The MIT Press

1. "Tree of Architecture," fron-
tispiece of Sir Banister Fletcher,
*A History of Architecture on
the Comparative Method for
the Student Craftsman, and
Amateur*, sixteenth edition,
1954

Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoḡlu
Toward Postcolonial Openings: Rereading Sir Banister Fletcher's *History of Architecture*

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*Postcolonial Space(s)* (Princeton Archi-
tectural Press, 1997).

And this world takes place neither simply inside you nor outside
you. It passes from inside to outside, from outside to inside your
being. In which should be based the very possibility of dwelling.

Luce Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*[1]

The twentieth edition of Sir Banister Fletcher's monumen-
tal *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for
the Student Craftsman, and Amateur* appeared in 1996 and
marked the book's one hundredth year of publication. By
all standards, *History of Architecture* has been a canonical
text that has played a formative role in the history educa-
tion of generations of architects in English-speaking insti-
tutions. There is something uniquely remarkable about
Fletcher's text: unlike other monumental histories (for ex-
ample, those by Fisher von Erlach or James Fergusson)
that now lend themselves predominantly to historiographi-
cal analysis, it has been continuously "updated" to preserve
its "original" purpose to be one of the most comprehensive
surveys of world architecture. The preface to the twentieth
edition reads:

The central aim behind this edition reflects and continues cer-
tain of the key directions established in the nineteenth edition.
The scope has been widened to include more coverage of ar-
chitecture from non-European regions and to contain more
information about vernacular buildings and engineered struc-
tures and works by architect/engineers such as bridges and for-
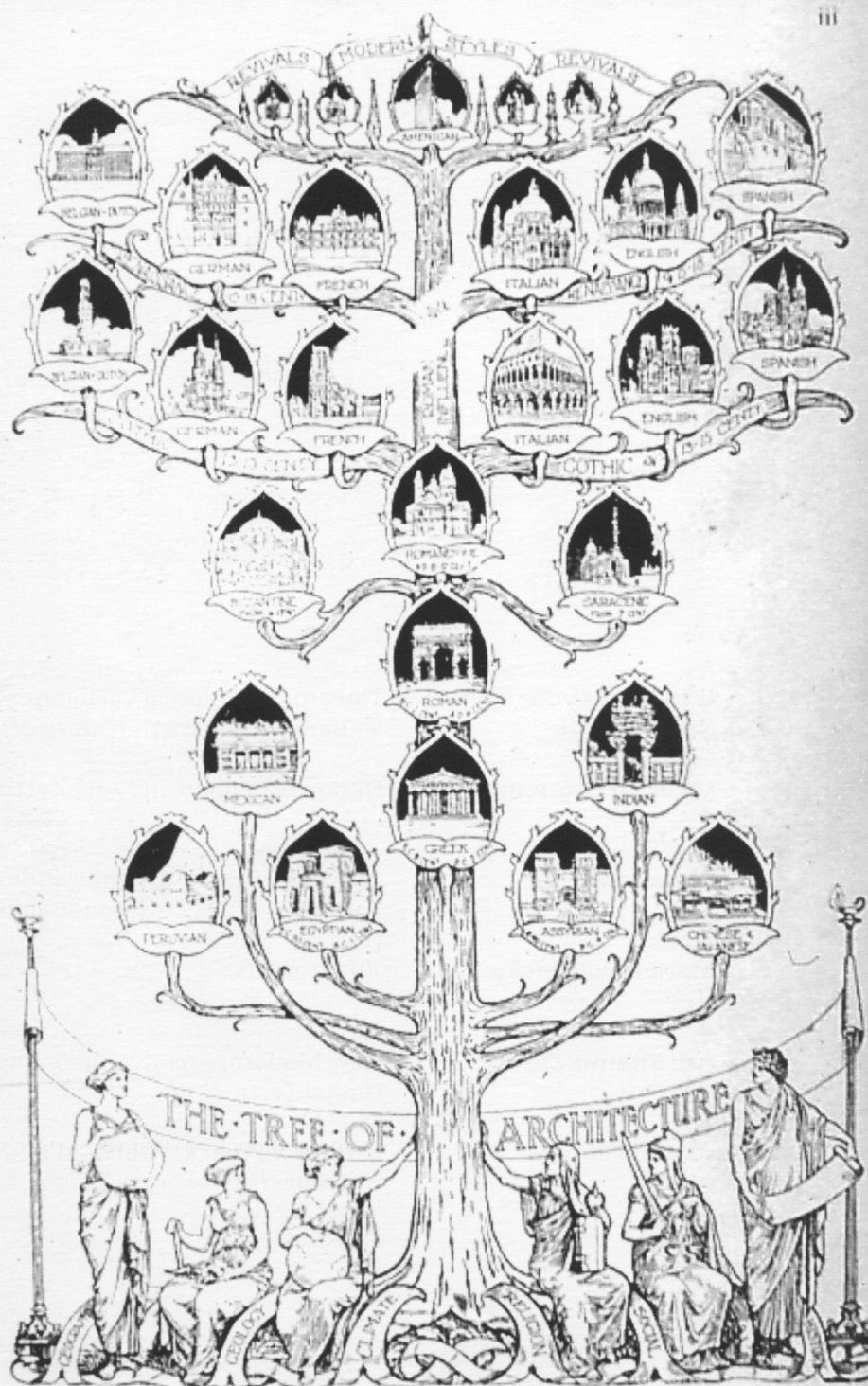
BANISTER FLETCHER INV.

