

AN INTERVIEW WITH Prof. ANTHONY D. KING  
ON "SPACES OF GLOBAL CULTURES: ARCHITECTURE, URBANISM,  
IDENTITY" (1)

(1) Realized on electronic mail, 26-28 November; 1-3 December; 14-15 December 2005.

**top right:** 'Proposed bungalow at Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Architect A. Jessop Hardwick' (*Builders' Journal* 1903); p.181.

1. *Dear Anthony D. King! Your new book Spaces of Global Cultures: Architecture, Urbanism, Identity which was published in 2004 and reprinted this year, is like a 'decipher of the nomenclature' regarding supra-discursive formations of the last 100 years in the world: modernity and modernization, the suburban and the urban, the modern and the postmodern, the colonial and the post-colonial, the imported and the exported, the global and the globalized, the new names of the ethnoburb and the globurb... Not only the etymology of these as words, but their cultural burden, the story of their existence in time and space is given throughout the pages in a comprehensive manner, just the 'Kingian' way. The book itself is a proof of the reflection of the 'time-space compression' (in the way Harvey names) on our cultural and intellectual reading of the contemporary and 'homogenized' world. Your style is very keen and critical of the Anglo-American, Eurocentricist and/or capitalist-hegemonic ways of perception. But, as the lines you have quoted from Kusno imply (p. 86), have not "...studies centered on European imperialism*

*themselves 'colonized' ways of thinking about colonial and postcolonial space?" What can be done to resist demarcations of the 'centre' which repeatedly reproduces itself through discursive formations in even scientific studies with self-aware positions?*

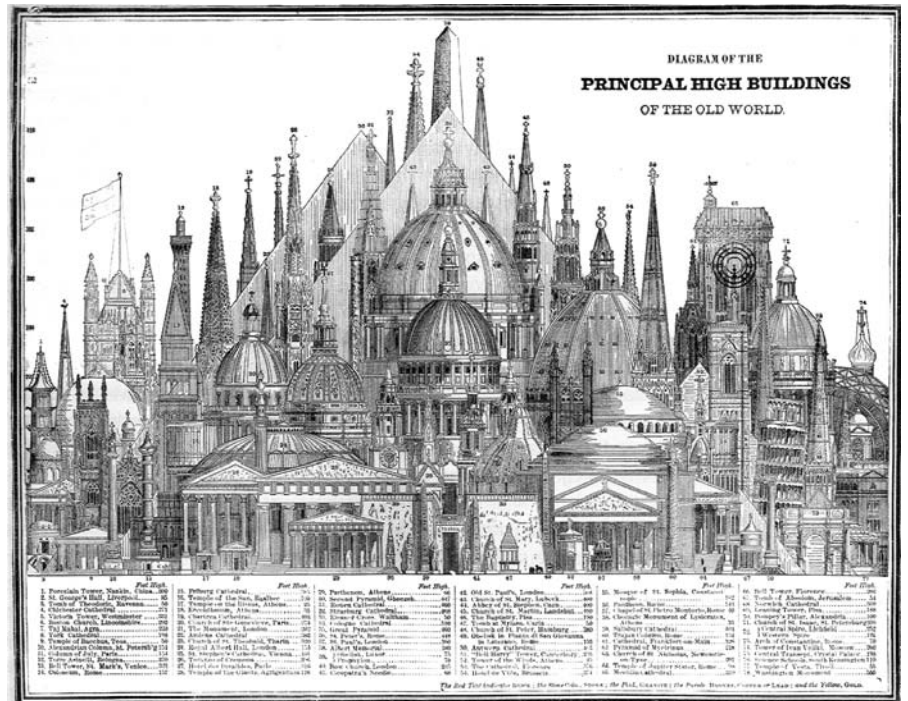
These are profound and also provocative comments, revealing a much deeper reading of the book than I'd imagined! The first thing I'd ask is whether, looked at historically, these really are the key terms of the last 100 years, and whether others have been omitted. Ever since I lived in India and became intrigued by the relationship between language and space (discussed in 'The Language of Colonial Urbanization' in *Colonial Urban Development* (1976)) I've found language (including nomenclature, terminological systems, linguistic classification) a fascinating and invaluable way of trying to understand built and spatial environments; everything from simple etymology to ethnosemantics. In the book, I've again cited Edward Sapir's comment that 'no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing

ANTHONY D. KING

**SPACES OF GLOBAL CULTURES:  
ARCHITECTURE, URBANISM, IDENTITY,**

(London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis) 2005, xix +256 pp.

