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# Hybridity as an Appellation of Twentieth-Century Islamic Built Environment

*Nuno Grancho*

we need to contaminate [...] to relocate it in the human cultural landscape. We should turn our attention away from a search for the authentic, the characteristic, the enduring and the pure, and immerse ourselves in the active, the evanescent and the impure, seeking settings that are ambiguous, multiple, often contested, and examining points of contact and transformation-in the market, at the edge, in the new and the decaying.<sup>1</sup>



The recent tide of scholarship on architecture has helped to highlight the questionable divide between the architectural histories of the Western and non-Western worlds.<sup>2</sup> Entangled within this epistemological classification, we find the architectural historiography of the last centuries split along constructed distinctions between ‘western’ and ‘non-western world’ modernisms, postmodern and postcolonial struggles for cultural identity and networks of knowledge transfer. This brief analysis intends to open a discussion on the history of Islamic architectural and urban production within the critical framework of *Orientalism*, or, more broadly, within the framework of colonial and postcolonial studies.

This essay reassesses the Islamic built environment – architecture and urbanism – since the formation of the predominant discourse on that subject in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It identifies a shift in scholarship

- 1 Upton, Dell, 1993. “The Tradition of Change.” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 5, no. 1 (Fall): 9–15.
- 2 The research for this chapter has been funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 895924 and by the Danish National Research Foundation (DNRF 138). I am indebted and thankful to Doctor Elizabeth Drayson for her advice and critical reading of this essay.

from representations of Islamic architecture as Other that is traced to the formation of an influential discourse about Islamic architecture and urbanism by architects in the twentieth and twentieth first centuries. To do so, it privileges the paradigm of encounter to capture an entangled terrain of contemporary architectural practice and coexistent assertions of cultural difference.<sup>3</sup> The most expansive sense of the term 'Islamic' contains secular and sacred architecture and urbanism, created by, for, in service of, or in regions under the rule of Muslims, historically or currently. Though referring to Islam, the term 'Islamic' aspires, especially in the learned and secular sphere, to encompass the entire cultural breadth of Muslim societies, rather than restricting itself to religion.<sup>4</sup>

Over time, in architecture and urbanism the Islamic themes evolved from a nationalist emphasis on finding the appropriate built environment for a place to finding the best expression for the present, that is, for the modern period. Within this context, Islamic thinking manifested itself in architectural and urban theories and histories, firstly, in developing typological theories tying each nation to Islam with its architecture and its cities – now with an emphasis on the mental attributes of a population in contrast to the earlier attributions to climate or environment. Secondly, it was apparent in narratives of architectural and urban histories premised on evolution, diffusion, and hybridization; and finally, in the arrangement of architecture and cities into historical, linear and developmental scales.

The architectural historian Ernst Grube expresses in *Architecture of the Islamic World* a contemporary discursive anxiety: "What is Islamic architecture?"<sup>5</sup>

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- 3 "process of enunciation of culture as 'knowledgeable', authoritative, adequate to the constructions of systems of cultural identification," Bhabha, Homi. 2004. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 50. To put it simply: a culture may only be identified by its difference to other cultures. The 'cultural' has thus no inherent essence but is articulated in relations with an Other and its 'location' is found in the gaps between diverging subject positions.
  - 4 Oleg Grabar addresses this issue: "What I mean by 'culture' in this context is a broader series of very varied impulses and needs – social, intellectual, ecological, climatic, political, and of course religious – which were sufficiently constant over the centuries to explain the relationship to each other of such diverse attributes of monuments [...] All these creations, one can argue, must be seen and understood primarily as expressions of, so to speak, an anthropologically defined culture, tied together perhaps by the faith of Islam" in Grabar, Oleg, 1978. "Islamic Art: Art of a Culture or art of a Faith." *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 11: 1. See also: Grabar, Oleg. 1973. *The Formation of Islamic Art*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1–18; Grabar, Oleg. 1976. "What Makes Islamic Art Islamic?" *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 9: 1–3; Grabar, Oleg. 1978. "Islamic Art: Art of a Culture or art of a Faith." In *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 11: 1–6.
  - 5 Grube, Ernst. 1978. "Introduction: What Is Islamic Architecture?" In *Architecture of the Islamic World; its History and Social Meaning*, ed. George Michell. London: Thames and Hudson. See also: Rabbat, Nasser. 2012. "What is Islamic Architecture, anyway?" *Journal of Art Historiography* 6: 1–15.

Grube addresses the formal landscapes of Islamic architecture differentiated as from a non-Islamic context. The consistency of Islam and the expectation of reliability in architecture and urbanism is stressed. Difference is attributed to the attrition of Islamic culture as “something has happened in Islamic culture in the particular region where such monuments were produced to indicate a general weakening in the ‘Islamicness’ of the specific architecture in question.”<sup>6</sup> The architectural historian Robert Hillenbrand supports this awareness of compromise in Islamic built environment and culture, “a culture as self-contained as that of Western Europe – as to a faith.”<sup>7</sup> In a persuasive outline of the difficulties of depicting Islamic built environment, Hillenbrand states it is the “accepted opinion that the best Islamic architecture dates from before the 18th century.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, “Islam then found itself forced to come to terms with the West, and the experience was traumatic [...] Western influence was as destructive to indigenous modes [...] in architecture.”<sup>9</sup>

The art historians Finbar Flood<sup>10</sup> and Gülru Necipoglu<sup>11</sup> and the architectural historian Sibel Bozdoğan<sup>12</sup> have stated from the early years of the twentieth century, that architecture and urbanism have devalued non-Western modern art and architectures, as they are obstinately left out from the study of both Islamic and modern architecture and urbanism.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, this generates, on the one hand, a perception of an exaggerated breach between pre-modern and modern periods, thereby helping to perpetuate the understanding of modernity as Orientalist and a solely Western phenomenon, and on the other hand, the exclusion of recent periods from the fields of Islamic

6 (Grube, 1978, 10).

7 Hillenbrand, Robert. 1994. *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 8.

8 *Ibid*, 6.

9 *Ibid*, 6.

10 Flood, Finbar. 2007. “From Prophet to postmodernism? New World orders and the end of Islamic Art.” In *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*. ed. E. Mansfield, London: Routledge, 31–52, puts forward that an uncontroversial category of Islamic art might consider its purview: 16th century artifacts from “the Ottomans of Turkey, the Safavids of Iran and the Mughals of India [...] then things get rather vague”.

11 Necipoglu, Gülru. 2012. “The concept of Islamic art: Inherited discourses and new approaches.” In *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century*, Benoit Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber and Gerhard Wolf (eds.), London: Saqi Books, 57–75.

12 Bozdoğan, Sibel. 1999. “Architectural history in professional education: Reflections on postcolonial challenges to the modern survey.” *Journal of Architectural Education*, 52(4): 207–216.