This Tree of Architecture shows the main growth or evolution of the various styles, but must be taken as suggestive only, for minor influences cannot be indicated on a diagram of this kind.

tifications. There is also more attention paid, in the part dealing with the twentieth century, to urban design.[2]

More non-European coverage, *more* vernacular buildings, *more* engineering structures, and *more* attention to contemporary design: Had it not been for the omission of *more* women architects, the twentieth edition of Fletcher's book would have been considered most appropriately reformed based on the concerns of the late twentieth century. The final edition bears testimony to the fact that, at least for a considerable fraction of architectural historians, the book's canonical status survives — not surprising given the comprehensiveness achieved by *A History of Architecture*.[3] As I trace various editorial changes to Fletcher's original text, however, I discover that although the latest edition marks only a quantitative expansion in geographical coverage compared to the previous one, the book had seen a number of significant structural changes prior to that.

Until the fourth edition of 1901, A History of Architecture had been a relatively modest survey of European styles. The fourth edition, however, appeared with an important difference: This time the book was divided into two sections, "The Historical Styles," which covered all the material from earlier editions, and "The Non-Historical Styles," which included Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Central American, and Saracenic architecture. Curiously, in the posthumously published seventeenth edition of 1961, the two parts were renamed "Ancient Architecture and the Western Succession" and "Architecture in the East," respectively. The nineteenth edition of 1987, on the other hand, consisted of seven parts based on chronology and geographical location. Cultures outside of Europe included "The Architecture of the Pre-Colonial Cultures outside Europe" and "The Architecture of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods outside Europe."

Why the restless change in names? What is so (dis)comforting about naming the other? As I work through these questions, my initial reaction against Fletcher's original categorization of "nonhistorical styles" takes a different turn. As I discover the text(s), I begin to see that what is at stake here is not merely the boundary between Western architecture and its outside, but also between architecture and its outside; between architecture and nonarchitecture. The latter issue has also been addressed by Karen Burns and others in the context of Western architectural thought.[4] In "Architecture: That ~~Dangerous~~ Useless Supplement," Burns focuses on how the category of building is constituted as "a space continually invoked as outside architecture's own internal space."[5] She surfaces the tenuous nature of the inside/outside boundary of architecture by thinking architecture as an identity category and signification rather than a stable and secure autonomous entity. I argue that historical constructions of the non-West figure at the precarious boundary of (Western) architecture's presumed inside. Moreover, as Fletcher's text discloses, they are reminders of the precarious nature of that very boundary.

My questions multiply: What are the mechanisms that define the inside and the outside of architecture and how do they operate? How are architectural boundaries constructed and on what basis? These are large questions that continuously define and redefine Fletcher's, his successors' and my spaces of writing. Architecture, as a fixed category, becomes a burden. I discover how, through Fletcher's and his successors' work, the boundary between the inner and outer worlds of architecture is carefully maintained for the purposes of disciplinary regulation and control. Working with and through Fletcher's text, I discover that he knew the need to construct a seamless boundary to retain the distinct nature of the inner and outer realms of the discipline.

As I trace Fletcher's world history, I recognize instances that gesture toward something different than Western architecture's tired insistence on constituting the norm; the so-called canon. These isolated instances, I shall argue,

suggest strategies to postcolonial discourses in architecture based on negotiations of incommensurable differences between architectural cultures — an entirely different end that is far beyond Fletcher's aims and scope. Stephen Cairns makes a similar suggestion in his historiographical analysis of the Javanese house. Based on the historian Wolff Schoemaker's denial of architectural status to the Javanese house, Cairns points to the possibility of reconceiving an architecture of radical difference.[6] Fletcher's and his successors' texts mobilize further questions by the ways they incorporate non-Western architectures into their own textual frameworks: How does the inner/outer binary of architectural discourse articulate with the cultural/geographical binary of West/non-West? How do disciplinary boundaries negotiate with geographical, cultural, and political ones?

