraged, are known in postcolonial discourse as "Settler Colonies". In these places, European immigration eventually overran the landscape and decimated the native people. They include the territory that is now Canada, the US, Australia, New Zealand, Chile and, in some parts, Mexico. Other places posed very different challenges. If the new colonies were, like India, already densely populated or, like much of the interior of Africa and South America, had landscapes and climates incredibly hostile to European colonists, they required different approaches. Nevertheless, wherever the colonists set up residence, the spatial activities of colonization followed to the greatest extent possible for that particular place.

It is not difficult to understand how colonialism established the networks and set the political, cultural, economic and spatial stage for the attitudes of globalization.

> In effect, the west Europeans were developing a "whole" new world. The transfer of people and plants are examples of a much larger distribution and reorganization of the elements of space – also including animals, food types, and diseases – all of which helped to incorporate an extant "natural" environment into a European "man-made" one. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century webs of long spanning and complex socio-spatial chains were being produced, restructuring world space.
>
> (Perera 1998: 71)

While many forms of spatial power are slowly being dismantled, globalization continues with great, unfettered ferocity. At the geographic scale, uneven geographical development is one of its primary spatial impacts – this

uneven-ness does far more than what Harvey laments as "render(ing) whole populations to the violence of down-sizing, unemployment, collapse of services, degradation of living standards, and loss of resources and environmental qualities" (Harvey 2000: 81). And it goes beyond poverty, starvation and devolution into lawlessness.

Spatially, globalization extends the project of colonialism by transforming local landscapes according to some global formula for efficiency and profit. No longer bound by the inconvenience of national allegiance that limited colonial empires, today's economic interests operate almost free of national boundaries. They dictate which crops are planted, the rate at which timber is cut and minerals are mined, the prices commodities bring and the dynamics of trade. A recent advertisement on National Public Radio from agricultural products giant ADM (Archer Daniels Midland) features a woman's gentle voice inquiring: "What if we think about the world as one giant farm field? When crops are grown where they grow best, we improve agricultural efficiency, make food more affordable and help feed a hungry world." This is globalization in a nutshell: posing as humanitarianism, what it is really doing is continuing, in a slightly different guise, the plantation system of colonialism. A growing number of people, including national leaders, are unconvinced by this rhetoric. The growing international opposition to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund is increasingly articulate about the political, economic, societal, cultural and spatial impacts of globalization. And the World Trade Organization, formerly under the control of the developed world, is moving toward a wider, more egalitarian stance in applications of subsidies and tariffs.

Among the numerous objectionable aspects of globalization is the continued assertion of the superiority (and desirability) of Western European and American models of organizing space, making cities, constructing buildings and consuming resources. These models are being adopted even in places where there is no particular external pressure to accept them, or despite direct conflict with local politics and culture. For instance, in China where communism is still the official political/economic system and where there is still an emphasis on the extended family, globalization has hit hard. The venerable city of Shanghai is being surrounded by suburbs and gated communities that look as if they were transplanted from Southern California – the prototypical model of capitalism, consumerism and single family living. This model of living is only available to the small percentage of Chinese who have managed to achieve a middle-class standard of living. However, the huge majority of people still live in poverty: a perfect example of the uneven geographical development Harvey refers to.

Given the widening impacts of globalization, it is not surprising that the discourse on space is becoming increasingly sophisticated and widespread. This is one place where the various definitions of "space" from a

range of disciplines converge, overlap and become irrevocably tangled. Technology is allowing a collapsing of space and time so the networks of economic (and therefore political and cultural) control are tighter than ever. The friction of distance is constantly being reduced. However, this same technology is also allowing for the dissemination of information and ideas at a speed and scale never before imagined. Indeed, within the strategies of globalization are the seeds of its own destruction. As with colonialism before it, globalization eventually makes available to those it controls the thinking, technology and strategies it deploys. These are picked up and transformed into tools of resistance to various kinds of economic, cultural and political power.

While globalization threatens us with a kind of homogeneity and numerous other acknowledged ills, the gradual breakdown of political and cultural hegemony means that local circumstances are simultaneously becoming more explicitly diverse through the disaggregation of power. For some peoples this disaggregation has brought enormous opportunity, an opening of horizons, and a chance to forge a future for their culture. In other situations, the benefits are far less clear. While spreading localism grants the basic human respect for the right of a people to self-determination and agency, it also opens up enormous possibilities for widespread destruction of cultural diversity and human practices. This is especially true for indigenous peoples who have been isolated from outside culture. A tribal group in the rainforests of Brazil, no matter how intelligent and wise, is ill-equipped to negotiate on its own behalf with international timber companies. Nor can they understand the effects of the blindingly rapid environmental and cultural impact of clear-cutting and introduction of monetary systems and outside technologies that accompany it. Within half a generation the remnants of the tribe may find itself as disenfranchised poor living in squalor on the fringes of some middle-sized Brazilian city.