13 About the definition and historiography of Islamic Art, see, *inter alia*: Blair, Sheila and Bloom, Jonathan. 2003. “The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field.” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (March): 152–184.

art, architecture and urbanism thereby blocking opportunities for equally significant studies on modern and contemporary architecture.

However, there is enough evidence to revise the past in a much more entangled means by foregrounding cross-geographical dialogues, even though the West and the East have been perceived as separated and made detached within a continuing process of hybridization. Simultaneously, it seems necessary to think about theories and concepts that will help us come to terms with these intertwined histories, rather than use oppositions between the foreign and the national, the Western and the Islamic.

## 1 Otherness and Hybridity

I will examine two concepts concerned with Islamic architectural and urban identities – ‘otherness’ and ‘hybridity’ – that have been applied to architecture and urbanism profusely and have been instrumental in postcolonial theory. ‘Otherness’ is a western philosophical concept that postcolonial theory has pursued, reviewed and rejected, while hybridity is considered a ‘product’ of postcolonial thought, a radical substitute for hegemonic ideas of cultural identity like racial purity and nationality.

The Other, politically and epistemologically, is a concept fundamental to contemporary concerns. Threat, responsibility, *alter ego*, and enigma to and of the self, have variously a major preoccupation of Western thought. The political philosopher Frantz Fanon (1961), the literary critic Edward Said (1978), and the postcolonial theorists Gayatri Spivak (1999) and Homi Bhabha (2004) are some of the authors of the western tradition that read or critique the Self in relation to the Other. They give more detailed attention to the postcolonial work that engages with the questions in examining the politics of representation, recognition and identity in architectural and urban theories and histories.

It would be important to take Said’s critique of West-East relations as an opening point, because our use of ‘otherness’ and ‘hybridity.’ Said’s theory of *Orientalism* was drawn on the philosopher Michel Foucault’s notion of power/discourse that theorises the East as a construction of the West in order to uncover the power patterns that have defined the relations between Europe and Asia. In *Orientalism*, Said extends Foucault’s critiques of the systematic acquisition of knowledge as a vehicle for power and dominance to the context of European imperialism. Said examines the reductive representation of Islam, associated with the Orient, as a distinct entity: “The boundary notion of East and West, the varying degrees of projected inferiority and strength, the range of work done, the kinds of characteristic features ascribed to the Orient:

all these testify to a [...] division made between East and West."<sup>14</sup> Said argues that the very "idea" of the Orient was complicit in the colonial mastery of the non-Western territory, resources, and peoples, that it allegedly represented.<sup>15</sup> While by no means in-depth, other studies are indicative of an interdisciplinary shift away from polarised representations of Self and Other, that can be further traced to the work of Said. While Said's *Orientalism* lays bare the power relations inherent to representational formations of Islamic architecture and Islamic urbanism, it exposes at the same time Europe's reciprocal dependence on those whom it subordinated.

Correspondingly, Said and more recently the anthropologist Anne Laura Stoler, have shown that the European imperial colonies in the East were seen as laboratories in which ideological and disciplinary regimes were established previously being transported back to Europe to regulate metropolitan society.<sup>16</sup> Questionably, the West was co-produced in and through their unequal interactions. This implies that Europe, while constructing its Other as an object of thought, was in fact constructing itself as a subject.

In the built environment analyses, the standing of hybridity is a neglected subject. To Bhabha, cultures are specific temporal groups, which to a large degree comprise elements that they share with others.<sup>17</sup> This hybrid nature of social collectives makes any claim of hierarchical 'purity' of cultures as well as concepts such as syncretism, synergy and transculturation unsustainable. To understand Bhabha's reasoning, it may be enlightening to remind his architectural metaphor of the house. A house may consist of some floors that are connected by a staircase. In order to move from the first to the second floor or vice versa, one needs to use the stairs. The staircase is thus allegorically speaking exceeding 'certain binary oppositions' such as high and low by opening a liminal space and a path between the extremes. The liminal space of the stairwell is, according to Bhabha, an 'interstitial passage' in a comparable sense that permits a social subject to move in and out of, for instance, different subject positions.

14 Said, Edward. 1995. *Orientalism; Western Conceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin Books, 201.

15 Foucault, Michel. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books. The differences between *Orientalism* and Foucault's methodology are analysed in Dutton, Michael and Williams, Peter. 1993. "Translating Theories: Edward Said on Orientalism, Imperialism and Alterity." *Southern Review* 26, no. 3: 314–57.

16 Said, Edward. 1992. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage books; Stoler, Laura Ann. 1992. "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule." In *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas Dirks, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

17 (Bhabha, 2004, 52).

Similarly, the writings of the anthropologist James Clifford are significant in drawing attention to the complexity of identity in the context of encounter and in re-thinking representations of Islamic architecture and Islamic urbanism. Encounters provoke assertions of cultural identity of Self and Other. We draw specific inspiration from Clifford's characterization of essentialist representations of culture using the metaphor of cultural roots to describe the pervasive tendency to represent the built environment as an expression of Islam, represented as a homogeneous religious and cultural entity. Clifford's alternative metaphor of cultural routes<sup>18</sup> enables the conceptualisation of varied experiences of dwelling and travelling amidst global encounters.

This takes us to the anthropologist Bruno Latour's delineation of modernity<sup>19</sup> as a continuous dispute between practices of translation that create hybrids and strategies of purification designed to articulate and impose the ontological difference that has been naturalized in many post-Enlightenment societies. By drawing attention to the reciprocated overlapping of conscious human subjects and inert architecture and city, we look at the constitutive relationships between human subjects, architecture, city,<sup>20</sup> and political formations, and the ways in which these relationships were implicated in processes of transculturation, a change unfolding through hybridity that can presuppose (if not produce) 'pure' original or related architecture and city(ies).<sup>21</sup>

The anthropologist Mary Louise Pratt recognises the reciprocity of encounter in the context of colonialism since 1750. Pratt theorizes the concept of 'contact-zone'<sup>22</sup> in an effort to move elsewhere representations that carve

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- 18 Clifford, James. 1998. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 19 Latour, Bruno. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Trans. Catherine Parker. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- 20 "As socially and culturally salient entities, objects change in defiance of their material stability. The category to which a thing belongs, the emotion and judgment it prompts, and narrative it recalls, are all historically refigured." Thomas, Nicholas. 1991. *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Harvard University Press, 129. See also, Appadurai, Arjun. 1988. *The Social Life of Things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 21 Glick, Thomas and Pi-Sunyer, Oriol. 1969. "Acculturation as an Explanatory Concept in Spanish History." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11, no. 2: 140. Lionnet, Françoise. 1989. "Introduction. The Politics and Aesthetics of Métissage." In *Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender, Self-Portraiture*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 15–17; Ortiz, Fernando. 1995. *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*. Trans. Harriet de Onis. Durham: Duke University Press, 102–3; Dallmayr, Fred. 1996. *Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-cultural Encounter*. Albany: SUNY Press, 14–18.
- 22 Addressing the concept of "contact zone" defined by Mary Pratt in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Interactions between global and local, transnational and

cultural Otherness as: “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination-like colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths, as they are lived out across the globe today.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, she complicates European representations of Self and Other, prompted by travel writing. Hybridity offers a model of textuality idea that does not delete difference, but exposes the spaces where meaning-systems collide. The hybrid can be understood as a ‘contact zone’ or a ‘third space’ which is an overlapping of cultures that can generate “borderline affects and identifications.”<sup>24</sup>

