



Citadel, Erbil, Iraq, before
its restoration, ca. 2008.
Photo: Georg Gerster/
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Introduction: A Discussion on the Global and Universal

THE EDITORS

In the fall of 2014, *Grey Room* was presented with a provocative critique: an essay that found an unexpected epistemic affinity between humanitarianism and global history writing. A few months earlier, in June, the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had voted to place the Erbil Citadel on the World Heritage List. But this designation (of an ancient mud-brick tell at the heart of a living city in Iraqi Kurdistan) had a troubling backstory. Eight years earlier, Kurdish authorities had cleared the citadel of its inhabitants (many of them refugees) as a first step in transforming “the longest continuously inhabited site in the world” into a certified site of heritage. Did this case study point to a more pervasive contemporary condition? Are global history writing, humanitarianism, and the global heritage industry mutually enforcing regimes? Have the architectural monument, the quotidian shelter, and the individual refugee become products of now distinct conceptual frameworks?

Daniel Bertrand Monk and Andrew Herscher are both experts in the history of violence, architecture, and urban space. The critique they put forward is as strident as it is controversial, especially in its explicit and implicit dismissal of the authority of academic disciplines—from history to anthropology, from sociology to political science—to govern our understanding of humanitarian crises. As editors we felt that this critique, which Monk and Herscher identify as a negative dialectical view of these seemingly unrelated forces, could prove a useful starting point for a discussion across disciplines about the charged terms and analytical frameworks deployed in humanistic discourse today. We generated a list of possible respondents from across the range of fields most directly implicated in their critique. The initial provocation was circulated, responses were solicited, and the results of the exchange are presented in this issue, along with a summary response from the original provocateurs. Centered on present-day concerns surrounding politics and architecture (two of *Grey Room*’s organizing themes), this debate’s startling juxtapositions also provide a probing instrument for tackling the general question of universals and the particular question of global history writing.

In the view of the editors, at stake in the discussion are the meanings of a constellation of interrelated concepts—“human,” “humanism,” and “humanitarian” and “refugee”; “shelter,” “refuge,” “architecture”; “debt,” “credit,” “value”; and so on—

each of which takes on profoundly different functions when configured in starkly different syntaxes and in relation to differing bodies of evidence. Miriam Ticktin's response takes up this issue directly by questioning the historical horizons and the moral valences of humanitarianism. Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi is concerned to salvage the methodological and political efficacy of microhistories from the implications of Herscher and Monk's recursive revisionism. *Grey Room*'s own Lucia Allais addresses the fragmentation of architecture within a changing "international order" as a specifically institutional project, revealing the artificial limitations we so often impose on architecture as object and instrument of humanist inquiry. M. Ijlal Muzaffar diagnoses Herscher and Monk's deferral of any direct articulation of a politics of humanitarianism and focuses on their attention to a properly negative dialectic. But he then invites them to a "second step" in the process of criticism that would kick off a strategic collaboration toward constructing such a politics. Lastly, Mark Jarzombek and Swati Chattopadhyay each articulate (substantively different) methods for pressing forward with a sufficiently "global" architectural history to renovate a field that has been too passive in the face of an organizing geopolitics that has sunk beneath its own field of vision. Finally, Herscher and Monk reply to these multivalent responses. We see this not as a last word but as a renewed provocation for further debate on the relations between, and confluences of, disciplines and epistemes.

This last point is all the more important since, as the editors of a journal that is deeply engaged with both history writing and the theoretical legacy of poststructuralism, we recognize the complexity of an all-too-often underemphasized and multivalent debate regarding the concepts of facticity, metaphor, subject-medium-object relations, value, and indebtedness in a diverse array of contemporary theoretical and historiographic practices. How we historicize this period, and how many histories we put into play across disciplinary boundaries, has the highest possible stakes for our understanding of the very conceptual and political crises to which Herscher and Monk rightly call our attention.



Citadel, Erbil, Iraq,
ca. 2010. Photo:
Adam Jones/Wikimedia
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The New Universalism: Refuges and Refugees between Global History and Voucher Humanitarianism

DANIEL BERTRAND MONK AND ANDREW HERSCHER

In 2006, around 840 Iraqi refugee and internally displaced families were removed from the Erbil Citadel in Iraqi Kurdistan in order to transform the walled town into a heritage site and tourist destination.¹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) identified the citadel as “the longest continuously inhabited site in the world” and sponsored a project proposal for the site that included “a visitor-friendly area complete with hotels, restaurants, museums and galleries.”² To enact this plan, the Kurdistan Regional Government allocated each displaced family a 250-square-meter plot of land ten kilometers outside of Erbil along with \$4,000 as “self-help” to build a house. “The city also prevailed upon one family to accept compensation but stay in their citadel home to ensure there [would be] . . . no break in the site’s continuous habitation” and to maintain the water pumps necessary to mitigate chronic erosion problems there.³ In June 2014, after several years of restoration and reconstruction work undertaken by UNESCO and the Kurdish government’s High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization, UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee voted to place the citadel on the World Heritage List.⁴ In so doing, the committee inscribed Erbil within the logic of a global history that has always privileged the fruits of “trans-civilizational” encounters and sought to present these as evidence of a tacit cosmopolitanism guiding human affairs.⁵

That the citadel, which historically functioned as a place of refuge, could be institutionalized as historic architecture only by cleansing it of contemporary refugees—perhaps the only contemporary interpretive community who regarded the citadel in accordance with its actual status in the “slaughter-bench” of history—is more than a simple irony.⁶ *The removal of refugees from the citadel was not only consistent with current understandings of global history and humanitarianism alike; it was in a certain sense made self-evidently necessary by the current logic of each and begins to point to an unexamined relation between them.* Just as specific sites are now allocated to a mode of existence reserved for global history—with its attendant transformation into heritage and tourist destinations—so, too, are refugees relegated to a strangely new administered

sphere, one associated with bare life but also one in which locations matter—or exist—only by virtue of their proximity to infrastructures of voucher distribution and redemption, most recently in the form of automated teller machines, mobile telephones, point-of-sale machines, and credit card readers. The \$4,000 allocated to Iraqi refugee families in Erbil joins with other recent innovations in humanitarianism, such as the debit cards given to Syrian refugees to pay for subsistence needs and, in some instances, housing.⁷ With these variants of “voucher humanitarianism,” we witness a growing indistinction between the refugee camp and the world itself. A world in which refugees are simply given funds to house themselves (like the Section 8 residents who are the beneficiaries of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development voucher initiatives) is a place that can become a refugee camp, anywhere and everywhere . . . *except* in designated refuges like the Erbil *Qala’a*. Confirming a rationality distinct from reason, the funds generated by heritage tourism are expected to join a resource pool that will support, among the Kurdistan Regional



Template of a MasterCard ATM card issued to Syrian refugees in 2013, bearing the United Nations logo and labeled “Humanitarian Relief in Lebanon.”

Government’s many other endeavors, humanitarian assistance to non-Kurdish refugees displaced—in part—by heritage tourism itself.

Erbil consequently invites a meditation on the contemporary disaggregation of the refuge from the refugee—and not only at the level of practice. The coeval emergence and self-fashioning of global architectural history and voucher humanitarianism as autonomous cognitive regimes points beyond transformations in technocracy or the division of labor to suggest a new, and tacitly normative, configuration of the universal that can be read only paratactically: in the discontinuous continuity between a new ecumenism of place and the designated place of humanitarianism.