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And, as you wanted words other than those already uttered, words never yet imagined, unique in your tongue, to name you and you alone, you kept on prying me open, further and further open. Honing and sharpening your instrument, till it was almost imperceptible, piercing further into my silence.

Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*[7]

Let me work closer with Fletcher. Coined in his fourth edition of *A History of Architecture*, the term "Non-Historical Styles" referred to

those other styles — Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Central American, and Saracenic — which remained detached from Western Art and exercised little direct influence on it. . . . These non-historical styles can scarcely be as interesting from an architect's point of view as those of Europe, which have progressed by the successive solution of construction problems, resolutely met and overcome; for in the East decorative schemes seem generally to have outweighed all other considerations, and in this would appear to lie the main essential differences between Historical and Non-Historical Architecture.[8]

Why, I ask, should "A History of Architecture" include "nonhistorical architecture" in the first place? Why would

proper history desire its lack? The frontispiece of Fletcher's book depicts a tree that "shows the main growth or evolution of the various styles." The "Tree of Architecture" has a very solid upright trunk that is inscribed with the names of European styles and that branches out to hold various cultural/geographical locations. The nonhistorical styles, which unlike others remain undated, are supported by the "Western" trunk of the tree with no room to grow beyond the seventh-century mark. European architecture is the visible support for nonhistorical styles. Nonhistorical styles, grouped together, are decorative additions, they supplement the proper history of architecture that is based on the logic of construction.

It seems strange that Fletcher valorizes and disqualifies non-European styles at the same time. "A history of world's architecture would be incomplete," he says, if he did not review "those *other* styles." Yet a history of Western architecture, which ought to lack nothing at all in itself, should not require to be supplemented. It seems paradoxical that the desire to be comprehensive and complete carries in itself the destiny of its non-satisfaction. Let me return to the notion of the supplement, in the sense that Jacques Derrida exploits the term. According to him, the supplement is both an addition, an excess, *and* a substitute that points to a lack in the original entity. "Whether it adds or substitutes itself," contends Derrida, "the supplement is *exterior*, outside of the positivity to which it is super-added, alien to that which, in order to be replaced by it, must be other than it."[9] For Fletcher, nonhistorical styles are at once in excess of the conditions of Western history and point to a lack in the essentially complete history of Western architecture. When they are added on, architectural history becomes both better (complete) and worse (impure).

Like all identities, "Western architecture" and "historical styles" are constructs constituted through the force of exclusion. These are terms that produce a constitutive outside as

the condition of their existence. The "non" of nonhistorical styles bears the mark of externality. Their reentry into the history of architecture then, points to their role as supplement. "Nonhistorical styles" are signs that are allowed entry to fill up a void. They point to a deficiency in the originary space and yet they are alien to that which they replace. Fletcher's narrative inadvertently complicates the plenitude that is constructed by the precarious alliance of the terms "architecture" and "Western architecture."

Fletcher superimposes the historical/nonhistorical and West/East dichotomies with another familiar binary categorization of the architectural discipline: structure/ornament. He opposes the "successive resolution of constructive problems," which characterized Western architectural history, to the "decorative schemes" of the East, which "outweighed all other considerations." Familiar indeed, for at least since Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* ornament has been relegated an inferior status in Western architecture. It has been associated with dishonesty, impurity, and excessiveness as opposed to the essential nature of structure. My argument is that in Fletcher's discourse, the seemingly cultural basis of the East/West categorization represses an ambivalence about the definition and limits of the architectural discipline. Fletcher states in an unexpectedly apologetic introduction to the nonhistorical styles:

Eastern art presents many features to which Europeans are unaccustomed, and which therefore often strike them as *unpleasing* or *bizarre*; but it must be remembered that use is second nature, and, in considering the many forms which to us verge on the *grotesque* we must make allowance for that essential difference between East and West.[10]

It seems interesting that Fletcher momentarily suspends his authorial position in these statements. It is the *Europeans* who are unaccustomed to Eastern art, which strikes *them* as unpleasing and bizarre. The potential critical distancing dissolves, however, when he goes on to his analysis of the nonhistorical styles. He then readily concurs that ornament is acceptable only when it is subordinate to, or in the service of, structure. Overly elaborate decoration, excessive ornamentation is to be relegated to the grotesque.[11] In a strikingly vivid account of Saracenic ornament, for example, Fletcher explains:

The craftsman who added the typically Saracenic detail had an almost limitless scope in the combination and permutation of lines and curves, which crossed and recrossed and were laid one over the other, *till nothing of the underlying framework was recognisable*. There was a restlessness, too, in their decorative style, a *striving after excess* which is in contrast to the Greek spirit that recognised perfection in simplicity and was content to let a fine line tell its own tale. Thus we find everywhere intricacy instead of simplicity: there are brackets of such tortured forms as to be constructively useless and of such elaborate decoration as to be *grotesque*.[12]