ISBN 0-415-19620-5



'Principal High Buildings of the Old World'  
1889: *The People's Illustrative and  
Descriptive Atlas of the World* 1889; p.8.

the same social reality' (p. 141). In *The Bungalow* (1984) I tried looking at some of the new urban terminology developed from the late 19th century (pp. 245-6). There's immense scope for someone's PhD to investigate how, when, and under what conditions, specific terms (frequently, though not always, in English) get incorporated into the everyday vocabulary of other languages.

What you suggest, here, however, is a much bigger and momentous project, which goes beyond knowing how language conceptualises the urban but rather how it imagines and represents the world.

How can we resist the demarcations of the 'centre' and counter 'colonized' ways of thinking about colonial and postcolonial space? Someone has written about the 'hermeneutics of suspicion'. We should always be aware of simply adopting the conceptual language of others, especially where English is not our first language. Sapir's comment also reminds us that social realities vary according to class, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, region, among other factors...

**2.** *The 'colonial space' need not entail colonization and colonizers in the literal sense: this, you make explicit in the*

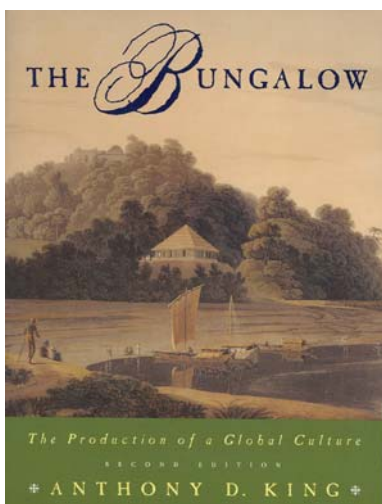
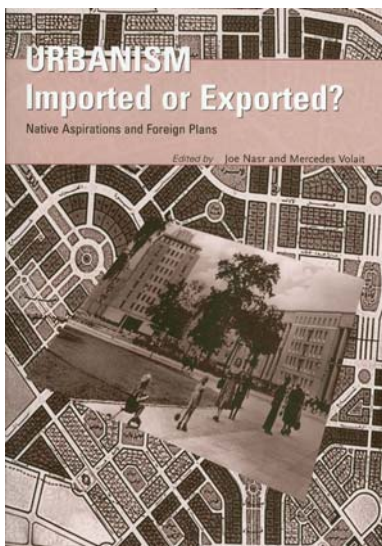
*discussions. Beyond the historic evolution of the word, your position sparkles new ways of approach to 'modernism' and 'modernity' even in Turkey, where the real debate is taken to be in the cultural arenas of 'modernity/traditional' and 'Western/Eastern' dichotomies. Would you elaborate on this.*

My response to this question follows from the previous one. We don't need a course in poststructuralism to question these binary classifications between new/old, West/East, modernity/tradition and the rest. Some good linguistic ethnography could tell us how different classes, ethnicities, ages, genders – in different countries of the world – speak about what we (academics) refer to as 'modernity and tradition'.

**3.** *As emphasized through your previous works also, 'how the colonizer colonizes' has been an extensive theme of focus, whereas the way 'how the colonized receives the colonizer' is rarely studied. Do you think there has been extensive research in this direction during the last decade, and would you elaborate on this more, to brief your future readers? What would you recommend the researchers on the periphery to do, in order to widen this strain of works?*

(2) Joe Nasr and Mercedes Volait, eds. (2003) *Urbanism: Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and Foreign Plans*, John Wiley and Sons Ltd., London.

(3) Anthony D. King (1984) *The Bungalow. The Production of a Global Culture*, London and New York, Routledge and Kegan and Paul, 1984. Oxford University Press, 1995.