In *Empire Building*, the architectural historian Mark Crinson recognises that it was in “the second quarter of the nineteenth century that architectural Orientalism emerged as a distinctive cultural formation out of its two parent discourses. That this ‘new Orientalism’ did emerge at this moment had something to do with the discarding of classical paradigms and Picturesque theory. But it had much more to do with the appeal of the new human sciences, particularly ethnography, and the operative conjunction of rationalism and modernization”<sup>25</sup> with particular emphasis on Victorian scholarship and the representation of Islamic, Saracenic, Moorish or Oriental architecture in the writings of Robert Hay, Edward Lane,<sup>26</sup> Owen Jones,<sup>27</sup> James Fergusson,<sup>28</sup> Edward Freeman<sup>29</sup> and John Ruskin.<sup>30</sup> Crinson recognises the expectations to define architecture as an expression of Islamic culture conceived of as an ahistorical, similar and unrepresented object.<sup>31</sup>

In 2007, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture published *Intervention Architecture: Building for Change*, where thinkers and practitioners focused on contemporary buildings and landscapes located within the Islamic world. In its introduction, Bhabha identified an “ethic of global relatedness that reflects the

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national, identity and difference, conjuncturalism and identity politics, space and time have become important areas of research as the study of culture, society, and power has become increasingly comparative, historical, and global in scope.

23 Pratt, Mary. 1992. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge, 4.

24 Bhabha, Homi. 1996. “Culture’s In-Between.” In *Question of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay. London: Sage Publications, 54.

25 Crinson, Mark. 1996. *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture*. London: Routledge, 16.

26 *Ibid*, 16, 26–30.

27 *Ibid*, 30–36.

28 *Ibid*, 42–48.

29 *Ibid*, 39–42.

30 *Ibid*, 48–61.

31 Çelik, Zeynep. 1992. *Displaying the Orient; Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs*. Berkeley: University of California Press.



ideals of a pluralist *umma* at the heart of Muslim societies which is repeatedly celebrated.”<sup>32</sup> Further, addresses the incontestability of the award questioning the “contest between the east and the west, or between Muslim and non-Muslim societies. Such polarisations are quite out [...] to reflect the shifting and changing world of ‘Muslim realities’ that transform the global *umma*. [...] In a state of transition – or translation – you are caught ambivalently between identifying [...] ‘origins’ and ‘traditions’, while, at the same time, relating [...] revisionary values.”<sup>33</sup> Also, the architect Farshid Moussavi addresses architecture and cosmopolitanism with reference to the twentieth first century, making a case for hybrid or cosmopolitan identities perceived as expressing a postnational condition resulting from processes of globalization. Moussavi presented this stance as in contra-distinction to the standard historiography of Islamic architecture: “Instead of declaring that differences are un-combinable, the point is to identify differences that are singular, look for connections, define systems of negotiation and find larger areas of consistency among these differentiated entities that can produce new hybrid [...] the whole is grown out of the hybridisation of the parts, akin to the way hybrid identities evolve in individuals. Hybridisation transforms fixed architectural categories and [...] experimentation.”<sup>34</sup> This perception of hybridity matches a move also recognised by the anthropologists Pauline Strong and Deborah Kapchan in which “what was once considered ‘contaminated,’ ‘promiscuous,’ ‘impure’ [was] becoming the focus of postmodern analytical attention.”<sup>35</sup> Such derogatory appellations had long been identified with representations of the Islamic built environment.

Bi- and multilateral transportation of people, ideas, objects, technology, information, and images generates processes of hybridity, which takes place under any condition where there is a cultural flow from one place to another. It is the process of transformation during the act of flow in a ‘contact zone.’ Drawing from literary studies (Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999; Benjamin, 1968; Derrida, 1985, 1992; Niranjana, 1992; Spivak, 1993; Venuti, 1995, 2000),<sup>36</sup>

32 Bhabha, Homi. 2007. “Architecture and Thought.” In *Intervention Architecture. Building for Change*, ed. Pamela Johnston. London & New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 7. For 2007 Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

33 *Ibid*, 9.

34 Moussavi, Farshid. 2007. “Cosmopolitanism and Architecture.” In *Intervention Architecture. Building for Change*, ed. Pamela Johnston. London & New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 166–167. For 2007 Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

35 Kapchan, Deborah, and Strong, Pauline. 1999. “Theorizing the Hybrid” *Journal of American Folklore* 112. 445: 239–253.

36 Bassnett, Susan and Trivedi, Harish (eds.). 1999. *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge; Benjamin, Walter. 1968. “The task of the Translator,” In

this theory treats translation as a conceptual metaphor for architectural and urban hybridity, while differentiating the specificities of the built environment practices.

## 2 From World War I, Up to the Present

I will discuss examples from the interwar period, through the Cold War up to the present, focusing specifically on cases from Turkey in the 1930s and 1940s, India, Iraq and Lebanon in the 1950s, Sri Lanka in the 1960s and 1970s, Kuwait in the 1970s, and the Gulf cities in the 2000s. Each example recognises a different construction as what I argue has stood for the locus of perceived hybridity in the Islamic built environment.

After the end of World War I (1918), the fall of the Ottoman Empire (1922) and the establishment of Turkey as a republic (1923), architects from Germany and Austria were invited to assist in a Westernization effort in the construction of Turkey's cities, buildings, and architectural schools.<sup>37</sup> The German architect and urban planner Hermann Jansen (1869–1945) designed a pre-war garden city model developed in Germany, which was not only supposed to be used as the master plan of Ankara, but also in other places of Turkey. The same archetype was used in collective housing, neighbourhoods for statesmen, and in residential villages to house people arriving from the Balkans. Governmental and higher education buildings in Ankara were commissioned to Austrian architects such as Robert Oerley, Clemens Holzmeister, Ernst Egli, and German architects such as Bruno Taut and Paul Bonatz. Houses for Kemal Atatürk

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Arendt, Hannah (ed.), *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*. Trans. H. Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 69–82; Derrida, Jacques. 1985. *The Ear of the Other*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press and Derrida, Jacques. 1992. "From Des Tours de Babel." In *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 218–227; Niranjana, Tejaswini. 1992. *Siting Translation: History, Post-structuralism and the Colonial Context*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Spivak, Gayatri. 1993. "The politics of Translation." In *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. London: Routledge; Venuti, Lawrence. 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, London: Routledge and 2000. *The Translation Studies Reader* London: Routledge.