On Jaina architecture:

Sculptured ornament of grotesque and symbolic design, bewildering in its richness, covers the whole structure, leaving little plain wall surface and differing essentially from European art.[13]

Then again, on Hindu architecture:

This varies in its three local styles, but all have the small 'vimana' or shrine-cell and entrance porch, with the *excessive* carving and sculpture. . . . The grandeur of their [Brahman temples] imposing mass produces an impression of majestic beauty, but the effect depends almost wholly on elaboration of surface ornament, rather than on abstract beauty of form, in strong contrast to Greek architecture.[14]

I am interested in Fletcher's simultaneous fascination and disdain for non-Western architectures. In his narrative construction, Western architecture is faced with what-it-is-not; non-Western architecture is the symptom of Western architecture. I use the term "symptom" as it is explained by Slavoj Žižek: "If . . . we conceive the symptom as it was articulated in the late Lacan — namely, as a particular signifying formation which confers on the subject its very on-

tological consistency, enabling it to structure its basic, constitutive relationship towards *jouissance* — then the entire relationship [between subject and symptom] is reversed: if the symptom is dissolved, the subject itself loses the ground under its feet, disintegrates."[15] What is important for me here is the dimension of enjoyment (*jouissance*) in the symptom. And indeed, Fletcher exposes a momentary enjoyment in such expressions as the "bewildering richness" of Jaina architecture and the "majestic beauty" of the Brahman temples. He cannot recover full pleasure from these as that would mean to admit the loss of Western architecture's self-identification. Hence he reverts to other terms that complicate his argument in interesting ways.

"Excessive" and "grotesque" are terms that appear again and again in Fletcher's analysis to indicate undesirable exaggeration. He is equally excited and disturbed at the sight of the lines and curves in Saracenic decoration that cross and recross till the underlying framework is totally written over. Structure, what gives life to Fletcher's history, is devoured by ornament. The visible boundary that separates structure from ornament has disappeared and has given rise to the unacceptable, the grotesque.[16] Fletcher's eyes are troubled since they cannot peel off the ornament to reveal what is behind. What causes his unease, I would argue, is not the reversion of the structure/ornament pair whereby, in his non-Western examples, the second takes the dominant role: it is the inseparability of the two. Mikhail Bakhtin suggests that in the grotesque, displeasure is caused by the impossible and improbable nature of the image.[17] In architecture, the negation of structure is unimaginable. Yet in the grotesque imagery, the architectural object, defined by structure, transgresses its own confines, ceases to be itself. The demarcation between structure and ornament is dissolved. Reason is threatened. Beauty becomes unacceptable when it cannot be ordered by reason. Bakhtin's point, however, is that there is a productive ambivalence in the grotesque and hence it cannot be seen

TABLE

OF THE

**COMPARATIVE SYSTEM
FOR EACH STYLE**

1. Influences.
    I. GEOGRAPHICAL.
    II. GEOLOGICAL.
    III. CLIMATIC.
    IV. RELIGIOUS.
    V. SOCIAL.
    VI. HISTORICAL.

2. Architectural Character.

3. Examples.

4. Comparative Analysis.
    A. **Plans,** or general arrangement of buildings.
    B. **Walls,** their construction and treatment.
    C. **Openings,** their character and shape.
    D. **Roofs,** their treatment and development.
    E. **Columns,** their position, structure, and decoration.
    F. **Mouldings,** their form and decoration.
    G. **Ornament,** as applied in general to any building.

5. Reference Books.

2. "Comparative system for each style"

merely as a negation. In the grotesque, he maintains, the life of one is born from the death of another: "The grotesque body . . . is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body."[18] Is it possible, then, that nonhistorical styles create possibilities of another architecture/architectural history that glares at us from the cracks that Fletcher inadvertently exposes in his own analysis?

On the relation between architectural texts and buildings, Mark Wigley argues that "the role of the text is to provide the rules with which the building can be controlled, regulations which define the place of every part and control every surface."[19] So far, I have focused on aspects of Fletcher's text that surface a desire that exceeds the bounds of regula-

tion and control. As I read it, his discourse is caught up in the tension between the desire for pleasure and the demand to control for self-preservation. The latter appears in very explicit terms. Fletcher's text is structured by what he calls a "comparative system for each style." This is an astoundingly comprehensive system that controls and regulates every section in the book. What I find interesting is how Fletcher exposes the disciplinary power of his system:

In considering the many forms which to us verge on the grotesque we must make allowance for that *essential difference* between East and West which is further accentuated in purely Eastern architecture by those religious observances and social customs of which, *in accordance with our usual method, we shall take due cognizance.*[20]