The spatial strategies discussed here are not without their weaknesses; their hidden underbellies of advantage and perspective. In discussions of colonialism and globalization, for instance, there is often a great deal of time given over to setting up dualities between the center and the periphery, or North and South, or First and Third Worlds. These dualities, while providing a handle on some basic dynamics of certain kinds of power in these large-scale systems, oversimplify the spatial complexities and presume a directionality and segregation of influence that is now discredited by many. Indeed, by assuming that the basic good–bad dynamics of situations are simply reproduced at ever-larger scales, these kinds of analyses miss the crucial subtleties that exist on the actual ground, in actual space and in lived time. While the main thrust of the spatial strategies of power is to control, reshape and make invisible, they also open up advantages and strategies of resistance to the very power that creates them. And, in the end, often those who are subjugated have enormous influence on those in power. There is a reason,

after all, that there is an entire genre of literature and film centered around the transformative effects the "colonies" have on the colonizer.

Reclaiming Space

How is it that people resist or reverse these deeply embedded spatial strategies and practices of those with power? Despite setbacks and attempts to stop it, the dynamics of political and cultural power throughout the world have been shifting rapidly over the past fifty years. Indigenous peoples, like the Kanak of New Caledonia and the Aborigines of Australia, who have been systematically sidelined in their own lands, are regaining their voices as they refuse to remain on the cultural fringes any longer. Minority peoples, like African-Americans in the US, who have been silenced or ignored are also asserting their presence and their rights. Small, previously marginalized, political action groups and non-governmental organizations, like the World Wildlife Fund, Doctors Without Borders and the Southern Poverty Law Center, have gained legitimacy through perseverance and success. Finally, people who comprise large proportions of populations, but who have through colonial occupation, law or custom been relegated to the fringes of power, are dismantling the systems that kept them from fully participating in determining their own lives. A striking example of this is the 1994 emergence of the black and "colored" people of South Africa after decades under the thumb of apartheid.

To be sure, the emergence of these previously powerless groups does not happen easily or peacefully. Nor is their progress always forward, for ground gained is sometimes lost. But the movement is generally toward an increasingly broad distribution of power, particularly in the cultural and spatial arenas: the dismantling of colonial rule (with ground lost to globalization); the reassertion of political, cultural and territorial control by indigenous peoples; the surge of civil rights and political power for those in the minority; and a continuing support for the crucial role played by many non-profit organizations in implementing progressive societal and legislative agendas despite conservative efforts in the opposite direction.

This redistribution of power places high value on maximum individual liberty for each person – tempered by a limited responsibility to a larger community. The movement toward this particular vision of how power is organized might be seen as the outcome of the past 900 years of European-driven history. These ideals reached an important level of refinement with the birth of democracy in France and the US in the eighteenth century – that *each* person has equal rights, protections and privileges. This is a deceptively simple notion. Indeed, the previous belief (not entirely eradicated) that the definition of a

"person" includes only those who are white, of European-descent, male and landowners has been the source of inestimable grief. This is born out in the history of European expansion and colonization, of slavery, racism, women's rights, segregation, apartheid, anti-Semitism, voting rights and civil rights. And it continues to this day. This grief is further expanded by the not necessarily logical coupling of the idea of democracy with the unfettered practices of capitalism. The Enlightenment experiment with equal rights has not yet fully proved its value to the vast majority, who continue to live without true political or economic power.

It is not surprising that those with power are most reluctant to give any of it up. Nor is it surprising that those without power have become increasingly sophisticated and more insistent about getting it – supported by the logical conclusions that must be reached about the extension of rights embedded in the primary democratic constitutions and institutions. It is unclear if the goal of this redistribution of power should ultimately lead to a democratic form of government, at least as practiced in the world today. However, the principles of early democratic ideals are still deeply relevant and have had a profound impact on the active critique and challenge to dominating powers.

The struggle mounted by colonized, segregated and marginalized people is, along with the desire for spatial freedoms, a struggle for agency – that is, the power to act on one's own behalf in daily life as well as in the nation's political and cultural arenas. Edward Said implies that the cultural agency needs to come before the political for "the slow and often bitterly disputed recovery of geographical territory which is at the heart of decolonization, is preceded – as empire had been – by the charting of cultural territory" (Said 1993: 209). This is a pivotal idea: that the idea of political change and the reclaiming of spaces is brought about first in the cultural production of a group of people through writing, art, music; and then it is acted upon in the real world, with the ideas turned into spatial reality.

Later in the same text, Said suggests a more poetic source for resistance to colonialism: "Because of the presence of the colonizing outsider, the land is recoverable only through the imagination" (Said 1993: 225). The imagination would seem an inadequate tool to undo the hegemony of a colonial power or any other power strong enough to curtail the ability to act in space or to rearrange an entire landscape. Yet, the imagination is the place where resistance, and even revolution, begin. Even in the most brutal of regimes, the interior life of the mind is not completely controllable or knowable, and so it is the one place where the human spirit can exercise its will toward independence. In most situations where power abusively controls how space is used, the power is either not strong enough to, or not interested in, controlling other aspects of the subject people's imaginative life, as long as it is not perceived as a direct threat. This life can be experienced through small

things like food, poetry, clothing or music – activities that can be more broadly defined as cultural practices.