Humanitarian Architecture and Architectural Humanitarianism

This dissociation of refuge from refugee is remarkably new. In the modern history of architecture and modern humanitarianism alike, the continuity between these spheres was both registered and reinforced in a shared preoccupation with shelter. In their

most radical moments, each field sought its own self-abolition in the fulfillment of the other. Whatever else it aspired to attain, the architectural modernism of the interwar period also envisioned itself as a humanitarian practice of sorts, of necessity preoccupied with the unhoused and underhoused. Le Corbusier's Ville Contemporaine project (1922) was not simply an art-historical achievement but the demographic artifact of a war that resulted in the destruction of nearly 300,000 dwellings in France and rendered approximately 750,000 French families homeless.⁸ However modest by comparison, its realized correlates—the “red belt” around Paris and the achievements of Ernst May and Martin Wagner in Frankfurt and Berlin—correspond with ugly facts of wartime capital destruction. In France, Russia, and Germany real national wealth dropped 25–50 percent, and so—in the minds of many—the socialization and standardization of housing was required to contend with the continental scale of Haussmannization effected by the conflict itself.⁹ This imperative is even recorded in the charter of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), albeit obliquely. The La Sarraz Declaration of 1928 sought to respond to the related phenomena of capital losses and weak states by developing universal standards of shelter. The resulting efficiencies, it proclaimed, could “foster the maximum satisfaction of the needs of the greatest number.”¹⁰ In effect, architectural modernism was forced to contend with the results of a *mass war* directed against *mass subjects* and so applied itself to the question of *mass housing*. As it inexpertly experimented with paradigms such as the “minimum dwelling” (*Existenzminimum*) and the “new building” (*neues Bauen*), it expertly aimed at the extinction of (what the declaration derided as) an *academic* “Architecture” in order to fashion a technocracy capable of offering universal standards of shelter. This project had a reformist dimension: the preemption of revolution by the deployment of a deacademicized architecture, as Le Corbusier urged. And it also had a revolutionary aspect, according to which “architecture” itself would be subordinated to “building,” as in the case of Hannes Meyer's Bauhaus, or to “objects,” as in the case of some Soviet constructivists. But in either of these dimensions the humanitarian modernist project was not only timely but prescient. With more than 50 million people displaced after World War II, and a parallel history of decolonization in the immediate postwar period, architecture's humanitarian imperative continued, even as its previous notions of universal standards would themselves be questioned in the form of alternative modernisms, critical regionalisms, and other attempts to assert the claims of locality in tandem with the demands of “human security.”¹¹

Read against the grain, the history of humanitarianism has been, from the outset, a chronicle of the history of “the housing question.” Precisely as initiatives developed to ameliorate the suffering of victims of war—the events that led to the founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has

often inaugurated histories of global humanitarianism—the suffering of the working class in the industrializing cities of England was consistently theorized and imagined in terms of shelter. From Friedrich Engels’s *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*, through Charles Booth’s *Life and Labour of the People in London*, to B. Seebohm Rowntree’s *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, the European working class was subjected to proto-anthropologies already developed against colonized peoples, with concerns over social hygiene, morality, public health, and poverty manifested in investigations of housing conditions and calls for housing reform.¹² With the consolidation and expansion of humanitarianism as an explicit political project, especially after the Second World War, attention to the plight of the working class through the slums they inhabited developed into attention to the plight of the displaced through



Martin Wagner and
Bruno Taut. Horseshoe
Estate, Berlin, 1925–
1930. Photo: UNESCO.

the shelters they were provided. The mass displacements and forced migrations of the twentieth century thereby transformed the modern era into what Michel Agier calls a “century of camps,” during which expertise in the provision of temporary shelter and humanitarian government was increasingly forced to contend with the permanence of the impermanent.¹³ In so doing, the very categories by means of which humanitarianism has come to identify and classify the recipients of its efforts—“refugees,” “internally displaced people,” “asylum seekers,” and so on—were based on spatial conditions and circumstances of homelessness. The turn from “relief” to “development” in humanitarianism during the 1970s and 1980s only intensified the field’s focus on housing, with proper forms of residence posed as preventative measures against the threats and dangers of disaster.¹⁴

Yet the more recent history of those conjoined practices—

an architecture in abeyance and a humanitarianism in emergence—is one in which these practices would be disconnected, their disconnections made self-evident, and their relationship then reestablished in supplementary and compensatory forms. In architecture, these forms include the founding of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) specialized in postdisaster relief and reconstruction, concentrations and degree programs in architectural schools on “activism” and “social practice,” the focusing of design-build and community design initiatives on postconflict and postdisaster environments, and the emergence of “pro bono” and “public” architecture as professional subfields. In humanitarianism, these forms include the founding of intergovernmental organizations and NGOs focused on issues of shelter, the formulation of “minimum standards” and “best practices” for postdisaster shelter and settlement, the emergence of site planning and shelter provision as specialized areas of postdisaster and postconflict expertise, and the framing of global shelter as a problem for United Nations (UN)–sponsored institutions and initiatives such as UN-Habitat, the World Urban Campaign, and the World Urban Forum.

More important: the disconnection of refuge from refugee has been subsidized in emergent epistemes. The globalization of the history of architecture has played its own role in the dehumanitarianization of architectural construction. Following the intellectual project of global history in general, it sought to advance what William H. McNeill describes as an “ecumenical” approach premised upon “typologies” of civilizational interaction.¹⁵ On its own terms, this globalization in architectural history has displaced historical attention from the narrow and exclusive confines of “the West”—confines that were intricately tied to colonized and “non-Western” spaces—to presumably inclusive and heterogeneous arrays of “local” sites across the globe. The “global history” of architecture has thereby become a history through and across “localities”: a history of locations, of “local architecture,” of architecture “triangulated by the exigencies of time and location.”¹⁶ At the same time, such efforts to chasten the false or incomplete universals of the high modernist humanitarian architectural project by relativizing the “local” that it never took into account also constitute a species of reenchantment with the given world. In these efforts, the local reveals itself to be little more than a variant or exemplar of a globally salient phenomenon. (And here we see the first limnings of a new ecumenical notion of the universal that is anything but ecumenical or universal.) Whether the objects of global histories of architecture are defined as—just to take a few recent examples—“significant symbolic monuments,” “monumental architecture,” or the products of historically and culturally specific divisions of labor between “architects, builders, and clients,” the turn toward global architectural history has been conjoined with the recuperation of architecture as that which is not reducible to “mere” refuge and must be scrupulously distinguished from it. Here, global archi-

tectural history reveals its sometimes disavowed intersection with UNESCO world history and world heritage, with the effort to escape Eurocentric, imperial, and/or culturally specific categories on methodological or theoretical levels accompanying or even driving the reinstantiation of such categories on descriptive or taxonomic levels.¹⁷ Scripted by global history, “local architecture” actually ratifies a universal canon of elites, and within this canon all manifestations, from settlement patterns to skyscrapers, can be subsumed by the same visual and textual techniques of representation—if not the same words, not least of which is *architecture* itself. Thus, if attention to “locality” has expanded the confines of an architectural history previously focused on “the West,” it has simultaneously *blurred* the universal claims to and of architecture posed by the same refugee for whom a humanitarian high modernist architecture sought to provide refuge. Global histories demand citadels without refugees.