Fletcher recognizes that what *appears* "unpleasing or bizarre" to European eyes can be *made* comprehensible by a particular method of analysis. The self-consciously distanced grip of Fletcher's method tames the nonhistorical styles by submitting them to the same framework of architectural analysis as the Western ones. Not only East and West but also Indian and Chinese and Renaissance and modern turn into conveniently commensurable and hence comparable categories. Fletcher's text is clearly marked by the nineteenth-century interest in the non-West, which carries the double burden of curiosity and control.[21] His totalizing history, however, bears the mark of its own impossibility; his gaze witnesses its own historiographical violence prior to his appropriation of the non-West into his comparative method.[22] What I am interested in here is not the criticism of Fletcher's method per se, but his momentary recognition of how his framework violates difference; how the writing of history makes history.

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Could it be that what you have is just the frame, not the property? Not a bond with the earth but merely this fence that you set up, implant wherever you can? You mark out boundaries, draw lines,

surround, enclose. Excising, cutting out. What is your fear? That you might lose your property. What remains is an empty frame. You cling to it, dead.

Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*[23]

In 1961 R. A. Cordingley, who revised Fletcher's book for its seventeenth edition, made a fundamental change in the outline of the book by, as noted above, renaming the two main sections "Ancient Architecture and the Western Succession" and "Architecture in the East." The scandal of nonhistoricity is erased. East and West are turned into seemingly neutral geographical categories. Cordingley explains: "The former general heading [The Non-Historical Styles] for Part II was anomalous; the architectures of the East are just as historical as those of the West."[24] Yet what seems to be the most obviously proper statement from a historian unexpectedly violates the hidden ambivalence of Fletcher's premises. In revising the book, Cordingley completely rewrote the introduction to the second part and turned it into a brief historical account of the geography of Eastern styles. All references to the grotesque, to the excessiveness of ornamentation, to impropriety, to the unaccustomed Europeans, and the qualifications of unpleasing and bizarre are erased. I would argue that in trying to eliminate Fletcher's seemingly negative qualifications for the East, Cordingley erased all traces of potentially critical openings in the earlier version.

The two succeeding editions introduced further changes. In 1975 James Palmes eliminated all broad classifications and provided a straight run of forty chapters.[25] Following the first chapter on Egyptian architecture, eight chapters cover all the non-Western sections. The "pure" continuity of Western styles from ancient Greece to the twentieth century is preserved. Non-Western sections are almost relegated a "pre-Western" status. Yet this is not the result of a chronological logic to the outline, since, for example, the section on India and Pakistan stretches to the eighteenth

century. Palmes gives no explanations for his changes however, and the format was again changed in 1984, when John Musgrove published the nineteenth edition of the book.[26] Musgrove's sections are strictly chronological. Three of the seven parts cover non-Western architectures: parts three, four, and seven, entitled, respectively, "The Architecture of Islam and Early Russia," "The Architecture of the Pre-Colonial Cultures outside Europe," and "The Architecture of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods outside Europe."[27] For the first time, "The Architecture of the Twentieth Century" covers Africa, China, Japan, and South and South-East Asia together with Western Europe.

Both Palmes's and Musgrove's revisions of A History of Architecture consolidate Cordingley's response to Fletcher's classification.[28] All attempts to rename Fletcher's historical/ nonhistorical categories in the later editions of his book are attempts to overcome a fundamental difficulty that Fletcher had discovered and had quickly covered over. The seemingly innocent categories of West/East (geographical) and precolonial/postcolonial (chronological) do not disclose the ambiguities inherent in the loaded terms historical and nonhistorical. Cordingley, Palmes, and Musgrove normalize what Fletcher had found problematic but had failed to problematize. Their premises are based on cultural diversity rather than cultural difference. Cultural diversity, according to Homi Bhabha, is a category of comparative ethics and aesthetics that emphasizes liberal notions of multiculturalism and cultural exchange. Cultural difference, on the other hand, "focuses on the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority: the attempt to dominate in the name of a cultural supremacy which is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation."[29] Cordingley, Palmes, and Musgrove consolidate Fletcher's framework, which, to be sure, is also predominantly based on cultural diversity but offers momentary possibilities to think cultural difference. The underlying premise in all four versions of the text is that

cultures can be aligned on the same plane of reference; compared and contrasted by the tools of the historian. This multiculturalist approach comes from well-intentioned positions against prejudice and stereotype. It covers over, however, issues of incommensurable difference and problems of representation that prevail at every cultural encounter.