Cultural production, things made in a particular cultural context, is a complex and powerful expression of human life. It is complex in that it involves a number of scales and strategies. At the most intimate physical scale it can include clothing, hairstyles, tattoos and adornment. Tools and utensils, weapons and containers, ritual and aesthetic objects are also forms of cultural production. Food and its preparation is a more transitory or performative form of cultural production, as are literature, dance, music and ritual behavior. At a larger scale, cultural production includes buildings, the organization of towns and villages and the landscape. It is, in part, in this multi-scalar and enmeshed condition that the radical potential of cultural production lies.

The power of cultural practices also lies in the way they sustain cultural identity. Throughout the world, certain kinds of cultural practices and making help people maintain their sense of separateness during years of being controlled by others. In less confrontational settings, it helps cultural distinctions to be drawn and cultural bridges to be built. It communicates values and sensibilities in ways that are absorbed through exposure over time. In cities all over the world, ethnic restaurants are often the outposts of minority cultures. Likewise, literature, music and film convey aspects of cultural sensibility and sophistication that may not otherwise be visible. In this way, cultural practices reinforce a sense of agency – the ability and power to act on one's own behalf – even for those who may be on the fringes of mainstream cultures.

Cultural production also has power as a location for the formulation of objections to domination. Through the use of practices from their own cultures, dominated people can voice their opposition through the often-encoded forms of the things they make. For instance, the women of the Ivory Coast have long had a practice of block printing cotton, then sewing the yardage into skirts, headscarves and other clothing items. The printing has always told a story or recorded an historical event. But it has also poked fun at political figures, particularly the French colonials. While a block printed skirt is not apt to foment rebellion, the practice of expressing political views through this seemingly innocuous form of decoration keeps alive a practice of criticism and an attitude of resistance. It also affirms the agency of the women – a small realm where they can act for themselves.

That cultural production can be a tool of political change is a notion that has also been more cynically used. In many places, the idea of a discreet cultural "tradition" has been invented or elaborated in order to build support for nationalism and to counter the overwhelming surge of global culture. Often, this sort of nationalism has allowed a disparate group of people to bond together to get rid of a conquering or colonial power. However, if cultural "tradition" is invented, then what is to keep it from being reinvented, causing

continuing waves of political and cultural upheavals? This question is as unanswerable as the invention that prompts it. This twentieth-century phenomenon of the creation of "tradition" has been usefully analyzed by a number of scholars, while it continues today.

> The rejigging of the map of the earth's human cultures is proceeding apace. The geographical bounding being striven for and the numerous inventions of tradition that are occurring indicate that this is a dynamic field of human activity which is moving in somewhat unpredictable ways.
>
> (Harvey 2000: 67)

A final way that cultural production is used for resistance is through the adoption of the cultural forms of the dominant culture in order to undermine it. This strategy might best be illustrated by the way the literature became a critical weapon in the dismantling of colonialism and in the reformulation of a sense of power for those newly de-colonized. V.S. Naipal, Salman Rushdie and Chinua Achebe all transformed the novel into tools for making those previously colonized vivid and present in the rarefied world of "European" literature.

But what does all this discussion of political change have to do with space? Henri Lefebvre brings us back around to the crucial relationship between space and power.

> A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential; indeed it has failed in that it has not changed life itself, but has merely changed ideological superstructures, institutions or political apparatuses. A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language, on space. . . .
>
> (Lefebvre 1991: 54)

How is it possible in the midst of these changes to undo the spatial legacy of segregation, marginalization and the spatial manifestations of colonialism? Is it possible to resist the spatial practices of globalization? Clearly, for South Africa to make a full transition from its apartheid past into the imagined race-blind future, the double landscape must be undone.

Architecture is a visible, spatial, high profile form of cultural practice that deals directly with space. As such it is intimately tied not only to power, but also to cultural agency – for while agency is necessary to advance an architectural project; architecture, as we have seen, lends credence to that agency. It is the primary spatial way for people to represent themselves in the world.

And it is in this connection that architects have the opportunity to participate in the restructuring of the spatial and physical world toward a goal of greater equity and justice.

In terms of its relationship to power, however, architecture is suspect as a form of resistant cultural practice. It has never been a practice of "the people". Lefebvre sees the architect as a recipient of the favors of developers, who give an architect a slice of land to work on. And he sees the practice of architecture as self-contained and aloof: "It may thus be said of architectural discourse that it too often imitates or caricatures the discourse of power, and it suffers from the delusion that 'objective' knowledge of 'reality' can be attained by graphic representations" (Lefebvre 1991: 361). A page later, Lefebvre turns from the architect to those who inhabit architectural space.