There are now a number of published studies which have addressed this issue, in some cases, questioning the entire framework of the so-called 'colonial encounter' in the terms of 'colonizer and colonized.' The essays in Nasr and Volait's edited book (2), *Urbanism: Imported or Exported. Native Aspirations and Foreign Plans* (2003) addressed this issue as also do other papers in *City and Society*, 12,1, 2000 (both publications from a 1998 conference). Kusno's *Behind the Postcolonial* on architecture and political cultures in Indonesia (2000), Hosagrahar's *Indigenous Modernities* (2005) on the transformation of 'old Delhi' between the mid 19th and 20th centuries, and Chattopadhyay's *Representing Calcutta* (2005) must also be mentioned. These, and other studies, have all been undertaken by scholars from what you refer to as 'the periphery,' often studying in the West but providing critiques of earlier studies of 'colonial cities' (mostly undertaken by Euro-Americans and often, as Kusno points out, within an 'imperial' or Euro-American frame). They are the works of scholars familiar with indigenous languages, archives, cultural and political histories, adopting their own critical positions and contesting theoretical models dominant in the West. However, the big question here concerns the theoretical/historical narrative and framework within which such studies are located. Are they studies in the 'development of national identity,' 'modernization,' 'postcolonial resistance,' 'alternative modernities,' all of these or none of them?

4. "Global Consumer Culture as Americanization", makes one recall the discussions about 'popular culture' and 'mass culture' during the 1970s, where the first signs of collective and intellectual awareness towards 'cultural imperialism' culminated. One thinks that these labels at the outset were 'enunciations' within the context of the 'status quo', representative of the power of the centre. If this is so, one should keep alert about the changing positions of subjects, reflected on the reception of objects of the discourse?

If I understand this question correctly, it raises similar issues to those I've just mentioned in the previous response, namely, what are the dominant

discourses which prescribe the intellectual, moral and, for some, spiritual parameters within which we, as intellectual workers, actually labour? Who determines these and where do they come from? What are the objects of that discourse and what are the criteria by which these objects are defined? More concretely, how have these parameters been changed by the information and communications revolution in recent years, by the impact of knowledge of global concerns about poverty, ecology, sustainability, peace? In this context, how do we choose the objects of our concern?


5. Your brilliant book about the Bungalow years ago (3) has substantial reverberations and impact on the understanding of the indigeneous/exogeneous and the global/local, which triggered several other studies by researchers. Do you have a work in progress compatible and similar to this? Would you pave the way for others, suggesting traces and routes?

There are endless possibilities for undertaking 'globally oriented' studies of particular building types which, for those who know Tom Markus's book, *Buildings and Power* (1993) or my edited volume on *Buildings and Society* (1980), have immense potentiality for examining, concurrently, processes of social, cultural as well as spatial and architectural change. There is an urgent need for serious critical studies to be undertaken on the conditions, interests and connections responsible for the near global spread of such typologies as the conference hotel, shopping mall, stadium, but also older typologies, such as churches, temples and mosques.

I would see research on these topics as being \*primarily\* sociological/anthropological in the first instance, looking at the way social institutions change under different conditions, giving rise, first, to some kind of temporary accommodation and then to a space or building that is purpose-built. The hospice, a purpose-built space for the terminally ill, is a good recent example of the way previous arrangements for care provided in the family (and house), or hospital, is now increasingly commercialized or commodified. How these various buildings and institutions

*Beijing Dragon Villas*

## Pure American-Canadian Style BEIJING DRAGON VILLAS



"Phase I completed, visitors are welcome"

Leaving the crowded and noisy city, just twenty minutes' drive, you can get to the Beijing Dragon Villas; the beautiful American-Canadian style residents, with fresh air, broad lawns and the beauty of the nature. You are sure to be satisfactory to enjoy the leisure of life. An expo from 10th-15th of march 1994 will be held at the Dragon Villas. Luxury models will be for viewing and visitors are welcome!

**Reservation hot line:  
466 0088 ext. 1703, 1730.**

- \* Buyers of Phase One can move in before July 31, 1994.
- \* Deluxe villas built with huge investments.
- \* Profitable capital gain.
- \* Villas are ready for selling and leasing and visitors are welcome.
- \* Selling price for usable floor areas from US\$ 110 per square feet.
- \* Rental price for usable floor areas from US\$ 1.4 per square feet.
- \* Approximately 4,000 square feet private garden for free.
- \* More than US\$ 100,000 free decoration and filling.