Fletcher's text is multilayered and complex. At first sight, it displays arrogant colonialism by naming non-Western architectural cultures "nonhistorical." This is the level by which his successors engage with Fletcher, to correct his prejudiced approach. At another level, by including non-Western architectures in his "comparative approach" he adopts a multiculturalist perspective, with all its inherent problems. This is the level where his successors collaborate with him. They expand on Fletcher's text and make additions based on latest archaeological and historical findings, but do not challenge his comparative framework. I argue that there remains another way of engaging with Fletcher's text, capturing the brief moment that makes it possible to think cultural/architectural *difference*. Fletcher offers this moment when he displays his unease with his own approach; when he shows both fascination and disdain for the nonhistorical styles; when he speaks *ambivalently* of the excess, the grotesque, the bizarre. The first and second historiographical instances, of arrogant denial and tamed equality, violate difference: the first in a blatantly obvious way; the second with the best liberal intentions. The complicity between these two seemingly very different approaches cannot be overlooked, however. This is made strikingly obvious in the library copy of Fletcher's sixteenth edition that I have been working on, not by Fletcher, but by an imprudent previous reader. As a mark of apparent impatience with the derogatory implications of the term "nonhistorical styles," a blue mark has crossed out the term "non" from the title of the second section — a crude replication, one might say, of what Cordingley and his successors had done in a scholarly manner. But here violence takes a further step. I was astonished to
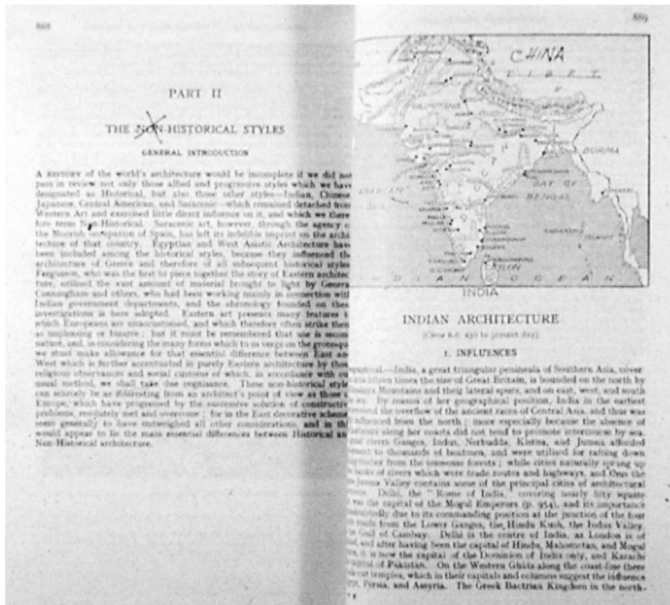
3. Anonymous reader's marks

see the same blue mark appearing on the facing page, on top of the map of India, this time crossing out the word "Tibet" to replace it with "China." The page stares at me as a marker of a continuing question of inclusions and exclusions, representation and naming. It also reminds me of the importance of Derrida's proposal that the problem is not to show the interiority of what had been believed as the exterior, but rather "to speculate upon the power of exteriority as constitutive of interiority."[30]

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An opening of openness. An encounter of countries and of clearings laying out an other, others, which create air, light, time. There is always more place, more places, unless they are immediately appropriated.

Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*[31]

As the title of my article suggests, and as I have implied throughout my analysis, a certain reading of Fletcher's text surfaces strategies to postcolonial discourse by way of recognizing the impossibility of containing the other in one's own terms of reference. Fletcher gestures toward a discourse that involves the staging of his positionality and that marks discontinuities among knowledges. He gestures toward questions about the validity of taking Western history as the necessary norm and the measure of architectural judgment. I want to emphasize, however, that my reading of Fletcher has been intentionally partial. I have only looked at one aspect of the work that, I think, has critical significance in cultural representations in architecture. I have not, for example, dealt with Fletcher's premises based on assumptions of an autonomous, formal, linear, and progressive history of Western architecture. Then again, my analysis is based on a particular reading of the term "architecture," not as an a priori and self-evident category but as a signification.[32] Only then could I begin to question the underlying claims that have supported architecture's self-proclaimed autonomy — its presumed "inside." Fletcher's survey does not, in any way, provide *the* paradigm for Western historiography's treatment of non-Western architectures. No work can take on such a charge. It does, however, contain a number of threads that can be productively woven into larger issues that address postcoloniality. Let me retrace these points with reference to Fletcher and from a broader perspective.