> Let us now turn our attention to the space of those who are referred to by means of such clumsy and pejorative labels as "users" and "inhabitants". No well-defined terms with clear connotations have been found to designate these groups. Their marginalization by spatial practice thus extends to language . . . The users' space is lived – not represented (or conceived). When compared to the abstract space of the experts (architects, urbanists, planners), the space of the everyday activities of the users is a concrete one, which is to say, subjective.
>
> (Lefebvre 1991: 362)

Indeed, few people in the world exercise direct agency over the production of the buildings that make up their worlds. Rather, non-residential buildings and the forms of towns and cities are usually the result of collective cultural and economic action and behavior by those in power. In many places, people – those without power – still make their own dwellings, sometimes using forms and construction techniques hundreds of years old. More often, however, people build shelter out of whatever materials they can find with an urgency and need that has little to do with consideration of culture. Even in these circumstances, however, people assert small gestures of individual agency, giving the most provisional of dwellings dignity and individuality. For instance, in the still-impoverished townships of post-Apartheid South Africa, the interiors of cobbled together shacks are often carefully and elaborately decorated – as if the spatial restrictions outside of the house could be counterbalanced by the lively expression inside. The exteriors of the shacks are usually less attended to, but are sometimes brightened with a bit of paint, flowers growing in a pot, or small decorations. These small gestures of dignity signal that someone lives in these places – individuals with thought and sensibility. Even the grinding dehumanization of poverty seems unable to take away

the expression of what Le Corbusier calls this "first proof of existence", this "taking possession of space".

So, "the people" seem to be getting along in their lives, and they are finding small, yet meaningful ways of resisting the spatial depredations of power without the help of architects. From the perspective of the slum dweller in Jakarta, architects and architecture have nothing to do with daily life and, if they are thought about at all, they are simply an extension of the existing systems of economic and spatial power. This is a fair assessment of a discipline created to serve these interests.

Given the relationships of architecture to these structures, what are the implications for architects of the changes in who holds power? The traditional relationship between architects and the old power authorities is complicated by the fact that as political, economic and cultural power is more widely distributed, so is the power to command architectural production. To be sure, a majority of architectural commissions are still for those who have traditionally held the power: governments, major religions, wealthy corporations, cultural institutions and individuals. However, an increasing number of building projects are being initiated and commissioned by those who previously would not have been able to even imagine such a visible, proactive and permanent assertion into physical space. It is here, in particular, that architects might find strategies for involving architecture, as cultural and spatial production, in social change.

Architecture's Role

To agree with Le Corbusier's observation about the primacy of space in existence, is also to find brutal, inhuman and ethically questionable the spatial consequences of centuries of colonialism, racism, segregation, tribalism, globalization and economic imperialism. And yet, as stated above, architecture is implicated in these consequences through its intimate relationship with those in power. Architects, perhaps unwittingly, have helped to make, building by building, the landscapes and cities and neighborhoods that embody, literally impress on our bodies, the power relationships that surround us. Kim Dovey, in his provocative book *Framing Power*, discusses the theoretical nuances of the connections between built space (particularly architecture) and power and does not mince words about this connection.

> The built environment reflects the identities, differences and struggles of gender, class, race, culture and age. It shows the interests of people in enpowerment and freedom, the interests of the state in social order, and the private corporate interest in stimulating consumption. Because architecture and urban design involve transformations in the ways we frame life, because design is the

> imagination and production of the future, the field cannot claim autonomy from the politics of social change.
>
> (Dovey 1999: 1)

For we are engaged, whether we like it or not, in "the politics of social change". What can we do to wiggle free of all the economic and societal ties that bind us to those in power and begin to apply our skills to re-distribute both space and power? How is it that the buildings we design can support the general trend toward more widespread cultural agency and spatial manifestation of peoples who have been systematically made invisible or excluded from representing themselves in the built world? Dovey reminds us, in his Afterword, that even as cynical an observer of culture as Michel Foucault wrote that "architecture 'can and does produce positive effects when the liberating intentions of the architect coincide with the real practice of people in the exercise of their freedom'" (Foucault as quoted by Dovey 1999: 192). Here we pick up this topic where Dovey leaves off: once an architect accepts this potential of his or her role, how does one become an agent for social change *as an architect*?

After all, architecture and architects would seem to have little ability to alter the world in such a significant way. Indeed, architecture has no ability to affect the imperial ambitions of the US. It cannot restructure the inequitable global flow of resources and food. It cannot disarm a tyrant, halt a civil war or end terrorism. It cannot restore tropical hardwood forests or stop global warming. It is not even apt to change people's minds about the ideas and values they hold. This truth about the inability of architecture to make rapid, large-scale changes often frustrates architects and, particularly, students of architecture. There is a sense of powerlessness in this – and a resulting urge toward resigned retreat into the old dynamics between the traditional powerful patrons and the architects who serve them. What kind of social change is actually within the grasp of practicing architects to accomplish?

To get a fresh look at what architecture as an agent of change can be, it might be useful to take a step back and see architecture through the eyes of someone who thinks about space, but from outside the world of architecture.