**2% DISCOUNT DURING EXHIBITION PERIOD.**

JUST LIKE  
CALIFORNIA  
HILLS OF CALIFORNIA


JUST LIKE  
RICHMOND OF VANCOUVER

JUST LIKE  
BAYVIEW HILL OF TORONTO


JUST LIKE  
LONG ISLAND OF NEW YORK




Developer:  
Beijing Long Yuan Real Estate Development Co., Ltd.  
Beijing Sales Office:  
Room 1703, 6 Xin Yuan Nan Road, Beijing, China  
Tel: (86) 466-0088 Fax: (86) 466-2687




Sales Agents in Hong Kong:  
MIZUHO INVESTMENT LTD.  
Room 302, 18F, Sun Plaza, 296-297 Gloucester Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong  
Tel: (852) 839 5288 (8 Lines) Fax: (852) 873 2150



Project Management:  
First Pacific Devco (Hong Kong) Ltd.  
Beijing Long Yuan  
Real Estate Development Co., Ltd.





總行：上海南京路100號 電話：(86) 21 466 0088 傳真：(86) 21 466 2687  
北京分公司：北京朝陽門外大街138號 電話：(86) 10 646 0088 傳真：(86) 10 646 2687

Advertisement, *Chine Daily*, April 1994; p.118.

spread to, but also differ (both in form and use) in different parts of the world would tell us much about the economy, society, politics and culture of where they exist. I touched very superficially on the globalisation of the villa in a few pages of my *Spaces of Global Cultures* book, but this is another, highly relevant topic to address, given its inherent connection to processes of suburbanisation.

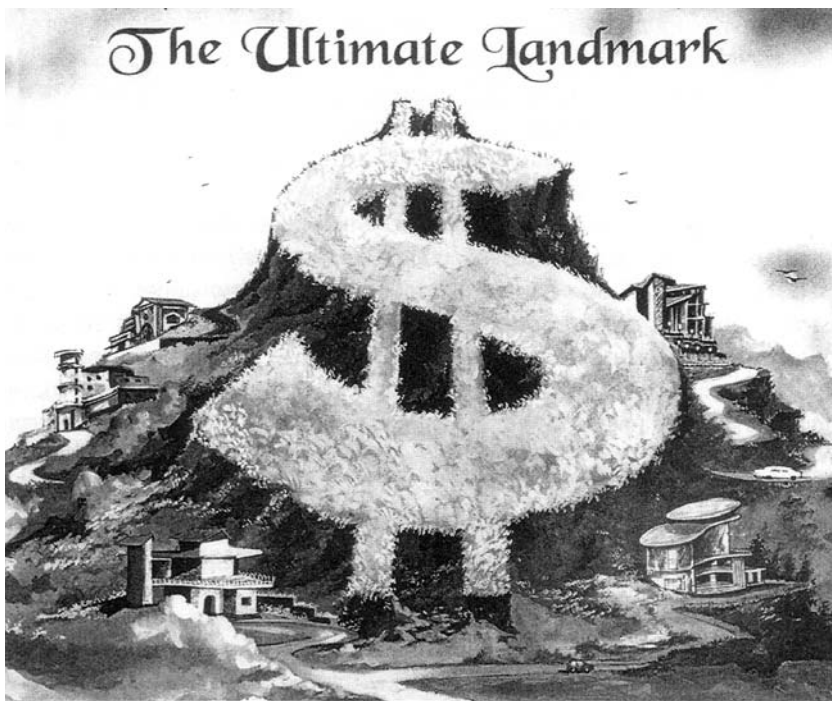
Obviously, the conditions for the globalisation of particular building types have changed enormously in recent decades, not least since the massive political changes after 1989. There are at least three studies I know of where scholars are examining the globalisation of architectural practice (geographer Peter Taylor in the UK, sociologist Leslie Sklair, also in the UK, and sociology PhD candidate, Xufei Ren at the University of Chicago). I also have a few slides taken of (often named) kiosks, in England, Germany, France, a particularly Turkish phenomenon, the

diasporic spread of which, and the conditions affecting this, would make an interesting study!