37 Akcan, Esra. 2005. *Modernity in translation*. Ph.D. dissertation. New York: Columbia University; Akcan, Esra and Bozdoğan, Sibel. 2012. *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History*. London: Reaktion Books; Bozdoğan, Sibel. 2001. *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*. Seattle: University of Washington Press; Nicolai, Bernd. 1998. *Moderne und Exil: Deutschsprachige Architekten in der Türkei 1925–1955*. Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen.

(president 1923–1938) and other official elites were designed most notably by Holzmeister and by the Turkish architect Seyfi Arkan, who had just returned from Berlin. Arkan had a tremendous impact on the Modern architecture of Turkey. Some authors attribute to him negative qualities, arguing that he was the architect of Atatürk and sided with the existing political powers to pave the path to professional success, but the majority acknowledge that his influence in mainstream architecture of Turkey during his lifetime and after. Arkan was accepted by the German architect Hans Poelzig as a trainee and lived in Berlin between the years of 1928 and 1933. This was his chance to observe and understand the Modern buildings and environment influenced by Bauhaus ideas. However, even in the most obvious examples of the official Westernization program, the results were never a direct copy of what happened in German Modernism but became significant hybrid architectural solutions like, for example, the Üçler Apartments, with a combination of oriels, an inseparable part of Ottoman and Anatolian houses, and reinforced concrete balconies which, besides resembling their Western counterparts are natural cantilevers of the structural system and do not require any specific craftsmanship.

The tripartite German-Austrian-Turkish co-operation was intensified after 1933, when the National Socialist party came to power in Germany. German and Austrian architects and planners including Ernst Reuter, Margarete Schiitte-Lihotzky, Martin Wagner and Taut were forced into exile. Most took part in the new generation's education and collaborated with local professionals. While in Turkey, some German émigrés, including Reuter, outlined the future of post-war Germany and came to influential posts there afterwards. Others like Egli returned to Switzerland and advocated a culture-specific theory of urban design. The prominent Turkish architect Sedad Eldem<sup>38</sup> built his career on the study of the Turkish House. No other person was as comprehensive, dedicated and productive as he was in bringing the traditional Turkish house back to life through his own architecture. The essential characteristics of this building type, and its possible variations depending on the site, represent the trait of Eldem's work and also his legacy.<sup>39</sup>

38 Bozdoğan, Sibel, Süha Özkan and Engin Yenal (eds.). 1987. *Sedad Eldem: Architect in Turkey*. Singapore & New York: Concept Media.

39 (Bozdoğan, Sibel, Süha Özkan and Engin Yenal, 1987); Gallo, Antonella, 1991. "Un architetto aristocratico," *Phalaris*, vol. 16: 12–15; Tanyelleli, Uğur. 2001. *Sedad Hakki Eldem*. Istanbul: Boyut Yayın Grubu; Tanyelleli, Uğur. 2007. *Mimarlığın Aktörleri, Türkiye 1900–2000*. Istanbul: Garanti Galeri, 162–171; Tanju, Bülent and Tanyelleli, Uğur. 2008. *Sedad Hakki Eldem 1: Gençlik Yılları*. Istanbul: Osmanlı Balkası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi; Tanju, Bülent and Tanyelleli, Uğur. 2009. *Sedad Hakki Eldem 2. Retrospektif*. Istanbul: Osmanlı Balkası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi.

Modernism itself may have had its own translatability to the whole world so that its technical and social merits could be shared globally. At the same time, building a sovereign nation-state out of the Ottoman Empire simultaneously demanded some revival. Among the constructed categories of national heritage, the 'old Turkish house' served as the common marker of architectural identity during this period, partly because unlike Ottoman monuments it was imagined to be 'authentically Turkish.' The regional, ethnic, and religious differences were overlooked for the construction of this unified category.

The Taslik Coffee House in Istanbul by Eldem's, was admittedly based on the Koprulu Amcazade Huseyin Pasa waterfront house on the Bosphorus. Eldem drew the first sketches during his travels to Europe where he was constantly negotiating between and hybridizing European Modernism and the old Turkish house. Bozdoğan points out that Eldem saw contemporary features in the traditional Turkish house: for him, this building type was remarkably similar to the concept of the modern house.<sup>40</sup> Full windows, lightness, transparency, the free plan and modular logic, all of which lent themselves to skeletal construction were reinterpreted in reinforced concrete in his designs.

Among the architects requested by Turkey, Taut's practice justifies a more favourable assessment precisely because he complicated and subverted the dominant Western/national dichotomy. In the building of the Faculty of Language, History and Geography in Ankara (1937), Taut used stones and tiles, unlike the modernist buildings of the period with stucco surfaces devoid of texture or ornament. On the exterior, he treated the front facade as a hard skin of stones and bricks interwoven by the system of composite masonry, a way of stone binding associated with early Ottoman communal buildings. Taut highlighted his intentions by designing subtle deviations from the stone of the front facade to the stucco of the side facade, refined details between the stones and the window frames, gutters, lamps, bent surfaces and expressive handrails. Taut used also a specific window detail admittedly inspired from the "old Turkish houses."<sup>41</sup> Freed from classical plan conceptions, the main

40 Bozdoğan, Sibel. 2010. "The Legacy of an Istanbul Architect: Type, Context and Urban Identity in the Work of Sedad Eldem," *In Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities*, ed. Jean-Francois Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino, proceedings of the conference "The other modern: On the influence of the vernacular on the architecture and the city of the twentieth century," London & New York: Routledge, 131–146.

41 Bozdoğan, Sibel. 1997. "Against style: Bruno Taut's pedagogical program in Turkey, 1936–1938." *In The Education of the Architect: Historiography, Urbanism and the Growth of Architectural Knowledge*, ed. Martha Pollak. Cambridge: MIT Press, 163–192; Gasco, Giorgio. 2010. "Bruno Taut and the Program for the Protection of Monuments in Turkey

hall was designed as a collection of framed spaces within spaces. Evaluating his work on the basis of traditional construction techniques and architectural ornament, some argued that Taut was a supporter of nationalism, whereas his own purposes were formulated in his writings (1936, 1937, 1938).<sup>42</sup> Taut disapproved of those who excluded foreign inspirations, yet supported “no false Internationalism, no uniformization of the world [...] but a hybridization that would “make both sides richer.”<sup>43</sup>

After World War II, the fading of European countries and the rebuilding of Europe led to changes in Asia. In this context, the Iraqi Development Board was established in the early 1950s to plan, manage, and use subsidy from foreign creditors and revenue from the oil industry to modernise Iraq. Modern architecture was presented as a symbol and core element in the progression towards a modern lifestyle, represented through buildings capable of strengthening national identity.<sup>44</sup> The British presence in Iraq during the mandate period<sup>45</sup> had its impact on the built environment. Most markedly, James Mollison Wilson<sup>46</sup> and Harold Mason designed major governmental and civic buildings until 1935 (Memorial Hospital and Airport in Basra) and continued to exercise their influence in the design of buildings (Baghdad Railway Station).<sup>47</sup> Nizar Ali Jawak, the son of the prime minister under king Faisal II, convinced his father that as Iraq becomes a part of the modern world, the country should employ the best architects. Architects proposed included Frank Lloyd Wright,

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(1937–38)/ Three case studies: Ankara, Edirne and Bursa.” *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* (27:2): 15–36.