In his important book, *Spaces of Hope*, geographer David Harvey envisions a cultural actor he calls the "insurgent architect". He is emphatic that he is not referring to the professional architect here but, rather, to the architect as a metaphorical figure. His insurgent architect has great potential as a proactive participant in the questioning, and even rearranging of what he terms contemporary socio-ecological life – the temporal and spatial *consequences* of current economic, cultural and political power. While Harvey is addressing every person who is actively concerned with these issues, his thoughts are also useful for practicing actual architects who aspire to change

the world. This is because he sees the potential of architecture with fresh eyes, letting us see ourselves in a new way. Harvey splits open that feeling of impotence that so often surrounds working architects. He does this by articulating a vision of architecture as crucial to human society.

> I begin with the figure of the architect. I do so in part because that figure (and it is the *figure* rather than the professional person of whom I speak) has a certain centrality and positionality in all discussions of the processes of constructing and organizing spaces. The architect has been most deeply enmeshed throughout history in the production and pursuit of utopian ideals (particularly though not solely those of spatial form). The architect shapes spaces so as to give them social utility as well as human and aesthetic/symbolic meanings. The architect shapes and preserves longterm social memories and strives to give material form to the longings and desire of individuals and collectives. The architect struggles to open spaces for new possibilities, for future forms of social life.
>
> (Harvey 2000: 200)

Harvey continues that the architect is "a metaphor for our own agency as we go about our daily practices and through them effectively preserve, construct, and reconstruct our life-world".

We should be flattered by – if not a bit disbelieving of – this generous reading of the pivotal role of the architect in society. We know all too well how our work is compromised by the context that surrounds and sometimes overwhelms architecture. But Harvey is not uninformed about these difficulties of making architecture. He readily acknowledges the complex systems within which architects have to operate: laws and regulations, planning policy, economic markets, site constraints, technological challenges, material difficulties, and the wide cast of characters, each with his or her own motivations: from developers to financiers, from contractors to laborers. He concedes that often these entities "have more to say about the final shape of things than the architect". But it is *exactly* these external pressures and complicating relationships that reinforce Harvey's attachment to the metaphor of the architect. "'Doing architecture'", he asserts "is an embedded, spatiotemporal practice. But there is, nevertheless, always a moment when the free play of the imagination – the will to create – must enter" (Harvey 2000: 204). In fact, it is this very experience of juggling pressures and still breathing poetry into our work that Harvey finds so inspiring.

Finally, Harvey's advocacy for the figure of the insurgent architect rests also on the fact that architects take action; we make things. That is our job.

> As real architects of our future we cannot engage in endless problematization and never-ending conversations. Firm recommendations must be advanced and decisions taken, in the clear knowledge of all the limitations and potentiality for unintended consequences (both good and bad).
>
> (Harvey 2000: 245)

This fascination with "action" grows from Harvey's own field, geography, which, along with anthropology and political and cultural theory, contemplates the need for cultural change. Each of these disciplines is involved in analyses of problems – offering elegant, insightful and intelligent discussions of the subtleties of causes and effects. But it always stops there; with a definition of the problem. Architecture, on the other hand, is about solving problems, about making a different spatial reality. It does this in the face of uncertainty, knowing that it will not be perfect. This reminds us that architecture is, in its essence, an optimistic, action-based endeavor. Harvey seems to admire both this action and its hopefulness.

So here, according to Harvey, are four tools architects have in their hands: (1) an explicitly spatial and physical cultural practice; (2) a practice fortuitously embedded within (and experience working with) a network of power and information; (3) imagination and effective techniques for envisioning alternative futures; and (4) actual spatial and physical action. Each of these tools is a routine part of the larger puzzle of architecture and those engaged in its daily practice often forget to think of them in these general terms. Yet, stating them in such general terms allows us to step back from their real-life implications to reframe them within the concerns of this book. What Harvey is reminding us of is that architecture is not powerless. It has, within the discipline and the way that it is embedded in culture, its own cultural agency. And that agency is predicated on the tools Harvey has so eloquently identified.

In order to use the agency of architecture, however, it is critical to know exactly how, at what scale and through what sorts of strategies, architecture can produce social change. To accept the limitations of architecture in this sense, is to learn to work with its true potential. Within a definition of architecture as the design and making of individual projects, there is the scale of real space and the heartbeat of lived time – Harvey's "actual spatial action". This is a far smaller scale than the grand sweeping dynamics of the power of nations. The Swiss architect Peter Zumthor puts it this way: "when we, as architects, are concerned about space, we are concerned with but a tiny part of the infinity that surrounds the earth, and yet each and every building marks a unique place in this infinity" (Zumthor 1998: 21). It is exactly here, at this small scale, that architecture can and does support change. It does this by doing what it does best: by enclosing a series of human uses adjusted to the

particular conditions of a specific place. These include the historical and cultural context, the site, the nuanced dynamics of the various people involved, the unique technological and material possibilities, and the daily rhythms and dreams of the people who will inhabit the building.