Reciprocally, the globalization of humanitarianism has also played its own role in the dearchitecturalization of its own efforts. This globalization, premised on moving beyond the war-ravaged spaces of Europe to spaces of disaster across the world, accompanied if not directed a series of shifts toward a statist, developmental, modernizing form of humanitarian expertise: from responding to the effects of disasters to dealing with their putative causes; from providing relief after disasters to providing development aid as protection from disasters; from humanitarianism as nongovernmental “pastoral power” to humanitarianism as a component of state foreign policy and “empires of aid,” among many others.¹⁸ These shifts each contributed to humanitarianism’s increased investment in housing, with the housing standards and standardized housing of the camp furnishing ways to efficiently guide postdisaster and postconflict assistance and disaster prevention. At the same time, however, “locality” began to emerge as a synecdoche for the general critique of camp humanitarianism. On the one hand, the permanent impermanence of many camps—exemplified by the self-built structures of tin, adobe, and stone constructed within the tents provided to Palestinian refugees by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in Lebanon—transformed standardized refugee camps into singular settlements.¹⁹ On the other hand, the ambition to acknowledge the “agency” of aid recipients as coauthors or partners in disaster prevention and postdisaster recovery transformed the provision of standardized forms of shelter into locally based programs for shelter “self-help.”²⁰ The critique of locality has thereby led to still-emergent forms of voucher humanitarianism in which the spatial residence provided by the refugee camp is in the process of being replaced by debit cards, credit cards, and “mobile money” for housing allowances, and the camp’s spatial control is in the process of being replaced by biocontrols such as retinal scanning.²¹ In this information regime, the provision of architecture is considered unnecessary and inefficient and may well

Bourj el-Barajneh, a refugee camp in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, 2010. The camp was home to more than 28,000 Palestinian refugees as of 2013. Photo: Flickr user la_keine.

be becoming impossible. Thus, if attention to “locality” has expanded the confines of a humanitarian project previously focused on typified and universally applicable forms and practices of shelter, it has simultaneously *blurred* the universal claims to and of shelter posed by the same refugee for whom an architectural modernist humanitarianism sought to provide refuge. Humanitarianism requires refugees without citadels.

A New Universalism: Cosmopolitan “Right” and “Wrong”

In privileging the “local,” global history has denied modernism’s visions of the universal and in so doing bequeathed to the present the possibility of a world of refuges without refugees—an architecture without humanitarianism. Conversely, the coeval emergence of the biometrically singular *homo economicus* has bequeathed to the present the possibility of refugees without



designated refuges, a voucher humanitarianism without architecture. In effect, architecture and humanitarian practice have each embraced the “local” as a plenipotentiary of the particular and in so doing confirmed the status of the “local” as the instance of something else. Here, a perverse notion of the universal presents itself to view in the eradication of another. Because, while global history endows each historicized building with a status consistent with an expanded definition of architecture, and while global humanitarianism endows each assisted person with a status consistent with an imperiled population, buildings and people are being defined in ways more or less suitable for inclusion within given paradigms of classification or action. Every thing acquires near-monadological status, in principle, even as it is all the more relentlessly assimilated within *given* repertoires of action in practice. As spatial hierarchies, exclusions, and center-periphery relationships

collapse into global history and their human remainder are absorbed into a status quo qua disaggregated refugee camp, an enforced cosmopolitanism that conflates equality with fungibility presents itself as if it were the inexorable march of the World Spirit.

Posed as a triumph of the singular, this integration erases any words we might possess to describe the actual state of affairs. The more relentlessly a neglected architecture and suffering peoples are given privileged status as individuals, the more they are ruthlessly integrated within the course of a universal history in which they can attain no presence as anything other than instances of the priority given to the principle of the particular itself. In that integration, refuge and refugee progressively lose any status as anything other than the means to the end of that same integration. With this loss, refuges or refugees will no longer *be*, and as they disappear so, too, will any consciousness of the fact that the demand for a relation between shelter and the displaced persists. By contrast, the forms of existence that found no representation in prior knowledge regimes will be—at least—preserved negatively through that which could not be integrated into them.

Postscript

While this essay was being written, political violence in northern and western Iraq displaced hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, many of whom sought refuge in the seeming or relative safety of Erbil. No refuge was on offer at the Erbil Citadel, where the crisis instead manifested as a threat imperiling a “historic monument” nominated for UNESCO’s World Heritage List.²² Nevertheless, on August 8, 2014, Erbil’s governor, Nawzad Hadi, estimated that almost half a million displaced people were inhabiting the city. “According to Erbil’s tourism authority, [these people] can be found anywhere in the city with room for them, from hotels, public venues, churches and mosques, to cultural centers and parks.”²³ With their occupation of Erbil, the displaced refused the disaggregation of refuge and refugee advanced by contemporary knowledge regimes and offered a rebuke to the new universalism. Demanding that refuges shelter refugees, they gave truth to the lie of the trade-off we have been describing in which a finance-based humanitarianism characterized by efficiency, flexibility, and, perhaps most important, seemingly global capacity has replaced the direct provision of shelter.

Notes

1. The inhabitants of Erbil Citadel included Kurdish internally displaced persons who fled to Erbil in the 1970s and 1980s from rural villages under attack by Saddam Hussein's government; and Turkomen refugees who fled to Erbil from Kirkuk after the 2003 U.S. invasion. See Ivan Watson, "Kurds Displaced in Effort to Preserve Ancient City," NPR.org, 4 February 2007, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7133379#7140666>; and Sarah Keeler (University of Kent, Department of Anthropology) to authors, email, 21 July 2014.

2. UNESCO Office for Iraq, "Revitalization Project of Erbil Citadel," <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/iraq-office/culture/erbil-citadel/>.

3. Associated Press, "Rescuing Erbil's Citadel Offers a Beacon of Hope for Iraq," *E Kurd Daily*, 24 January 2008, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2008/1/independentstate1933.htm>.

4. Judit Neurink, "New Addition to UNESCO World Heritage List: Erbil Citadel," *Rudaw*, 23 June 2014, <http://rudaw.net/english/culture/23062014>.

5. Peter Fritzsche, "Global History and Bounded Subjects: A Response to Thomas Bender," *American Literary History* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 284.

6. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1991), 21.

7. Steven A. Zack, "The Humanitarian Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis Must Not Ignore the Private Sector," *Overseas Development Institute*, 11 November 2013, <http://www.odi.org/comment/7979-private-sector-humanitarian-syria-aid>.

8. Jay Winter, "Demography," in *A Companion to World War I*, ed. John Horne (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 248–62. As the director of the civil affairs office of the Red Cross in Paris noted, "there were refugees everywhere. It was as if the entire world had to move or was waiting to move." Peter Gatrell and Phillipe Nivet, "Refugees and Exiles," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War I*, vol. 3, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 186. See also Homer Folks, *The Human Costs of the War* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1920).

9. Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison, *The Economics of World War One* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 31.

10. CIAM, "La Sarraz Declaration (1928)," trans. Michael Bullock, in *Programs and Manifestoes of Modern Architecture*, ed. Ulrich Conrads (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 110.

11. The term *human security* emanates from recent critiques of hegemonic security paradigms. Whereas the latter have treated the state as the referent of security at the expense of populations, *human security* corresponds with the universalization of individuals' claims to protection—including the right to refuge. We therefore juxtapose these human security arguments with claims for regionally specific identity claims—that is, with arguments about "locality" that are in themselves now universal. See Derek Reveron and Kathleen Mahoney-Norris, *Human Security in a Borderless World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2011).

12. Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. W.O. Henderson and W.H. Chaloner (1845; Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1958); Charles Booth, *Life and Labor of the People in London* (1892–1897; New York: A.M. Kelley, 1969); and B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (London: Macmillan, 1903).

13. As described by Michel Agier, "If the 20th century in Europe was the 'century of camps,' what is happening on the world scale today is the extension and greater sophistication of various forms of camps that make up a mechanism for keeping away undesirables and foreigners of all kinds—refugees, displaced, 'rejected.'" Michel Agier, *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*, trans. David Fernbach (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2011), 3–4. See also Étienne Balibar, *Politics and the*

Other Scene, trans. Christine Jones, James Swenson, and Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2002); and Étienne Balibar, *We the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, trans. James Swenson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

14. Fred Cuny, *Disasters and Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

15. William H. McNeill, "The Changing Shape of World History," in "World Historians and Their Critics," special issue, *History and Theory* 34, no. 2 (May 1995).

16. Kathleen James-Chakraborty, *Architecture since 1400* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), xvii; and Francis D.K. Ching, Mark M. Jarzombek, and Vikramaditya Prakash, *A Global History of Architecture* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2007), xii.

17. The authors of *A Global History of Architecture* pose this reinstantiation as a contingent matter: "we have only dealt with large or significant symbolic monuments: the traditional objects of academic scrutiny. We have not painted a picture of the historical development of vernacular and other non-monumental architecture, such as the domestic space. This is not because we do not recognize the importance of the latter but simply because we have used the category of monumental architecture as one of the constraints by which we have delimited the boundaries of this book." Ching, Jarzombek, and Prakash, xii. For us, by contrast, the defining of constraints and delimiting of boundaries are precisely what are at stake here.

18. See Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

19. See Romola Sanyal, "The Work of Exile: Protracted Refugee Situations and the New Palestinian Normal," in *The Post-Conflict Environment: Investigation and Critique*, ed. Daniel Bertrand Monk and Jacob Mundy (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 135–57.

20. See, for example, *Beyond Shelter after Disaster: Practice, Process, and Possibility*, ed. David Sanderson and Jeni Burnell (New York: Routledge, 2013).

21. For technical descriptions of what we term "voucher humanitarianism," see, for example, Paul Harvey, *Cash and Vouchers in Emergencies* (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, 2005); and Gabrielle Smith, Ian Macauslan, Saul Butters, and Mathieu Trommé, *New Technologies in Cash Transfer Programming and Humanitarian Assistance* (London: Cash Learning Partnership, 2011).

22. Sarah Cascone, "Are More Monuments under Threat from ISIS?" *Artnet News*, 8 August 2014, <http://news.artnet.com/art-world/are-more-monuments-under-threat-from-isis-75383>.

23. Daishad Abdullah, "Erbil: From Tourist Playground to Refugee Haven," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 8 August 2014, <http://www.aawsat.net/2014/08/article55335175>.

Humanitarianism's History of the Singular

MIRIAM TICKTIN

In “The New Universalism” Daniel Bertrand Monk and Andrew Herscher bring together global history and global humanitarianism to argue the emergence of a new (perverse) universal singular—a monadological refugee and form of refuge that threaten to efface both. By putting shelter and displacement side by side, they insightfully point us to different global patterns, such as the turn to the principle of the particular. Monk and Herscher read these patterns against the grain, offering us—almost in passing—a new history of humanitarianism.

The usual story attributes the start of contemporary humanitarianism to Henry Dunant in 1863 and his attempt to civilize warfare by providing aid on the battlefield. This resulted in the creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1863 and the Geneva Conventions in 1949, commonly known as the laws of war. Humanitarianism later expanded to include not just zones of conflict but responses to natural disasters. Monk and Herscher, however, tell us that humanitarianism was from the outset about shelter and that we cannot understand humanitarianism without taking seriously the spatial conditions of homelessness. This provocative idea—while immensely compelling—raises several questions.

I want to suggest that humanitarianism is not actually what Monk and Herscher, despite their innovative approach, claim it to be. I say this not to undermine their argument but to show how it could be made more powerful by moving beyond nostalgia for a particular humanitarian moment. I will propose three arguments to complicate Monk and Herscher's account. First, humanitarianism is not the same as modernist forms of care such as the welfare state. Humanitarianism responds in many ways to the loss of modernist ideals and politics. Second, as just one illustration of its difference from forms of modernist care, humanitarianism's investment in the category of humanity has always been grounded in the protection of exceptional, suffering individuals, not in care for the masses. Third, while the more recent turn to voucher humanitarianism draws on neoliberal technologies, it does not create but simply *continues* an extant focus on individuals. Understood in this context, this new kind of humanitarianism may nevertheless offer less-patronizing and less-violent ways of governing.

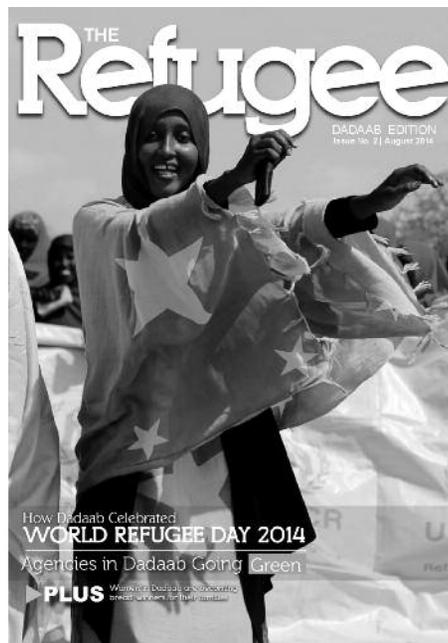
Let me turn to the first point. Even if we agree with Monk and Herscher's important argument that humanitarianism is always also preoccupied by the question of shelter, we must ask if all forms of care for or aid to the suffering or neglected should be considered “humanitarian.” The kinds of action

Monk and Herscher refer to—particularly those that addressed the suffering of the working class in industrializing English cities and those that attended to the working class by focusing on questions of slums—might be better described as part of the larger “government of the social.”¹ That is, these forms of care that resulted in mass housing (and architectural modernism) were part of the invention of the social through techniques such as social hygiene, public health, and moral reform. They targeted, governed, and cultivated masses and turned them into a national *population* in an attempt to counter the self-interest of the modern, economic subject while leaving the economic system intact. Government of the social worked to keep the nation together, as “society,” while simultaneously enabling economic practices that worked to pit people against one another.² Novel technical practices of care managed the newly identified “social” needs of the population by marking each problem as discrete—health or the regulation of housing—and addressing them administratively, each with its own set of experts: psychologists, social workers, public health workers, architects, teachers, and so on.

While humanitarianism is descended from government of the social, it is not identical to it. That is, humanitarianism enacts its own form of government, drawing on the techniques developed through government of the social, including a central role for moral sentiment, while simultaneously rejecting the idea of bureaucratized charity. The “new humanitarianism” of the 1970s (developed by Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF]/Doctors Without Borders and now the dominant approach to humanitarianism in the contemporary world) looked instead to emotive responses, not rational or institutionalized ones.³ While care is central to this form of government, these forms of care produce and protect not society (or the social) but a concept of universal “humanity.” They often fill in gaps in social services in the absence of a state or governing body, but they do this only in the context of emergency and only for those excluded from state care. That is, they can provide care only in very limited situations. Their care is of the temporal present—beyond that, no promises are made, no long-term human condition supported. Similarly, they do not purport to provide long-term housing. While humanitarianism has morphed in the last decade, it is nevertheless still distinguished (especially from other forms of doing good, such as development or human rights) by its particular focus on crisis and emergency. Humanitarianism has no long-term plan to address inequality.