42 Taut, Bruno. 1936. *Japans Kunst*. Tokyo: Verlag Meiji Shobo; Taut, Bruno. 1937. *Houses and People of Japan*. Tokyo: Sanseido; Turk Evi, Sinan. 1938. *Mimari Bilgisi*. Ankara. *Her Ay*, 2: 93–94.

43 (Taut, 1936, 206).

44 Bernhardsson, Magnus. 2008. “Visions of Iraq: Modernizing the past in 1950s Baghdad.” In *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 81–96; Fethi, Ihsan. 1985. “Contemporary Architecture in Baghdad: Its Roots and Transition,” *Progress: architecture*, 58 (May): 112–132; Frampton, Kenneth and Hasan-Uddin, Khan. 2000. *World Architecture 1900–2000: A Critical Mosaic, vol. 5, The Middle East*. Wien: Springer; Nooraddin, Hoshair. 2004. “Globalization and the search for modern local architecture: Learning from Baghdad.” In *Planning Middle Eastern Cities*, ed. Yasser Elsheshtawy. London: Routledge, 59–84.

45 Colonial mandates were formally granted in 1922, when the League of Nations gave Britain sovereignty over Iraq and Jordan, and France was given sovereignty over Syria and Lebanon.

46 Assistant of Edwin Lutyens in the design of colonial New Delhi, 1912–1930.

47 Crinson, Mark. 2003. *Modern Architecture and the End of Empire*. Burlington: Ashgate and Pieri, Caecilia. 2004. *Bagdad: La Construction d'une Capitale Moderne, 1920–1960*. Cairo: American University of Cairo Press.

Walter Gropius, Alvar Aalto, Josep Lluís Sert, Constantinos Doxiadis and Gio Ponti.<sup>48</sup> Looking to represent the new nation as a sophisticated, modernising member of the world community, the Iraqi Development Board invited the world's best to build signature projects in Iraq.

At the age of ninety, Wright, conceived an urbanistic proposal for Baghdad (1955–1958).<sup>49</sup> The master plan was more an Orientalist proposal than a depiction of the region's vernacular architecture that makes it hard to find a formal unity between appropriating or foreignizing tendencies in hybridity. The proposal contained ziggurats that hid parking lots, cascading spires, cut and pasted Arabic symbolism. The Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier was at the height of his career when in 1955 he was invited to design for Baghdad. On the larger question of where Baghdad fits into Le Corbusier's modernist oeuvre, technological innovation was integral to the design of his City of Sports (1955–1983). His innovative use of moving waves for the swimming pool, 'piscine à vague', reflected his appreciation of the Tigris River. Sketches and records of his meetings reveal that the gymnasium roof's sloping form was inspired by the Arabian tents.

Gropius was awarded the contract for the University of Baghdad Master Plan in 1957 and would oversee the project until his death in 1969.<sup>50</sup> Only a few of Gropius' designs survived into the final iteration of the campus. The project was praised for "setting aside [...] Bauhaus purity" to "make room for liberties of the vernacular,"<sup>51</sup> thereby "avoid[ing] too much Americanism."<sup>52</sup> Gropius

48 (Bernhardsson, 2008, 81–96); (Fethi, 1985, 112–132); (Frampton and Hasan-Uddin, 2000); (Nooraddin, 2004, 59–84).

49 Marefat, Mina. 1999. "Wright in Baghdad." In *Frank Lloyd Wright: Europe and Beyond*, ed. Anthony Alofsin. Berkeley: University of California Press and Stanek, Łukasz. 2012. "Miastoprojekt goes abroad: the transfer of architectural labour from socialist Poland to Iraq (1958–1989)," *The Journal of Architecture*, 17, 3: 361–386. Siry, Joseph. 2005. "Wright's Baghdad Opera House and Gammage Auditorium: In Search of Regional Modernity." *The Art Bulletin* 87, no. 2: 265–311.

50 Wisniewski, Katherine. 2015. "Baghdad Could Have Been a Mega-City by Frank Lloyd Wright." *Curbed*. March 05. Accessed May, 2021. <https://archive.curbed.com/2015/3/5/9985504/greater-baghdad-frank-lloyd-wright-corbusier>.

51 Rogers, Ernesto. 1960. "Architecture of the Middle East," *Casabella*, vol. 242, (August), vii. Quoted in Marafat, Mina. 2008. "The Universal University: How Bauhaus Came to Baghdad." *DC. Revista de crítica arquitectónica*, n. "Ciudad del Espejismo: Bagdad, de Wright a Venturi": 157–166. Marefat argues that Gropius was applying 'Bauhaus principles' and no regionalism in his design, although all the evidence is to the contrary, in particular this statement.

52 Gropius, Walter. 1958. "Planning a University," *Christian Science Monitor*, 9. Quoted in Marafat, Mina. 2008. "The Universal University: How Bauhaus Came to Baghdad." *DC. Revista de crítica arquitectónica*, n. "Ciudad del Espejismo: Bagdad, de Wright a Venturi": 164.

wrote “buildings are placed round patios of various sizes, which are filled with plants, water basins, and fountains [...] The interrelationship of [...] buildings and the land-scaped open spaces with their water fountains between them, as well as the shadow effects from the strong sunlight obtained by cantilevers and undercuts will cause a significant rhythm.”<sup>53</sup> The project incorporated concrete versions of *mashrabiya* – pierced grilled windows – and placed vaults on top of skyscrapers. Gropius also created a mosque in the form of a concrete dome supported on three points surrounded by a circular pool of water.

The Greek architect Constantinos Doxiadis was initially asked by King Faisal's II administration to draw up a five-year plan for the entire country. He developed master plans for Iraq (1954–1958), Syria (1958), and Lebanon (1958), with the endorsement of the United States. The Baghdad master plan stressed housing for all and a foundation for long-term urban and regional growth. Doxiadis made it a point to distinguish his regionalist approach to planning from that of Brasilia and Chandigarh.<sup>54</sup> Doxiadis committed to diagnose each site's specific local, regional needs and potentials rather than applying universal norms and standards.

At the time, Doxiadis was praised by the *New York Times* for eliminating empty and lonely urban environments that made dwellers susceptible to communism.<sup>55</sup> Doxiadis's master plans sought to rectify the urbanization problems of post-war cities, such as housing shortages due to mass immigration from rural areas, slum clearance, and traffic congestion. Yet, he showed a heightened interest in researching built settings and environmental features. Convinced of the power of Ekistics, “the science of human settlements,” to “civilize” the world and provide the architecture of development, Doxiadis thought extensive visual surveys, scientific (i.e., empirically based) analyses, and candid diagnosis of present problems would deliver both universal progress and regional specificity. According to the scholar Panayiota Pyla,<sup>56</sup> “Ekistics proposed a corrective to Eurocentric modernism” and appealed to “post-colonial governments of the time [with] the promise that it would be more amenable to local cultural preferences.”