At one level, Fletcher's text contains traces of awareness of its own textuality. It shows that only a particular methodological rigor of thought, a textual framework, can contain his version of a history of world architecture; but only at a cost of interpretive violence. This framework is a representational tool that consolidates all reference and meaning in one's (in this case, nineteenth-century Western historiography's) own terms; it refuses to recognize the irreducibility

of the other to the terms of the self. Cordingley, Palmes, and Musgrove do exactly this by erasing all traces of ambivalence from the earlier text. They subject an entire world history of architecture into a singular machinery that eventually reduces all difference to chronology and geography. In his analysis of non-Western architectures, Fletcher introduces his readers to such terms as nonhistorical and grotesque, which disturb the logos of his text. He exposes what exceeds and cannot be contained by his framework. He uses terms that are impossible to assimilate in his logic but that are necessary for it to function. Non-Western architectures exert an unsettling force on the apparent claims and concerns of Fletcher's enterprise. In doing so, they enable him to surface enjoyment and desire; elements customarily suppressed by disciplinary regulations and control. Furthermore, Fletcher straightforwardly declares his subject position — as a Westerner and as a scholar — in naming non-Western architectural cultures. Awareness is a necessary but not sufficient condition of critique, however. As Gayatri Spivak argues, "if you make it your task not only to learn what is going on there [outside the Western centers] through language, through specific programs of study, but also at the same time through a *historical* critique of your position as the investigating person, then you will see that you have earned the right to criticize, and you will be heard."[33] The question here is not, who is entitled to write about what? The issue of cultural representation cannot simply be reduced to that of Western or non-Western scholars writing their own history. Ethical positions of enunciation are irreducible to nationality, ethnicity, or race. Yet representing others, speaking in the name of others, *is* a problem, and as Spivak reminds us, "it has to be kept alive as a problem."[34] What I find interesting in Fletcher is that he "points to" the problem in explicit ways.

Lastly, on categorization: Is it at all possible to speak of the non-West as a category as opposed to the West? Is it possible to speak of *a* postcolonial experience, approach,

theory? And, then again, is it possible to speak of an inside and an outside to architecture? Or do these categories consist of historically constituted relational terms made in and through language? My reading of the story of Fletcher's book attempts to understand how the category of the non-West is produced and restrained by a particular thread in Western historiography. The same category operates in very different ways in other historiographical approaches or, say, regionalist discourses. Similarly, the (post)colonial experiences of Africa, Asia, and South and Central America have not held the same position in relation to any given center.[35] And architecture has not had a clearly demarcated inside and outside. I am not making the impossible suggestion of simply ignoring these categories and binary constructs. The boundaries that demarcate them, however, "are much more porous and less fixed and rigid than is commonly understood, and one side of the border is always already infected by the other. Binarized categories offer possibilities of reconnections and realignment in different systems."[36] The task, then, is to work with these possibilities toward those positive moments that disrupt the categorical boundaries imposed on other cultures, to listen and attend to what is silenced by and expelled from them.

Working through various editions of A *History of Architecture*, my premise has been that writing postcoloniality in architecture does not merely entail an engagement with previously colonized cultures; it is but one of the many practices that make it possible to engage with the boundaries that guard architecture's cultural and disciplinary presuppositions; boundaries that remain intact through certain exclusionary practices that remain unquestioned once the institutional structure of the discipline is established. Writing postcoloniality in architecture questions architecture's intolerance to difference, to the unthought, to its outside. For it embraces the premise that "when the other speaks, it is in other terms."[37]

Notes

I would like to thank Mirjana Lozanovska, Karen Burns, and Stephen Cairns for their inspiring comments during the final stages of my work on this article. An earlier and slightly different version of the article appeared in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Architecture* 1 (September 1996): 3–11. The argument here was presented at the Society of Architectural Historian's meeting in Baltimore, 16–20 April 1997, in the session entitled "Confronting the Canon," chaired by Roberta M. Moudry and Christian F. Otto.

1. Luce Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*, trans. Joanne Collie and Judith Still (London: Athlone Press, 1992), 47.

2. Dan Cruickshank, ed., *Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 1996), xxiii.

3. The discipline of architectural history seems to have remained ambivalent about the status of Fletcher's history. In 1970, for example, Bruce Allshop was highly critical of the book's methodology and declared that it "reflects the decline of architectural historical thinking." In 1980 David Watkin, who apparently merited the book on its "antiquarian" value, wrote that "probably it is in the end unfair to cavil at a book which generations of architectural students have evidently found so helpful," and credited its importance in "the recognition of the study of the history of architecture as an essential part of a liberal education." See Bruce Allshop, *The Study of Architectural History* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), 67, and David Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 87.

4. See Karen Burns, "Architecture: That ~~Dangerous~~ Useless Supplement," in the proceedings of the conference *Accessory/Architecture*, held in Auckland, New Zealand, July 1995, 49–56. Elizabeth Grosz, following the Deleuzian notion of the outside as the unthought, questions whether it is possible for architecture to ask what is different from and beyond it; see "Architecture from the Outside," in *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 125–37. See also Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 128–41, where she addresses the instability of the inner/outer binary in the construction of sexed identities.