Herscher and Monk understandably mourn a form of collective care, one wherein shelter was built for the masses, and they mourn this as a loss of a particular humanitarian moment. While a shift away from care and shelter for the masses has undoubtedly occurred, this loss coincided with the decline of the welfare state in the Global North and the decreasing importance of technologies of the social. The rise of humanitarianism already marked that moment of loss.

Second, while humanitarianism is fundamentally about the category of humanity, it is characterized by a tension between a focus on the exceptional individual and a collective humanity. Humanity is accessed and treated through individual, suffering bodies, even as it is also figured or imagined en masse, particularly in the Global South.⁴ Humanitarianism is practiced on humanity conceived of as a set of singular individuals facing exceptional circumstances. So, when Monk and Herscher suggest that a shift from a concern with the masses to a triumph of the singular has occurred—a shift in humanitarianism as much as architecture—I wonder whether this is actually something new. We need only think of the classic humanitarian subject: the refugee. As Hannah Arendt wrote in 1951 in her classic chapter on “The Decline of the Nation State and the End of the Rights of Man,” asylum as a category was always only meant for the exceptional cases, never for the masses. As she states, “the



Cover of *The Refugee* magazine, Dadaab [Kenya] edition, no. 2 (August 2014), featuring “A woman dancing at the World Refugee Day celebrations in Ifo camp.” Photo: Kepha Kiragu for UNHCR.

trouble arose when it appeared that the new categories of persecuted were far too numerous to be handled by an unofficial practice destined for exceptional cases.”⁵ Refugee laws stipulate that those who claim asylum must demonstrate both that their persecution is due to their membership in a particular social group and that their case is exceptional.

In thinking about the emotions that inform and undergird humanitarianism—the two most important arguably being compassion and pity—sociologist Luc Boltanski also draws on Arendt to argue that compassion is directed toward particular individuals, particular suffering beings, without seeking to develop the capacity for generalization. Compassion is actualized only when those who do not suffer come face to face with those who do.⁶ In parsing these emotional logics, Boltanski also points out that the subjects of humanitarianism are at once

projects and right-wing ideologies.⁹ In the case of refugees, our only option is to turn to the specific context of each instance of voucher humanitarianism to determine whether it should be seen as part of a conservative neoliberal political future or as one that offers more dignity to the refugees. That is, does it enable them to participate in larger polities instead of being imprisoned in camps? Does it give them the means to obtain what they themselves deem absolutely necessary, instead of having to rely on standardized humanitarian kits developed in foreign locales? Refugee camps can be places of extreme violence, hierarchy, and dehumanization, so we need to think carefully about when and under what conditions we want to preserve their architecture.

Humanitarianism has always been saddled with the problem of the singular. If we want to follow the powerful and thought-provoking critique of neoliberalism that Monk and Herscher are offering by reading global history alongside global humanitarianism, we should look well beyond humanitarianism and not try to recuperate its earlier days.

Notes

1. Jacques Donzelot, “The Mobilization of Society,” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991), 169–80.

2. Giovanna Procacci, “Sociology and Its Poor,” *Politics and Society* 17, no. 2 (1989): 115–62.

3. On its way to becoming the dominant form of humanitarianism, MSF was gradually institutionalized and bureaucratized. See Peter Redfield, *Life in Crisis: The Ethical Journey of Doctors Without Borders* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013). This was called the “new humanitarianism” because it sought to distinguish itself from the ICRC. One of the ways it did so was by insisting on the duty to bear witness. See also Peter Redfield, “A Less Modest Witness,” *American Ethnologist* 33, no. 1 (2006): 3–26.

4. As Liisa Malkki argued in 1996, refugees, especially African refugees, are figured as “a ‘sea’ or ‘blur of humanity’”—as “a spectacle of a ‘raw,’ ‘bare humanity.’” See Liisa Malkki, “Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization,” *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 3 (1996): 387.

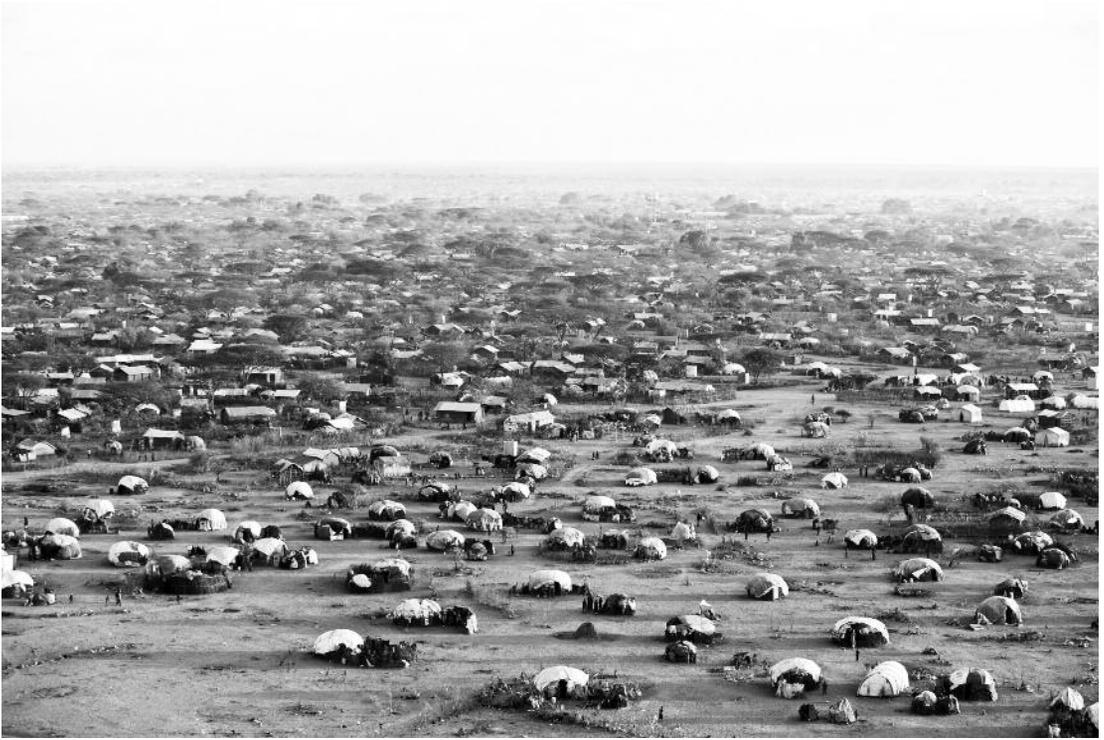
5. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1951), 291.

6. Luc Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*, trans. Graham Burchell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

7. Boltanski, 12.

8. Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and Anne Vallaeys, *Médecins Sans Frontières, la biographie* (Paris: Fayard, 2004).

9. James Ferguson, “Uses of Neoliberalism,” *Antipode* 41, no. S1 (2009): 166–84.



Informal settlement (foreground) on perimeter of Dagahaley refugee camp, one of three in the Dadaab refugee complex, Dadaab, Kenya, 2011. A fourth camp, Ifo 2, was opened that year. As of May 2015 the complex hosts 330,000 people. Photo: Brendan Bannon/IOM/UNHCR.