6. In *"Villafication: The Transformation of Chinese Cities"*, you have brought forward one of the issues to exemplify the dissemination of the historic building type, villa. Surely the Chinese case demonstrates the 'global homogenization thesis', as well as the 'flattening of local values and traditions', through very intricate processes. It is a problematic concern of preservation of the historic tissues, as well as a hegemonic imposition on the lifestyles. The political argumentation behind might have been implemented in diverse ways, as different authors argue (you give Bozdoğan, Ackerman, Archer and others, who explore past and present cases and theoretical positions); however, the present powerful dissemination seems to be backed up by the ideological and cultural spread of 'the anonymous customer', rather than being a consequence of imported-exported objects. The human beings getting flattened result in the 'anonymous customer', who is not only virtual, but also real; he/she is there in the market, purchasing possibilities the same way a broker does at the NYSE: the possible buy/and/sells define the market or the globe.

Although there is some truth in the 'homogenization thesis,' any familiarity with the idea (and varying forms of) the villa in, for example, Brazil, Italy, Turkey, the US, India, or Shanghai, or with its changing meaning in these and other societies over time, would show how very different these ideas and forms are. And while 'the flattening of local values and traditions' is a very powerful and also provocative phrase, it can also be countered by Roland Robertson's statement that globalization leads to 'an exacerbation of civilizational, societal and ethnic selfconsciousness.' Isn't the customer 'expanded' rather than 'flattened'? I wouldn't agree with the analogy between the NYSE broker and the customer/consumer. The first makes a decision principally and often solely on economic grounds: for the second, the decision is far more complex.

7. What I try to accentuate by the 'NYSE broker-anonymous customer' metaphor is the limitation of possibilities due to



**The Ultimate Landmark**

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**Dollar Hills** Soon the most exclusive address in Hyderabad. Where only a select few will enjoy this magnificent view from their dream houses.

**PRIVILEGED**  
**Dollar Hills.** Wide, black topped roads. Avenue Plantations, Underground cables for electricity, telephone, television connections, Childrens playground. Club with guest rooms, swimming pool, tennis, shuttle, badminton courts. Super Shoppe for daily needs.

**DOLLAR HILLS**  
**Hyderabad**

Figure 8.2.; p.136.

*the 'foresight' (or the 'nearsightedness') of the subject at/from the 'centre'. You are right that there is also an 'expansion'; but though you argue by "drawing attention to the socially exclusive conditions... and the very different circumstances in which buildings and environments are experienced by local people." (p. 224), would you not think that 'homegenization' is more visible and tangible from 'the local point of view'?*

It depends what you mean by 'local point of view.' We live these days in a world where there is a constant proliferation of images (TV, films, video, photographs, internet etc) and these images register on our conscious and subconscious selves. If we take the idea of a 'local point of view' quite literally, what we perceive as 'homogenisation' is also determined by the images we remember (as well as others which we occasionally forget). Moreover, as I indicate on the last line of Chapter 10, the meaning of 'visibility,' and the

conditions governing what we actually 'see' is also a very complex process.

8. *As you know, Cyprus was a colony of the British, taken over from the Ottoman Empire in 1914, after which expressive buildings to represent the British administration were realized. In Nicosia, Kyrinea, Famagusta, Larnaca, Lefke and other cities, 'housing with verandah' as civic buildings, still call for the closer reading of the researcher, along with several public buildings as persistent representatives of the Empire, all of which constitute a rich architectural heritage. So objects of colonialism and globalisation are not only objects of information through which we can 'read', but do constitute the very objects of historic preservation, which are usually (and numbly) overturned under ideologico-political concerns.*

All processes of historic preservation are affected by ideological-political concerns, even if they are often hidden. Preservation agendas are frequently determined by apparently narrow nationalistic criteria, which presumably proves how (subconsciously) conscious people are of transnational and global forces. Reading the built environment in terms of what is not present, of what has been erased, while a difficult exercise is also a productive one. Your mention of Cyprus is a reminder that colonial architecture is not only a matter of representation and power but also (with your reference to domestic verandahs) one of cultural behaviour and lifestyles.