It is not easy to do this well, for it requires not only architectural skill, but also that magic component Harvey refers to as "imagining . . . alternative futures". Imagination, seen by Said as the first location of resistance to the hegemony of power, is here applied to the specific problem of transforming space. Indeed, another physical reality must be evoked – first in the minds of architects, then in representations of those ideas through drawings and models, and, finally, full-scale in real space. South African Iain Low, writing of the role for architects and architecture in remaking the spaces of South Africa highlights the importance of imagination in this endeavor.

> If architecture is to gain a new transformed identity, then architects must take a stand on the side of *imagination* and of the possible. In South Africa this necessarily means engaging in the unknown; with the otherness that has ensured our divides for so long. It requires the exercise of a capacity for critical reflection that locates our *imagination* probably best in between the grassroots and the global. In this way we might claim a new identity for architecture and contribute to meaningful production of the project of spatial transformation . . .
>
> (emphasis added, Low 2002: 36)

This use of the imagination of the architect as a key location for architecture's engagement with social change is not a new idea. Over the past 150 years, architects have used architectural imagination to actively question and engage the existing structure of society. Certainly architects have aided advocates of utopian orders (including fascist utopias) of all descriptions by supporting their social, economic and political ideals with visions of cities, towns and neighborhoods that might readily contain them. In the fifteenth century Iaques Perret drew the "Ideal City" and Bartolommeo Delbene made an engraving of his "City of Truth". Much later, in the late eighteenth century, Claude Ledoux developed a town plan and detailed architectural configurations for his town of Chaux. Likewise, futurists have often used architecture as a vehicle for envisioning a technologically transformed urban life. From Le Corbusier to Super Studio, architects, themselves, have happily participated in these ventures, convinced of the potency of space and form to reflect and support social, even political, behavior. Certainly in these cases the architectural vision has been important to rounding out the picture of an idealized future. Look, here is what this new life will look like. Here is the tidy town with

decent housing, communal fields and places of shared leisure. Can't you picture yourself there? But even then, architecture is still not the agent of change. It can be a supporter, an advocate and give spatial definition to change, but it will not cause change itself.

In the twentieth century a handful of architects began to use their imagination and skills to try to change the physical circumstances of those who could not afford their services. Sometimes these efforts were supported by the government, notably in government-supported Socialist worker housing schemes in Europe in the 1920s. These arose from the well-intended visions of architects who believed that industrialization could yield important progress in housing workers in affordable and efficient residential buildings. This effort at providing decent affordable housing is continued today in a wide range of ways. In many places, governments continue to be the prime motivator of such residential projects. In the US, as the government has withdrawn from this role, private non-profit developers have moved into the void.

There was a time, as global colonial practices began to collapse, and former colonies emerged as new nations, when architecture got very involved in politics – but only as it always has: as a reflection of power. In this case, however, the power had been transferred to new governments that were anxious to demonstrate their separation from their former occupiers.[3] For this task – to symbolize the radical departure from these European links – some nations chose a supposedly neutral modernism as a style for the new buildings. This style was also meant to communicate the fact that the new nation was technologically and aesthetically advanced; ready to join the modern community of nations. And so, Brazil, with Oscar Niemeyer's Brasilia, India with Le Corbusier at Chandigarh, and fledgling Bangladesh, with Louis Kahn's capitol building in Dacca, all proclaimed their independence from the colonizers' vision of space.

By the mid-twentieth century, some architects began to look not only at the products of their practices, but at the accepted structure of practice as well. Challenging the positioning of architects as only serving the wealthy and powerful, some architects, mostly within the support structure of universities, tried launching community design centers and providing pro-bono services. Motivated by an intense desire and motivation for social change, these "storefront" practices attempted a new form of practice providing architectural services to those who could not otherwise afford them. While many good projects have come from these efforts, projects that have significantly improved communities, the role architecture plays in the larger context has continued unchanged.

This tradition of work has been extended most recently by design-build work of architecture schools across the US. Most notable among these is the Rural Studio at Auburn University and Studio 804 at the University of

Kansas. The format of these studios is to design and build homes for families in poverty. While the poor "client" is consulted during the design, the houses they receive far exceed what is needed as shelter, or even as home. The thinking is that the client receives a tremendous value added through design.

A scattering of other practices engaged directly in social change are tied less to a tradition of work than to intriguing individuals who have simply made up their minds to do something. Cameron Sinclair has founded Architecture for Humanity, a non-profit organization that has sponsored design competitions for a mobile AIDS clinic in South Africa and transitional refugee housing in Kosovo. The Korean-American architect Jae Cha designs ethereal community buildings and churches out of ordinary materials for impoverished rural communities in Latin America. And the revered Japanese architect, Shigeru Ban, has applied his interest in technology to design refugee housing out of giant paper tubes manufactured by the same factories that make the tubes for toilet paper. After the devastating earthquake at Kobe, he scaled up the technology even further to build a temporary Catholic church.

In addition to practicing architects, a number of historians, theorists and critics have, over the years, made lucid arguments about how architecture and urban form are the spatial results of a complex set of social, economic, political and historical interactions. But what are architects, those who are actively involved in the making of buildings, to make of these important analyses? How can this thinking be brought forward to inform the daily practice of architecture?