In Favor of Seeing Specific Histories

ANOORADHA IYER SIDDIQI

Daniel Bertrand Monk and Andrew Herscher's provocative meditation on "a growing indistinction between the refugee camp and the world itself" builds on a compelling narrative of contemporary Erbil. By commingling forms not typically seen together—the humanitarian voucher and the world heritage monument—they bring into view the problematic links between global economies and global histories and level an important critique of a technique perfected by both, of invoking the particular. My historical studies of architecture and humanitarianism support this imbrication of refuge and refugee, and I share the authors' distrust of monadological constructions of each.¹ However, I believe that the narrative of Erbil in this prompt, while relying on a particular set of events, eschews historical specificity. This element of abstraction in the essay elides several forms of politics and thus limits its own critical scope, with consequences for historiography. In relation to seeing specific histories instead, this response addresses two sets of stakes—the first regarding discursive regimes and the production of subalterns, and the second on methods of global history.

First, the abstraction of refuge and refugee is central to Monk and Herscher's argument, one that is nominally tethered to selected narratives of architectural modernism and modern humanitarianism cited by the authors. Yet these very narratives stem from specific histories that have produced specific shelters, monuments, refugees, and humanitarians. By disengaging historical particulars in favor of a dialectical abstraction, Monk and Herscher's text risks falling directly into the assimilative universalist modality it seeks to critique, one "scripted by global history . . . [that] actually ratifies a universal canon of elites." To hear the actual voices of displaced actors arguing for shelter rather than vouchers within an aesthetically rich narrative of families doubly displaced may instead perform an important and complex historiographic task, recuperating an ethnic, regional, or geopolitical history as an architectural one and, conversely, bringing architecture into urgent dialogue with a historical politics. Moreover, a specific history of architecture and humanitarianism may serve in this instance as a point of access for the historically marginalized into a discursive realm of theory, just as its denial may produce an obstruction. Because the question of whom we hear and see in our histories raises concerns about who gains access to discourse, interrogating what it means for a text to use histories of architecture and humanitarianism as foils becomes important. Much may

be gained from their specific historical and material registers.

The majority of refugee sites in the world today are far more *unseen* than those the text recalls. While recognizing the authors' important critique of a universalism ultimately based in systems of global finance, we must also understand as significant and distinct the geopolitically strategic value of the region they reference, which includes Iraqi Kurdistan and Syria. This has resulted in the extreme visibility of humanitarian engagements in these locations as opposed to, for example, at most sites in sub-Saharan Africa, where the architecturally invisible strategy of voucher humanitarianism has been less attractive and where governmental and nongovernmental actors alike strive to make refugee populations visible, if often for contradictory purposes: for instance, to make it possible to attend to public health or to control migration, or for the shared objective of attracting attention and funding from external donors.² In such locations, the production of humanitarian space has encouraged the coproduction of vivid images of refuge (see frontispiece), with contours etched distinctly between the camp and the world. Moreover, architecture has conferred legitimacy and authority spectacularly, approaching monumentality through forms that differ enormously from the Erbil Citadel—massive camp settlements, permanent humanitarian compounds, and global infrastructures. These forms may be analyzed in the same terms as those of the contemporary heritage monument. Like the citadel, they signal aura and global value within the same networks of finance capital, albeit by means of radically different aesthetics and photogenics. At these sites, we see a determination specifically *not* to disaggregate refuge from refugee. As such, the Erbil that Monk and Herscher describe—which demands the particularity of a refugee site that has been intensely seen, staged, and imaged by and for the international publics behind voucher humanitarianism, as well as a citadel similarly cast for the publics producing and consuming world heritage—cannot quite support claims to its universalism.

If a historiographic commitment to architecture and humanitarianism was not the authors' purpose, such a commitment might nonetheless have dispelled one of the essay's primary claims: that refuge and refugee have been universally disaggregated. Furthermore, we ought to treat contemporary entanglements of the two with suspicion. Through its at least partial denial of specific architectural and humanitarian histories, Monk and Herscher's argument goes beyond reproducing forms of political and social marginalization and engages in the production of new subalterns in the realm of discourse.

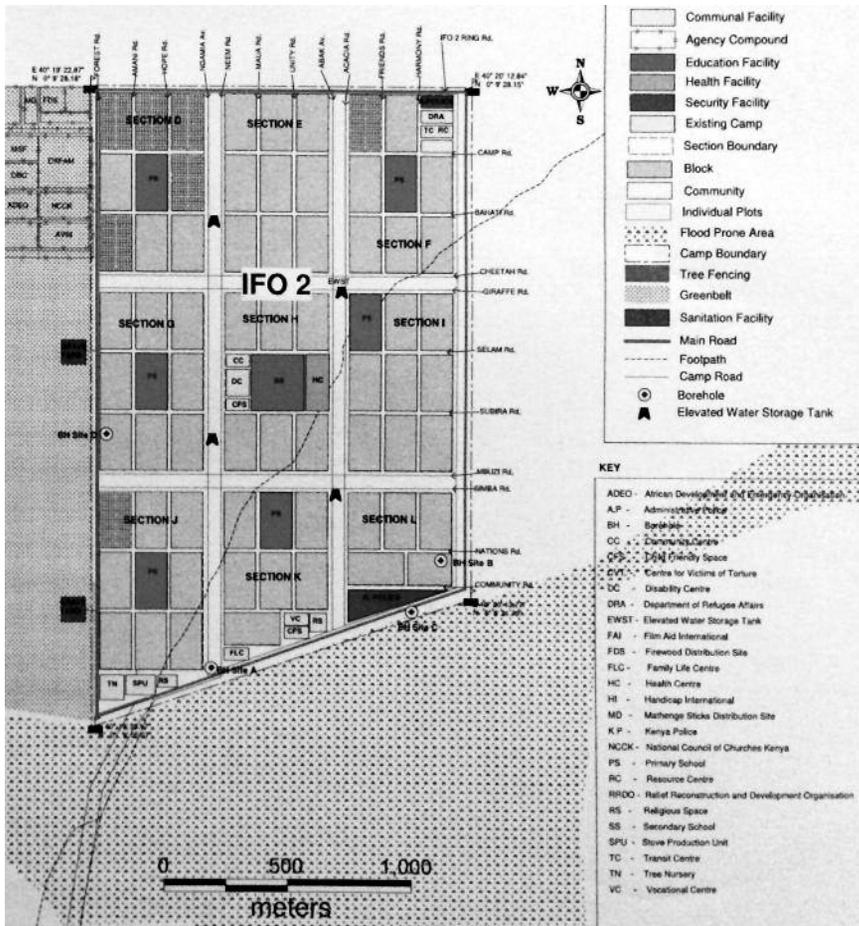
To clarify, while the text seems to acknowledge that each emergency raises specific historical and political complexities, it seems to treat architecture and its attendant imaging as universal. This flattening of the politics of specific architectures and images stems in part from the claim that the "dissociation of refuge from refugee is remarkably new." This claim is not entirely accurate and, more to the point, exposes a modernist

lament haunting the essay.³ Shelter and encampment have long responded to the deeply patriarchal desires of architectural modernists and modern humanitarians alike, joining refuge and refugee in enacting a space of welfare. This condition, however inextricable from modernity, may be understood as profoundly undesirable when viewing actual site-specific practices in a historical purview not limited to that described in Monk and Herscher's text. For example, we might look to a conundrum in modern humanitarian practice: the deeply gendered politics of the architecture of shelter and camp. If emergency spaces must be rendered highly visible to humanitarian publics to attract donors (through increasingly sophisticated mechanisms of image-making and circulation) and funding is often sought using representations of a shelter or camp, such representations rarely address the problem that its actual architectures produce materially identifiable targets for violence—targets who happen more often than not to be women.⁴ This problem central to the architecture of humanitarianism is a long-standing paradox that has strangely privileged refuges over refugees. To use architecture and humanitarianism without engaging these problems seems not only to elide a social politics and realpolitik but an urgency in the realms of theory and historiography. Arguably, this politics of scholarship may be recovered in the specific histories of humanitarianism and architecture.