53 Gropius, Walter. 1959. “Universität in Bagdad,” *Bauen + Wohnen*, Heft 11: 392.

54 Doxiadis, Constantinos. 1959. “The Rising Tide and the Planner,” *Ekistics*, vol. 7, no. 39: 4–10 at p. 6. Quoted in Pyla, Panayiota. 2008. “Baghdad's Urban Restructuring, 1958,” In *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 99.

55 Pyla, Panayiota. 2002. “Ekistics, architecture and environmental politics, 1945–1976: A pre-history of sustainable development.” Ph.D. dissertation. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT, 63.

56 *Ibid.*, 21 and 57.

Josep Lluís Sert, the Catalan architect based in the United States, describes his Baghdad embassy's chancery, ambassador's residence and staff buildings (1955–1960), as a response to climatic constraints, that he considered “nature-given” hence “eternal” identifiers of a region. The buildings had a modernist taste in a landscaped oasis garden encircled by walls that contained a dyke and a canal as an allegory of the Tigris River. The chancery building was organized around a cooling courtyard which was an allusion to traditional houses and had three floors stepped back with cantilevered slabs to provide shades. The *brise soleil* surfaces for protection and ventilation were designed as two kinds of screens, one of white ceramic tiles and the other as metal louvers. There was a double roof made of a folded concrete slab which allowed air circulation in-between, protected the inner roof from excessive sun, and channelled down-pours through its folds. The wide use of concrete in addition to local tiles was in line with the aim of boosting the concrete industry in Iraq.<sup>57</sup>

Many architects were interested in a climate-specific architecture and a regionalist foundation for their buildings. The invention of a new modern vocabulary with sun-protected surfaces and outdoor spaces, *brise soleil*, courtyards and umbrella roofs testifies to a pledge to climate as marker of identity. Despite the claims to regional sensitivity, all these Western architects were criticized for drawing Western forms.

In the 1970s, the rise of Kuwait marked the beginning of works by established architects.<sup>58</sup> The first include Kenzo Tange from Japan who designed the National Airport; Mohamed Makiya from Iraq for the design of the State Mosque; Alison and Peter Smithson from the UK for research into climate; Malene Bjorn from Sweden for the Kuwait Water Towers (1969–1976) where she provided “an Islamic symbol of the space age.”<sup>59</sup> Raili and Reima Pietilä from Finland after an invitation in 1969 to draw up an idea plan to modernize the old Kuwait town outlined an interpretation of Middle Eastern bazaars with the design of a covered pedestrian area. They were commissioned to design ‘new Arabic architecture’ with the administrative complex that included an extension of the Sief Palace, the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. George Candilis, Alexis Josic and Shadrach Woods, the French

57 Samuel Isenstadt interpreted this building complex as part of Eisenhower's United States embassies program and hence a balancing act during the Cold War. Isenstadt, Samuel. 1997. “Faith in a Better Future’: Josep Lluís Sert’s American Embassy in Baghdad.” *Journal of Architectural Education* 50: 172–188.

58 Stanek, Łukasz. 2012. *Post Modernism is almost all right: Polish Architecture after Socialist Globalization*. Warsaw, Museum of Modern Art.

59 Gardiner, Stephen. 1983. *Kuwait: The Making of a City*. Essex: Longman, 124.



members of Team 10, designed residential neighbourhoods using *The Cité Verticale* design based on the traditional patio-dwelling. They took as starting point the Islamic tradition transition from private to public domain and, at the same time, united traditional elements with modernity such as multi-level buildings, technology, and contemporary collective amenities.<sup>60</sup> Two Danish architects, Arne Jacobsen and Jorn Utzon, designed the Central Bank and the Parliament Building (1972–1983).<sup>61</sup> His building outlined an interpretation of the traditional souk. Thoughtful with an idea of “additive architecture,” in the design Utzon combined monolithic and additive elements by preparing the stage for new additions of modules if needed, while establishing a finished composition overall. The main concept was hence sun protection, which was materialized with the introverted character of the complex, as well as the use of repetitive courtyards, covered inner streets, and tent metaphors. For Utzon, the structurally tectonic expression of his buildings reproduced the “purity of Islamic construction.”

In Sri Lanka, a place whose purview is hegemonically Buddhist and Sinhala, where Tamil, Muslim, or any Other can only arrive as guest, the architect Geoffrey Bawa began to produce buildings in the 1960s that drew on his professional training and the influences of Modernism that he had been exposed to in Europe. Bawa was a leading architect of critical vernacularism and his attention to the study of traditional building form was manifest. He was commissioned to design the National Parliament. However, many of Bawa's projects integrate existing dwellings or draw on Sri Lanka's built heritage resulting from Portuguese, Dutch or British settlements. The hybridization of built forms over centuries through contacts, exchanges, subjection, and revival was a great source of inspiration for Bawa: “past and present good architecture in Sri Lanka as just that – good Sri Lankan architecture – for this is what it is, not narrowly classified as Indian, Portuguese or Dutch, early Singhalese or Kandyan or British colonial, for all the good examples [...] have taken the country itself into account.”<sup>62</sup> The use of internal spaces provided a commonality among Islamic houses and established a difference from other Singhalese houses. Bawa's work is pitched as an expression of national identity in the postcolonial context, “a new architectural identity that drew together the different strands

60 Avermaete, Tom. 2005. *Another Modern, The Postwar Architecture and Urbanism of Candilis-Josic-Woods*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers.

61 (Gardiner, 1983).

62 Robson, David. 2002. *Geoffrey Bawa: The Complete Works*. London: Thames & Hudson.

of a complex ethnic weave and exploited a rich history.”<sup>63</sup> Hence, Bawa’s work is presented as an authentic response to Sri Lankan hybridity.<sup>64</sup>

### 3 Global Currents

After the 1980s, an increased emphasis on cultural identity motivated a simultaneous and perhaps independent shift in secular circles of architectural and urbanistic cultures popularized ‘Islamic’ as the catch-all term, especially in Western publications and institutions, to designate building practice in Middle East and Asian countries. The shift from the category of the ‘regional’ into a reconstructed category of the ‘Islamic’ is a perceived identity-marker of hybridity. It is interesting to observe how contemporary architects after the 1980s relied on this field’s taxonomies, which aligned them with the rise of postmodern architectural style around the world and the new interest in making references to historical buildings.