5. Burns, "Architecture: That ~~Dangerous~~ Useless Supplement," 54.

6. Stephen Cairns, "Resurfacing: Architecture, *Wayang*, and the Javanese House," in *Postcolonial Space(s)*, ed. Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoḡlu and Wong Chong Thai (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 73–88.

7. Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*, 9.

8. Sir Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for the Student Craftsman, and Amateur*, 16th ed. (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1954), 888. Henceforth, all quotations from Fletcher will be taken from this edition.

9. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 145.

10. Fletcher, *A History of Architecture*, 888 (emphases mine).

11. Fletcher uses the term "grotesque" sometimes in a strictly art-historical sense, referring to the kind of classical ornament that consists of medallions, sphinxes, foliage, and the like. At other times, he reverts to its nontechnical use, implying incongruity, strangeness, preposterousness, and irrationality. Here I am interested in the latter instances.

12. Fletcher, *A History of Architecture*, 961 (emphases mine).

13. Ibid., 893.

14. Ibid. (emphasis mine).

15. Slavoj Žižek, "Symptom," in *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), 426. Ray Chow, too, uses this explanation in terms of the relation between the native and the white man, but not in terms of enjoyment and desire; see *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 30–31.

16. The structure/ornament distinction in Western architectural discourse has been studied by a number of contemporary theorists. Mark Wigley, for example, discusses Alberti's description of a building skin made up of coats of plaster, which cover the building elements. Wigley argues that this white skin maintains a visible line between structure and decoration. His focus is on the production of gender in architectural texts: "The feminine materiality of the building is given a masculine order and then masked off by a white skin. . . . The white surface both produces gender and masks the scene of that production, literally subordinating the feminine by drawing a line, placing the ornament just as the walls place the possessions in the house. The ornament becomes a possession of the structure, subject to its order" ("Untitled:

The Housing of Gender," in *Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina [New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992], 354).

17. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 303–67.

18. Ibid., 317.

19. Wigley, "Untitled," 353.

20. Fletcher, *A History of Architecture*, 888 (emphases mine).

21. This point has been brought to my attention by Mirjana Lozanovska.

22. In a different context, Ray Chow writes about "a mode of understanding the native in which the native's existence — i.e., an existence before becoming 'native' — precedes the arrival of the colonizer." She argues that, feeling "looked at" by the native's gaze, the colonizer becomes "conscious" of himself, which produces him as subject and the native as image. See Chow, *Writing Diaspora*, 51.

23. Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*, 25.

24. R. A. Cordingley, ed., preface to *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* [by Sir Banister Fletcher], 17th ed. (London: Athlone Press, 1961), ix.

25. James C. Palmes, ed., *A History of Architecture* [by Sir Banister Fletcher], 18th ed. (London: Athlone Press, 1975).

26. John Musgrove, ed., *Sir Banister Fletcher's History of Architecture*, 19th ed. (London: Butterworths, 1987).

27. Musgrove's use of the term "post-colonial" is strictly historical and does not theorize the

(post)colonial architecture of the non-Western world. In the related chapter, it refers specifically to Latin America after Spanish and Portuguese rule.

28. At some level, all three authors' changes to Fletcher's text can be related to the post-1950s historiographical commitments of relating architecture to larger societal phenomena; reactions against the exclusion of anonymous urban and rural environments from architectural history; and the emerging disappointment with modern Western architecture. As Dell Upton has informed me, for example, Cordingley was a leading figure in studies on English vernacular architecture. The analysis of the precise nature of these links falls beyond the scope of the present essay.

29. Homi Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 34.

30. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 313.

31. Irigaray, *Elemental Passions*, 59.

32. Again, see Burns, "Architecture: That ~~Dangerous~~ Useless Supplement."

33. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Questions of Multi-culturalism," interview with Sneja Gunev, in *The Post-Colonial Critic*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 62.

34. Ibid., 63.

35. Some of the problems with the use of "postcolonial" are addressed in Ella Shohat, "Notes on the Post-Colonial," *Social Text* 10 (1992): 99–113. Shohat questions the ahistorical and universalizing deployments of the term and its problematic spatiotemporal desig-

nations, stating that "the concept of the 'post-colonial' must be interrogated and contextualized historically, geopolitically, and culturally. . . . Flexible yet critical usage which can address the politics of location is important not only for pointing out historical and geographical contradictions and differences but also for reaffirming historical and geographical links, structural analogies, and openings for agency and resistance." I find much of her criticism very pertinent to architectural studies.

36. Elizabeth Grosz, "Architecture from the Outside," in *Anyplace*, ed. Cynthia C. Davidson (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995), 19.

37. Jennifer Bloomer, "D'or," in *Sexuality and Space*, 168.

Figure Credits

1–3. Sir Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for the Student Craftsman, and Amateur*, 16th ed. (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1954).