A second set of stakes concerns locating the borders between global history, regional history, and microhistory—taking into account the contemporary academic privileging of the first and the disciplinary desires for an architectural canon to reflect it. The specific history threatens not to subscribe to a universalist historical regime, operating in the diminished scale of the local history or the microhistory. Yet specific histories reflect (and produce) unexpected channels for political actions and negotiation. For example, ethnographer Sarah Keeler (referenced by the authors) elsewhere examines the capacity of the international regime in Iraqi Kurdistan to self-reproduce through “managing or overcoming, rather than incorporating, local views.”⁵ Voucher strategies (and any attendant denial of refuge) are indeed elements that might constitute such structural adjustment through the system of international aid. We may imagine that a family worked willingly with the government, electing a payment scheme instead of a cramped plot within the Erbil fortress walls, however pressured to do so within the spectrum of financial possibility. We may also surmise that Hadida Hamademin Kader readily negotiated the option of inhabiting the citadel with her seven children “to ensure there is no break in the site’s continuous habitation,” even if it were to lead to a form of submission implied in the scene in the report cited by Monk and Herscher, of her “pouring strong, sweet tea for visitors.”⁶ Similarly, we may understand history differently through locally retrieved evidence—for example, the plan on the next page depicting formal spatial practices

behind a camp opened in response to the overflow of refugees depicted in this essay's frontispiece.

If we do not engage the complexity of such interpretations, and instead dismiss their local or microhistorical scale, or deny an understanding of events on the ground as transactional, we risk a history that reproduces political asymmetries. Such an architectural history can never be global, as its only political commitment is to its own aesthetics. If a critique of global history resists the co-optation of the local by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), it ought also to implicate actors such as Kader, not to mention



“840 families . . . offered a plot of land outside the city, with electricity, sewage and water and \$4,000 toward building a new home,” along with the semiautonomous Kurdish state itself.⁷ Together these actors enabled the reproduction of international authority through aid and heritage in Erbil. However asymmetrical the relationships behind this voucher humanitarianism, if we are to redress the universalism of global history, our call to order must acknowledge (and *name* and give voice to) not only the UNESCOs but the Kaders and other aid recipients who have together coconstructed our architectural histories.

Through these two sets of stakes—on the one hand, processes

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Site plan for Ifo Camp extension (now known as Ifo 2), Dadaab, Kenya, October 25, 2010. Courtesy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sub-Office Dadaab.

of historical marginalization and, on the other, scales of historicity—I argue for seeing specific histories. Indeed, rather than refusing the World Heritage site, we ought to complicate it by recognizing its position as a nuanced point of geopolitical control for actors with little other power and by collocating it with those less “architectural” settlements that we may deduce to have suddenly appeared outside of Erbil as the result of a voucher scheme. Specific voices and ground engagements enable greater historiographic complexity. The inclusion of these may produce parallel data points to undergird a global history that more properly resolves the authors’ criticisms of the mobilization of the particular.

Notes

1. Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, “Just Add Water? Architecture and Humanitarianism, 1991–2011” (Ph.D. diss., New York University Institute of Fine Arts, 2014).

2. I argue this in my dissertation, based on evidence collected from research in multiple humanitarian agency and organization headquarters around the world and from field sites in Africa and Asia, including an archive of oral histories collected from approximately three hundred participants (refugees, aid workers, architects, and officials).

3. See Paul Harvey, *Cash-Based Responses in Emergencies*, Overseas Development Institute Humanitarian Policy Group Report 24 (London: Overseas Development Institute, January 2007), 9. The distribution of subsistence vouchers and/or cash in emergencies has long roots in humanitarian practice, and the Overseas Development Institute cites examples of cash-based responses dating to the founding of the Red Cross. According to several people I interviewed, displaced individuals or families preferred turning to housing resources outside the humanitarian system (relatives and friends, etc.) over provisional shelter and encampment (with their attendant forms of governance).

4. Particularly following events in the Port-au-Prince encampments after Haiti’s 2010 earthquake, the voucher strategy gained recognition in humanitarian networks for its potential to reduce the vulnerability of working women to gender-based violence. For background information, see Women’s Refugee Commission, *Building Livelihoods: A Field Manual for Practitioners in Humanitarian Settings* (New York: Women’s Refugee Commission, 2009); and *Preventing Gender-Based Violence, Building Livelihoods: Guidance and Tools for Improved Programming* (New York: Women’s Refugee Commission, 2011).

5. Sarah Keeler, “Peacebuilding: The Performance and Politics of Trauma in Northern Iraq,” in *The Post-Conflict Environment: Investigation and Critique*, ed. Daniel Bertrand Monk and Jacob Mundy (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 78.

6. Associated Press, “Rescuing Erbil’s Citadel Offers a Beacon of Hope for Iraq,” *E Kurd Daily*, 24 January 2008, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2008/1/independentstate1933.htm>. Though Kader is unnamed in the text, her story is nevertheless mobilized to support the main argument.

7. Associated Press, “Rescuing Erbil’s Citadel.”



International Commission
for a History of the
Scientific and Cultural
Development of Mankind,
December 16, 1950.
Seated, from left to right:
Constantine K. Zurayk,
Julian Huxley, Paulo
Carneiro, UNESCO
Director-General Jaime
Torres-Bodet, Ralph E.
Turner, Carl J. Burckhardt.
Photo: UNESCO.

This Criterion Should Preferably Be Used in Conjunction with Other Criteria

LUCIA ALLAIS

Whether the goals of humanism and humanitarianism are fundamentally incompatible has been a recurring question in the international political debates surrounding war and disaster relief in the twentieth century. This disjuncture has often been expressed in architectural terms as a distinction between “buildings and people” or between “monuments” and other kinds of architecture—the same distinction Daniel Bertrand Monk and Andrew Herscher leverage in their dual provocation against global history and voucher humanitarianism.

On the one hand, we have humanists who see architecture as an object in the study of human culture; on the other hand, we have humanitarians who define architecture as the shelter of human life. I want to contribute to this discussion in two ways. First, I want to ask, how did these two aspects of architecture become bifurcated in the international order? Second, I want to follow one way this split is maintained today through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an agency whose role in global architectural production is undertheorized by humanists and humanitarians alike.

1.

Monk and Herscher construct a symmetrical argument that spans the long twentieth century to arrive at the present day, where they detect, in a number of formal and financial complementarities, the return of a repressed “discontinuous continuity” between empty monuments and displaced peoples. Theirs is a powerful rewriting of the history of housing (as a history of dehousing) and a compelling reminder that the dominant mode of architectural permanence today is one that “preserves negatively.”