Among the institutions that advocated modernization without detachment from cultural twitches was the Aga Khan Award Foundation exploring in its award “notions of architectural identity, of reliance on native rather than imported practices and talents, of an ideologically significant rather than merely antiquarian past, of technologies appropriate to each task [...] of pride in accomplishments of the past of the lands on which one builds, of locally inspired rather than imported educational objectives in professional schools.”<sup>65</sup> The secretary of the Foundation, Siiha Ozkan, while explaining its mission mentioned the ‘failure’ of modernism in the Islamic societies and in the Third World, because its proponents ignored the “existence of the cultural values in the built environment, continuity between past and present, a sense of identity, consideration of climate and need for user (or community) participation.”<sup>66</sup>

63 Robson, David. 2001. “Genius of the Place: The Buildings and Landscapes of Geoffrey Bawa,” In *Modernity and Community: Architecture in the Islamic World*, ed. Philippa Baker. London: Thames & Hudson, 18.

64 Robson, David. 2001. “Sage of Sri Lanka,” *Architectural Review* 210, no. 1257 (November), 75.

65 Grabar, Oleg. 1994. “The mission and its people.” In James Steele (ed.), *Architecture for Islamic Societies Today*. (London: Academy Editions, Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1994), 7.

66 Ozkan, Suha. 1994. “Complexity, coexistence and plurality.” In *Architecture for Islamic Societies Today*, ed. James Steele. London: Academy Editions, Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 23–27.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture supported both canonical buildings by established architects, conservation projects and low-income housing, that dealt with the question of identity and those that were evaluated as balanced syntheses between modernity and tradition. The award canonized the past work of the Egyptian architect Hasan Fathy and valued projects as the Hajj Terminal in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (1974–1982) or the National Commercial Bank in Jeddah (1977–1983), designed by the international team SOM as one of the first climate-specific skyscrapers that integrated historical references and environmental concerns and served as a model for future skyscrapers in West Asia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh, designed by the Danish architect Henning Larsen, a complex with a fortress-like stone-clad exterior, ceremonial entrance, a hierarchy of atriums, courtyards, internal streets and passageways.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the postmodern solution to the challenge of authenticity and continuity was to revert to selective replication of acclaimed historical models not mediated by stylistic rereading. This suited the attitude of the time in Islamic countries, some of which had belatedly gained their independence from colonial rule and were eager to establish an identity with roots in the past. The available display of Islamic architecture comprising collections of grand monuments, presented a streamlined set of imageries from identifiable historical anchors that influenced contemporary architects' designs. Historical models were 'sampled' to make up variations on these archetypes valued by a new class of wealthy and culturally traditionalist patrons. Consequently, most of the Islamic architecture of the 1970s and 1980s, and even later decades, was postmodern in spirit and appearance, even when it was cloaked in environmental or technological rhetorical arguments.

In the late twentieth century, big buildings design in Qatar and in the United Arab Emirates were authored by architects such as Rem Koolhaas (OMA), Jean Nouvel, Norman Foster, Zaha Hadid, Santiago Calatrava, Arata Isozaki, I.M. Pei, SOM, Kenzo Tange, the Rafael Vinoly, UN Studio and Legorreta+Legorreta. For the rebuilding of Beirut's destroyed by war, were invited architects such as Steven Holl, Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, Jean Nouvel, Rafael Moneo, Norman Foster and Arata Isozaki. It is relevant to note how the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar by Pei, was designed as a structure highlighting "simplicity" and "geometry" inspired partly on the Ahmad ibn Tulum Mosque in Cairo occupying an artificial island.

The Otherness of ornament is attributed to abstract pattern making and the proliferation of surface decoration (where figural representation and three dimensionality are purposefully suppressed to emphasise Otherness). As in the nineteenth century, the preoccupation with unity was identified with

the ahistorical discourse of Orientalism and the didactic studies of ornament aimed at a Western audience. For example, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai designed by SOM (2004–2010) is the world's tallest skyscraper to date and yet residues of postmodern and Orientalist fixations on Islamic identity have been used. Many architects use stylized and technologically reinterpreted versions to create compulsory identity markers. For example, *mashrabiyyas* have come to be perceived as one of the most easily identifiable markers of Islamic architecture, as in the Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi by Nouvel, or the campus buildings in the Qatar Education City (2004–2008) by Isozaki.

#### 4 The Islamic City

The Islamic City paradigm has a long history in Orientalist research.<sup>67</sup> Main attributes of Islamic cities as defined by authors such as Albert Hourani and Samuel Stern,<sup>68</sup> Janet Abu-Lughod,<sup>69</sup> Eugen Wirth<sup>70</sup> and Ludwig Ammann,<sup>71</sup> include dense and unequal urban settlement patterns with long and winding streets, a separation between residential and commercial neighbourhoods, a subdivision of the residential neighbourhoods into smaller neighbourhoods,

67 In a seminal article, Janet Abu-Lughod (Abu-Lughod, Janet. 1987. "The Islamic City: Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (2): 155–176) traces the origins of the quest for the essence of Islamic cities back to an article published in 1928, 'L'Islamisme et la vie urbaine' by William Marçais, as well as to Jean Sauvaget's work on Damascus (1934) and Aleppo (1941). Another important source often drawn on to identify differences between European cities and those in the Islamic world is Max Weber's text *The City* (1958), originally published in 1921. From 1970 on, the generalising concept of the Islamic City was subject to critical reassessment. In spite of profound criticism, authors such as Albert Hourani (Hourani, Albert, and Stern, Samuel (eds.). 1970. *The Islamic City: A Colloquium*. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer & Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), Samuel Stern (Hourani, Albert, and Stern, Samuel (eds.), 1970, 25–50), Dale Eickelmann (Eickelman, Dale. 1974. "Is there an Islamic City?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5: 274–94) and Janet Abu-Lughod (Abu-Lughod, Janet. 1980. "Contemporary Relevance of Islamic Urban Principles." *Ekistics* 47 (280): 6–10 and (Abu-Lughod, 1987, 155–176) did not discard the concept entirely but rather attempted to modify and refine it. Until recently, urban historians, geographers, architects and town planners have used and reproduced it.

68 (Hourani, Albert, and Stern, Samuel (eds.), 1970, 9–24.

69 (Abu-Lughod, 1987, 160–173).

70 Wirth, Eugen. 2000. *Die orientalische Stadt im islamischen Vorderasien und Nordafrika*. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 517–522.

71 Ammann, Ludwig. 2004. 'Privatsphäre und Öffentlichkeit in der muslimischen Zivilisation.' In *Islam in Sicht: Der Auftritt von Muslimen im öffentlichen Raum*, ed. Nilüfer Göle and Ludwig Ammann, Bielefeld: transcript, 93–95.

blind alleys and dead-end courts shared by the inhabitants of adjoining houses. Furthermore, Islamic Cities are described as lacking municipal organisation.