As is usually the case in architecture, there is no formula for this; nor is there a specific process. In fact, projects that explicitly take on the issues of cultural and political power, that are an overt reassertion of cultural agency and dignity, that seek to symbolically represent a formerly invisible people, or that have overt agendas for social change are, by their very definition, unique in almost every way. Such projects cannot be solved by the standard design and constructional processes and procedures of architecture. Instead, they require risk-taking, rethinking, reinventing – bold acts of faith and imagination. They require dealing spatially and materially with the consequences of political, economic and cultural power in the context of the project. And they require intelligence, patience and, perhaps most of all, persistence.

In order to understand how architects might creatively operate in such circumstance, might re-imagine the architecture in specific situations, or might even re-imagine architectural practice itself, it is useful to look carefully at specific examples of projects.

In the past decade, architects have been repeatedly commissioned to design significant buildings for people who previously did not have cultural or political access and who could not have afforded the opportunity – including the architects in this book. Through a series of political shifts these people

now have real cultural agency – to act in their own behalf, to represent themselves in a larger physical and social context through building projects. For instance, many of these projects are cultural centers or museums that have as a mission nurturing a local culture, revealing that culture to others from the global community, or reconciling aspects of cultural or political interaction. Such building programs are not benign. Usually the projects are for institutions that explicitly or implicitly address issues of inequality and historical disproportion – but may also be unfamiliar or even antithetical to the culture of the people they are meant to serve. Usually these projects threaten those who used to hold power by making physical and spatial the revised structure of power – raising the possibility of backlash. Usually racism has been a key factor that must be recognized and addressed in the cultural and political tensions. And usually the architects for these new places are at the very least educated in the framework of the white Western European culture that has been the primary source of the tension in the first place.

The architectural questions these situations raise are messy and difficult. There is no way to avoid the fact that the structures that house such institutions are symbolic on many levels. Their mere existence is political, much less their form and expression. In some instances, the building is the first time that the people have had an opportunity to represent themselves in the contemporary world. This places particularly heavy demands upon both the architecture of such buildings and the architects. Each instance of this kind of project is unique. While they may share many of the same issues, the architectural strategies for addressing these issues are by necessity different in each situation. Indeed, these strategies must be fine-tuned to the politics, history, context, decision-making strategies, cultural and spatial habits and modes of interaction of the particular group of people involved.

The buildings themselves become part of the process of telling more complete histories, of giving voice to the silenced, of reconciling historical victims and victimizers, and of manifesting in physical, lived space the presence of once-marginalized people. At their best, these projects complicate accepted history by asserting the agency of those often thought to be victims. By translating the complexities of the situation into built form, they are given depth, dimension, individuality and physical, spatial solidity.

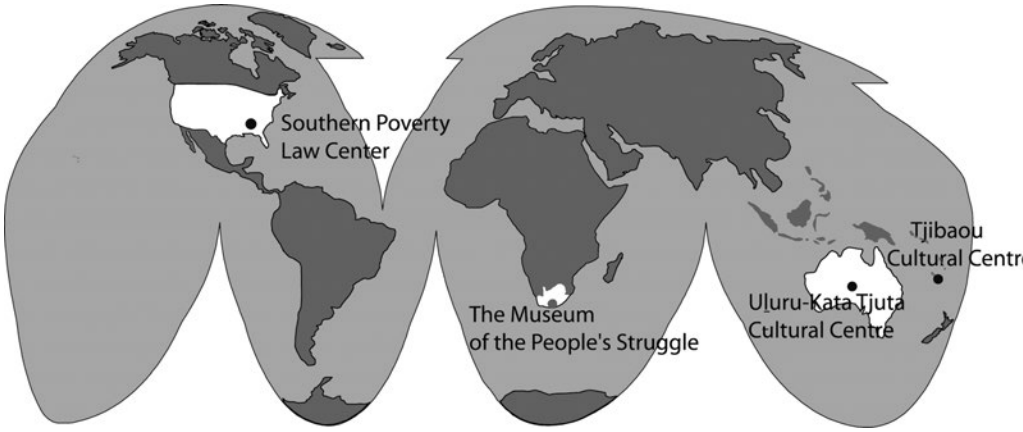
These kinds of projects are also, of course, implicated in the processes of apology, guilt, restitution, reconciliation and profound cultural change. They are sometimes happening at the same time as the reclamation of "tradition" for the people: a process that selectively winds back the clock to a particular period (sometimes a different period for different slices of culture – this era for clothing, this for dwellings, this for dance and ritual). Simultaneously, there may be an attempt to revitalize languages, often all but lost to daily usage.

The selection of architects for such projects, the strategies they use in design, and materials and techniques of construction they employ are implicated as well. Can an architect from outside of the culture really understand the subtleties of the project? Are the usual practice modes of architecture appropriate for these projects? How far does an architect go in trying to adapt "traditional" building techniques and materials to the new building? Is this appropriate? Desirable? Even reasonable? What about a culture that has little or no practice of building, like the Aborigines of Australia?