9. *Your reference to the newspapers in Chinese distributed in the United States reminds me of the sources of information you refer to in 'Suburb/Ethnoburb/Globurb: The Making of Contemporary Modernities'. The variety of sources in diverse languages may form information islands for us, towards where we can hardly swim: In 2002, in my book Modernin Saati (The Hour of the Modern), I published an article about the historic (starting second half of the 19th century) vineyard houses in Anatolia ('Bağ Evi'nden Villa'ya', pp.119-141), focusing on the urban cases in Ankara, claiming that they were the genuine examples and followers of the villa. They were the satellite elements of the city as Ackerman claimed, they were*



'Beijing Dragon Villas', Beijing, China, 2002;  
p.124.

*dependent on the privileges of the city; representing the status of the owners as icons, with various compositions and coming together of the generic type and the generic farm-land; but they were all serving as homes of seasonal seclusion for especially the old, the very young and the female family members, as part of a cyclic function. The content of the information which would diversify our interpretation on the one hand; its being hidden within a language, on the other...*

This question returns us to issues about language and meaning. There are many cases in history where different societies or individuals have developed or invented social or technical innovations which, while appearing to be similar to those developed in other places elsewhere have none the less occurred quite independently, with no proven connection between them. Although the vineyard houses in Anatolia appear to share many of the same functional and spatial characteristics of the Italian villa (or structures derived from it found elsewhere) the fact that there's no connection in the nomenclature used to describe it is sufficient evidence that it has developed independently and is therefore not 'the same'.

The increasing demand for forms of global knowledge which will enable the identification of, and ultimately, respect for, local differences should generate much more collaborative research

between scholars with different language competences in order that they can gain access to these 'information islands' that you mention.

**10.** *According to the "Making of Contemporary Modernities", the suburb "offers a space of freedom, escape and fantasy." It is "(a) place for the consumption of the globally produced, locally assembled, supermalled, hypermarketed cornucopia of goods." (p.106) "Suburban centers are built with the names (and imagined architectural styles) of 'Trafalgar Square', 'San Francisco' and 'Piazza Venezia'" (p. 107). This chapter brings to mind the endless re-production of "places" in the last quarter of the 20th century: you may find buildings dressed as 'the Kremlin Palace', 'the Piazza Venezia' and 'the Topkapı Palace' as branches of chain hotels on the southern coasts of Turkey; resort towns and second housing are also commodifying what is genuine and what is of high quality.*

*What is the adventure of 'identity' in our age, 'identity' as an object of commodification; or, do you think it is worth writing the second volume as the 'Places of Global Cultures'?*

The idea of the 'adventure of identity' has a lot of potential. The supposed 'internationalisation' of buildings and places by naming, stylistic dressing and investment of capital from around the world is obviously related to strategies



Bungalow design for the suburbs, 'lately built in Sussex' (R.A. Briggs 1897); p.181.

of global marketing, but what else are its effects? Does it erase, transform or recreate ideas about the local? This is a topic worth investigating – but I'll leave the job of distinguishing places from among the spaces to someone else!

**11.** I quote from "Transnational Delhi Revisited": "...my aim is to ask how these different concepts and categories, imaginary as well as material, these different language as well as architectural and spatial worlds, are affecting processes of identity, as well as subject formation, as well, of course, as consumption." (p. 159) In a nutshell, you define your topic as well as your method!

But someone has still to do some empirical research into this!

Further: "What may, at the time, seem to be the 'smaller' histories, geographies and sociologies of, for example, individual families, households or communities, are also part of 'larger' histories of regions, nation states, and empires. We are the products of our circumstances." (p. 189) I think this is more than "serendipity" as substance, and would like to thank you once more!