Since the nineteenth century, criticisms are directed at representations of the Islamic city as Other. Abu-Lughod, Raymond and Çelik identify the limitations of efforts to define urban form as a material expression of Islam.<sup>72</sup> In three insightful essays they trace this tendency to French Orientalist scholarship, particularly the work of William Marçais, Georges Marçais and Jean Sauvaget.<sup>73</sup> The attitudes represented in this body of Orientalist scholarship are celebrated and summarised by architectural historian Gustave von Grunebaum.<sup>74</sup> Commenting on the tendency to represent the Islamic city with reference to French scholarship on North Africa, Çelik identifies “the fallacies of orientalist scholarship.”<sup>75</sup> Similarly, Raymond identifies the shortcomings of prominent Orientalist studies that define the city in terms of cultural stereotypes or faith, challenging “efforts to define an urban ‘doctrine’ from the fundamental texts of Islam.”<sup>76</sup> He argues that representations present the Islamic city as timeless and incapable of development. Raymond extends his criticism to studies that emphasise the formal hierarchy of the city consisting of religious institutions (mosque and madrasa) attached to the bazaar and distinct from residential quarters.<sup>77</sup>

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- 72 (Abu-Lughod, Janet. 1987, 155–176); Raymond, André. 1994. “Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views,” *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 21, no. 1: 3–18; Çelik, Zeynep. 1999. “New Approaches to the Non-Western City,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58, no. 3 (September): 374–81.
- 73 Marçais, William. 1961. “L’Islamisme et la Vie Urbaine.” In *Articles et Conférences*, Paris: Editions Adrien-Maisonneuve; Marçais, Georges. 1954. *L’Architecture Musulmane d’Occident*. Paris: Arts et Metiers Graphiques; Marçais, Georges. 1957. “L’Urbanisme Musulman,” in *Mélanges d’Histoire et d’Archéologie de l’Occident Musulman*, 2 vols. Algiers: Imprint Officielle, and Sauvaget, Jean. 1934. “Esquisse d’Une Histoire de la Ville de Damas,” *Revue des Études Islamiques* 4.
- 74 Grunebaum, Gustave von. 1961. “The Structure of the Muslim Town,” In *Islam: Essays on the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 141–158.
- 75 Çelik, Zeynep. 1999. “New Approaches to the Non-Western City,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58, no. 3 (September): 375.
- 76 Raymond, André. 1994. “Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views.” *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 21, No. 1: 16. For further discussion of representation of Muslim cities as an expression of a discrete Islamic culture and society, see the introduction to AlSayyad, Nizar. 1991. *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- 77 The limits of representing an Islamic city typology, especially in the Mediterranean region and the Indian subcontinent, are further identified in *The Islamic City: A Colloquium*, edited by Albert Hourani and Samuel Stern, Samuel.

## 5 The Modernist Hybrid City

After India's independence, its partition and the ensuing movement of refugees across borders, the foundation of the nation, the allocation of cities to Pakistan, nostalgia, ambitions, imaginations and their paradoxes and struggles were all part of the plans and planning of Chandigarh. The national aspirations for the new city represented in Jawaharlal Nehru's (prime-minister 1947–1964) idea of India, divided between Hinduism and Islam, and the notions of modernity fostered by Punjabi officials had a profound impact on the design of Chandigarh.

Modernity, for Nehru, meant the hostile effort to catch up with the West. New cities, hydroelectric dams, steel and iron plants, were the order of his rule. Nehru's vision of 'new' India presented the opportunity of merging spiritual heritage with the 'scientific temper' of the West.<sup>78</sup> Nehru was certainly not limited to learning from India alone. Nehru placed himself within a hybrid and liminal thought in relation to the postcolonial context. He believed in India's aptitude to learn from others and to 'Indianize' elements and features borrowed. In Chandigarh, Nehru was in search of a way to renew it and use it to display an Indian modernity different from and free of colonial versions.<sup>79</sup> The Modernism of the postcolonial Nehruvian state was the mutual response of the colonized, the self-empowering act of dissolving contradiction by simultaneously rejecting and appropriating the unsolicited gift of colonization. Modernization, thus, was a mimicry of the colonial project. It is within this hybridity that Chandigarh was conceived by Nehru.

Two plans were prepared for the city, the initial awarded to American architects Albert Mayer and Mathew Nowitzki in 1950 and the subsequent supported by Pierre Jeanneret, Maxwell Fry, and Jane Drew. Le Corbusier was the author of the Master Plan, the Capitol complex, where the Secretariat, Legislative Assembly, High court and the unbuilt Governor's residence were located. He also set the guidelines for the commercial centre, built a museum and a school of arts. Chandigarh was formally inaugurated on October 7, 1953.<sup>80</sup> Beyond the Master Plan, the city's claim to modernity was settled through appearances: it could not look colonial, could not look Indian, could not look Hindu or Islamic, but had to look modern. The city is in some parts conceived

78 Chatterjee, Suparna and Kenny, Judith. 1999. "Creating a New Capital: Colonial Discourse and the Decolonization of Delhi." *Historical Geography* 27, 88.

79 Khilnani, Sunil. 1997. *The Idea of India*. New Delhi: Penguin, 130.

80 Kalia, Ravi. 1999. *Chandigarh: The Making of an Indian City*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 44.

as in a modern Garden city mould, and in others in one that is Orientalist and rural.

The planning of Chandigarh represents many other voices beyond Islamic and exclusive praise of Le Corbusier only echoes the scarcity of the discourse and its narrators. It is much more uncanny, hybrid, liminal, disorderly and diverse than its architectural discourse suggests. The Corbusier plan is a hybrid map of contested Hindu and Islamic imaginations. In a conference in Chandigarh in 1995, the postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak, made a case for colonial architecture free from the unhappy memory of colonization. She argued that the “mundane movement of the European colonies upon Indian soil [...]. The contemporary hybrid Indian, a product like us of history, has internalized the idiom of minor colonial architecture now.” In another publication Spivak states: “the invitation of Le Corbusier was part of that [...] triumphalist construction of the new nation as an hybrid. It is an irony that that planned hybridity did not work because of a failure in the transfer of the idiom (not a failure of translation).”<sup>81</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

The examples offered in this chapter illustrate that Middle East and Asian cities throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries were shaped by decisions “in-between” places that produce hybridization of identities: “it is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.”<sup>82</sup> Foreign and local architects should hence share not only the credit for the landmarks but also the criticism for the general urban outcomes. Foreign architect designs are marked by hybridity and assess the different qualities and ideologies of each specific example of architecture in which hybridity is manifest. Correspondingly significant is the negotiation between collaborating foreign architects and citizens, the sincere attention to local climates and architectural forms for those who could use their ethnographic expertise and cosmopolitan integrity to generate hybridity.

We think that hybridisation does not occur once and for all but is a continuous process. Bhabha, claims that “all forms of culture are continually in a

81 Spivak, Gayatri. 2019. “City, Country, Agency.” *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 16, no. 2: 59–85.

82 (Bhabha, 2004, 1).

process of hybridity.”<sup>83</sup> The corollary is that the boundaries between hybridity and tradition, change and continuity, may dissolve.<sup>84</sup> It is an uneven, unidirectional, and forced hybridity that replicates the prevailing hierarchies of Modernity in the Islamic built environment.

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