To frame and focus the wide range of architectural issues the contemporary shifts in spatial power and cultural agency suggest, I have tracked the stories of four recent buildings.[4] The projects were selected because each has an overt cultural and political purpose deeply linked to historical conflicts, shifts in power and to future hopes. In each case the project is located in a physical place with profound historical and cultural connections. In each case, the architects took on these complex circumstances as the crucial context of the project and deployed the cultural agency of architecture in service of proactive social change. This decision led to a distinct design process as well as a highly specific architectural product. These four projects are discussed not only in terms of the global issues surrounding them, but also in specific terms of the physical, political, spatial, cultural and historical setting, the selection of the architect, the process of design, the construction and use of technology, the qualities of the finished project, and the way in which the project operates on a day-to-day basis. While they share a great deal in common, however, each project is unique. And each allows a different perspective on the rapidly changing political dynamics of cultural agency and spatial power that continues to unfold across the globe.

The case studies presented here are: The Tjibaou Cultural Centre in the French Overseas Territory of New Caledonia for the Kanak people by the Renzo Piano Building Workshop; The Uluṟu-Kata Tjuṯa Cultural Centre at Uluṟu (Ayers Rock) in Central Australia for the Aṉangu Aboriginal people by Melbourne-based Gregory Burgess; the Museum of Struggle in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, South Africa for the Citizens of South Africa by South African architects Noero and Wolff; and the new headquarters building for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama by Erdy McHenry Architecture of Philadelphia.

The Tjibaou Cultural Centre project raises the question of how an architect represents an oppressed and tattered culture primarily to itself, as well as to outsiders. How does one create a context for the revitalization of cultural dignity? What exactly is represented in the building, who chooses which aspects of culture are embedded, and what role can architecture play in reviving a culture? Its role, as the only one of Mitterrand's *Grands Projets* outside of France requires a close analysis of the idea of agency, as well as motivation, in



1.5
Locations of the projects in the following chapters

the instigation of such projects. Finally, the Tjibaou Cultural Centre's startling form, imported, highly crafted materials, and advanced structural system calls into question the appropriateness of certain globally available means of production while simultaneously representing contested aspirations to cultural global sophistication. Like the deployment of cell phone technology in India, this technological strategy leapfrogs over locally available, but comparatively crude, imported construction technologies.

The Uluṟu-Kata Tjuṯa Cultural Centre makes the Aboriginal people of Uluṟu visible in a way they have not been before. The project leads to a discussion of how a culture with an extremely limited building practice is manifested through architecture and how a building explicitly for a particular culture – but not representing it – can have direct relevance for it. In such a case, how is one to understand strategies of technology and construction, materials, and form? These questions are intimately bound up in issues of tourism in this case, as well as in the issues arising from a gross historical imbalance of physical, political and cultural power. In addition, the reclaiming and exercise of cultural agency, in all aspects of such a project, is highlighted. This project also raises the question of how an architect from outside the culture can serve as a translator in a cultural context. And finally the question of what is revealed and what is concealed about a culture through architecture is explicitly embodied in this project.

The Museum of Struggle, while not an active cultural center, is built in memory of the latest raw and unresolved cultural conflict in the tragic history of South Africa: apartheid, and the sustained resistance against it. The project raises in the most overt terms the issues of power and how it is represented in architecture through the materials and stylistic references of the building and its construction technology. Here, the relationship between constructed space and the cultural and curatorial program for the building is raised

as an explicit political issue. Here also, the notion of a single interpretation of culture and politics portrayed through a building is explicitly called into question. Finally, because the Museum is about an ongoing cultural process of the architects' own place, the project brings up the issues of how architects become citizen activists in this sort of politicized environment and project.

The inclusion of the Southern Poverty Law Center expands the discussion by introducing a range of issues raised by private, non-governmental institutions working for legal, cultural and political change. While this is a far different situation than a sanctioned cultural institution, these organizations often occupy the margins of power and operate in an unfriendly atmosphere. How can such institutions make their presence known in physical space? Like the Museum of Struggle, the SPLC project raises issues of the representation of power, but here the context is an ongoing adversarial one. The question of the authority carried by architectural style is also raised here with modernism and neoclassicism face to face. In addition, the possible power and symbolic nature of the site, and the relationship between the larger context and the building, is highlighted with this project. Finally, the controversial SPLC raises the all-too-current issue of providing, through architecture, security for a building and its inhabitants, while also projecting a civic image.

Since these are ongoing stories with unknowable outcomes and with multiple points of view that are unlikely to be reconciled in the near future, it would be unwise and unjustified to claim any kind of singular set of insights from these investigations. Taken together, however, the projects reveal a world where the imaginative capacity of architecture is fundamental and is reinvigorated by new inspirations and challenges. It also provides architects a new perspective on where they might make, through their work, a significant contribution to the spatialization of political and cultural change. Finally, these projects suggest that for those architects willing to proactively wield its agency, architecture is not just a slave to those in power. Indeed, it has the potential to be a vital and significant cultural practice that contributes to positive social change.