**12.** 'The skyscraper as metaphor of modernity', as in the case of Ankara (as well as Skopje, Phillippepolis, and other Balkan cities), has now created its opposite after the September 11th, 2001, as you mention. The symbolism of tall buildings now demarcates hegemonic territories and disseminates hegemonic values about the 'high level' of

*technologic development and the empowerment of capabilities: fiscal richness, administrative qualities to organise, high standards to sustain... The Libeskind project to replace World Trade Centre in New York tries to achieve a 1776- foot-tall tower, 'to refer to the American independence' (p. 22, n.19). The developments in Dubai, ironically, are challenging 'the natural' with the capital coming from oil resources as a gift of nature: changing the coastline, modifying the topography and threatening the natural sea-life, but with help from the most developed architects, to whom you refer to as members of the 'Global Intelligence Corps' (p.21, n.13). The so-called 'Dubai Towers' in İstanbul, are imported as a symbol of Islamic capital to be erected in the 'laicist country', to empower a religious 'ideology'. Catered by the 'Global Intelligence Corps' again, it will represent not only being modernized, being globalized, being 'up-to-date', but through the transfer of capital, social, cultural, economic challenges will arise.*

Years ago, we had strolled together around the Citadel in Ankara, which was once the landmark for the extensive Anatolian topography for more than a thousand years, like several other cities. The quality was grasped by foreign city-planners as a 'modernized' landmark for the contemporary city of the 20th century, developing to be a Capital. The idea of the Crown of the City, or City Crown, by Carl Christoph Lörcher and by Hermann Jansen, in line with the works of Bruno Taut (die Stadtkrone),

*aimed to contribute to the quality of the historic settlement, reconciling it with the new, in serenity. Controversial with the superficiality of current tasks the space is deliberately given at the design desk (or, the political table), this old and timeless way of urban design still gives one a fresh point of view. Do you think the field of 'spatial politics' is being 'over-nourished'?*

In your comments about the iconic function of (overly) tall buildings, you highlight the different, and also competitive, way this iconicity is imagined. The logic for two recent cases of 'the world's tallest building' has been given, for the Taipei 101 tower, 'to put Taipei on the global map' and for the proposed new tower in Noida, New Delhi, according to the architect, 'to show the world that India can do it.' What does this tell us of people's perception of these two cities, or indeed, two countries? Further comment is unnecessary. If this current practice of building competitively tall buildings, is 'over-nourishing' the field of spatial politics, as you suggest, there's a good argument for replacing the old modernist dictum of 'less is more' with 'more is less.' What is certainly true is that architectural projects in the last twenty years have become increasingly globally competitive, although the history of tall buildings shows that this has been going on for hundreds of years. Maybe the new generation of spectacular urban developments will consist of huge holes in the ground.

**13.** *Explicit in the introductory notes of the "Architext" series you run with Thomas A. Markus, is the aim to 'bring the space of the built environment centrally into the social sciences and humanities, as well as bringing the theoretical insights of the latter into the discourses of architecture and urban design.' With the two coming books to complete the set to a dozen, what has the series achieved till now, is there an expected delimitation to complete a scope in mind, and which routes still need to be traced?*

There are currently nine (possibly ten) contracted titles at various stages of production, for publication in the next two or three years. According to our Routledge editor, the series has been

enthusiastically received by the architectural community. The main purpose of the series was to produce interdisciplinary, theoretically informed and intellectually challenging books for a readership in architecture and architectural education but which would also be of interest to readers in other fields. Most authors or editors of the eleven titles so far published have come from architecture but forthcoming books include authors from anthropology, sociology and literature. While the second aim is being achieved, therefore, we are still working at the first aim. Although the published titles have been well received in urban studies and geography we are endeavoring to get the series better known among scholars in other disciplines. In addition to being reviewed (as expected) in architecture and urban design journals, reviews have also appeared in journals of planning, sociology, critical theory, urban studies, art history, geography, urban history, women's studies, architectural history, German Studies, social studies in science. The first title, Kim Dovey's *Framing Places*, is being re-published in a second revised edition and the second, Rendell, Penner and Borden's *Gender Space Architecture* is in its third printing, selling across a number of disciplines.

There is no 'delimitation to complete a scope' in mind. The co-editors and publishers welcome new proposals, especially from authors and editors in the humanities keen to explore the themes of the series in a global and postcolonial context.

As for any larger 'achievements' of the series, we can only leave others to tell us!

**14.** *Thank you for sparing your time for the METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture. I hope we may expect more contributions from you in the near future.*

Ali CENGİZKAN