However, in explaining how “the human” was bifurcated into two realms of international architectural politics, this symmetry and the historical narrative of “coeval emergence” warrant a few important complications. Insofar as international obligations were, like architectural solutions, created reactively during a century of mass killings and mass displacements, they not only arose gradually in response to a mounting “humanitarian imperative” but were constructed willfully and through sharply punctual geopolitical turns. Whatever else the

second postwar era shares with the first, it differed fundamentally in what Mark Mazower calls “the strange triumph of human rights”: the fact that it was *individual* rights that became the primary value celebrated by the United Nations in the 1940s, despite (or, Mazower argues, because of) mounting evidence that it was the rights of *groups*, including internal minorities, colonized peoples, and displaced masses, that would increasingly need to be protected.¹ This matters for two reasons. First, because it explains why the refugees who settled in Erbil had no obvious international instrument to which they could resort in appealing their mass-expulsion. Second, because while human rights in the second postwar period veered sharply toward the individual, heritage law at the same moment became decidedly *collective* through the concept of “cultural property,” which has fixed heritage in space.²

In spatial terms, the “disaggregation of refuge from refugee” originates at least in part in two different regimes of international law: one that guarantees freedom of movement and the other that abides by a logic of location.³ Seen from this perspective, fixity was long ago assigned to the monument and mobility to the dweller through far-reaching legal code.

The Genocide Convention is an instructive exception to this generalization; it protects group rights and was signed into law in 1948 almost single-handedly through the advocacy of Raphael Lemkin, who thought of it as a counterproject to the contemporaneous Human Rights Declaration.⁴ Lemkin took the concept of “culture” as a protective category and even argued in 1933 that any group protection would have to pertain not only to acts of “barbarism” against people but also acts of “vandalism” against their art and architecture. Surprisingly, his notion of culture as that which sustains collective existence did not preclude another notion of art and architecture “as property and as the culture of the collectivity.”⁵

But this proposed conflation, which could have been the crux of a spatial form of cultural and dwelling protection, was not to be. As the 1930s wore on, the movement for “the humanization of war” struggled to bind together a proposed military exception against bombing cultural sites and another against bombing civilians. By the time the 1954 Hague Convention was signed, nation-states agreed to protect architecture as an international value only after making a major concession to monumentality.⁶ A site would be protected if, in the first instance, it was a “monument” and if, in the second instance, it contained objects—not people.

Monk and Herscher use this concession, as it is upheld today by UNESCO and in a variety of architectural history textbooks, to indict all global history writing. I am not sure why it is important for them that we rehearse the “technocratic” ambitions of modernist architects in 1920s Europe and even gallantly forgive their “inexpertise,” even as we look “beyond transformations in technocracy” in the case of working historians, whose actions are ascribed instead to an “emerging epis-

teme” that resides “not only on the level of practice.” On the contrary, shouldn’t we ask how habits of history writing migrate into international governance and back, and expose such connections?

One specific link is the “comparative method” of architectural history, which ties the exemplarity of monumental architecture to specific geographic locations and has been one of historians’ most persistent blinders at least since Banister Fletcher.⁷ At UNESCO, comparison became an especially powerful tool after it was conjoined with the fixity of heritage through the World Heritage Convention. By addressing this phenomenon briefly, I hope to help dispel the air of historical inevitability that often surrounds international organizations and that we scholars risk perpetuating if we do not give historical flesh to our cultural critiques or negative dialectics.

2.

The World Heritage Convention, as the slightly obsolete-sounding *world* indicates, predates the discursive ascension of the “global” in the 1980s and 1990s. It was conceived in a period when UNESCO approached heritage protection as a standard-setting project among others, such as revising textbooks, setting academic research agendas, and encouraging historians to think comparatively. Comparison was as much a working method as a feature of the textbooks themselves. The project for a multi-volume *History of Mankind*, for instance, attempted to extract consensus from over a thousand working historians, but instead it provoked a heated debate over whether world history should be written by “optimizing diversity” or by “emphasizing interconnections.”⁸ In the absence of agreement, a juxtaposition of case studies became the default. UNESCO also tried to get at world history by commissioning theoretical treatises, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss’s iconic *Race and History*, which describes civilization as a repository for “the contributions of cultures.”⁹ In architecture, heroic campaigns for the salvage of monuments enforced the physical isolation of objects, a kind of textbook-writing in space.¹⁰

The 1972 World Heritage Convention can be seen as a culmination and radical objectification of this comparative drive toward a history of “contributions.” The convention was signed into law on the back of the decade’s environmental activism, but the method it codifies is much older: an Enlightenment premise about “human creative genius” married to a fin-de-siècle relativist aesthetics. Now called “the values approach to conservation,” that aesthetics is granted the highest formalist pedigree by reference to Alois Riegl, who, as the literature never ceases to remind us, pioneered the marriage of law and art history in 1903.¹¹

But from 1903 to 1972 the comparative mentality had taken hold not only in a whole host of academic disciplines from art history to area studies; it also became an instrument of governance that allowed the evaluation of nations, governments,

economies, societies. The World Heritage Convention made architecture available to this newfound calculus. It was not the architectural content of heritage but the status of the convention as a species of property law that offered a crucial bridge between history writing and history making.

Nothing in the World Heritage Convention mandates the removal of inhabitants from cultural properties. For example, no residents had to be expelled from the housing projects designed in the 1920s by Bruno Taut and Otto Wagner, which Monk and Herscher mention, when in 2008 the buildings were inscribed on the World Heritage List as part of the “Berlin Modernism Housing Estates.”¹² They were designated important “testimonials” to the Weimar Republic’s “innovative housing policies” and, unlike at Erbil, this new valuation aligned the economic interests of some resident-owners. How, then, is the global historical method implicated in this kind of alignment or misalignment?

3.

World Heritage works by asking sites to fulfill one or several of ten “criteria,” effectively transforming judgments of taste into legally binding norms. This system was clearly intended to “optimize diversity” but it has had a homogenizing effect, produced in concert by its three enforcing authorities:

(1) For nation-states the multiplicity of criteria promotes thinking of heritage as a kind of portfolio, where opportunities can be pursued selectively, usually to further national or nationalist interests.¹³

(2) The criteria themselves ensure that any difference of opinion is contained in an art-historical debate, which is outsourced to a nongovernmental organization (NGO) such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) or the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). Such NGOs compose the so-called third UN.¹⁴ In ICOMOS’s judgment about Erbil, we find old-fashioned architectural hierarchies (the refugees’ architecture is found “not outstanding” and “encroaching upon surviving Ottoman edifices”) and a total lack of imagination about how more recent categories of heritage UNESCO has proposed, such as intangible or urban, could be called upon to describe and protect the precarious conditions of refugee existence.¹⁵

(3) At the UNESCO secretariat, the criterion system absorbs any friction, because all perceived disproportions can be addressed by recalibrating the canon. By guaranteeing that any critique will be statistical, the system affords a model of cultural distinction that mirrors (and increasingly tries to compensate for) capitalist accumulation. Since a “Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List” was

House of Slaves, Island of Gorée, Senegal, 1776. The island was inscribed on the World Heritage List because it “testifies to an unprecedented human experience in the history of humanity” as a “symbol of the slave trade with its cortege of suffering, tears and death.”
Photo: Jean Krausse.

launched in 1994, the criteria have been periodically revised to account for various imbalances, including an excess of “particularisms,” a surplus of works authored by “globally significant persons,” and an overemphasis on “monumentality.”¹⁶

One place where the comparative alliance between history, law, and architecture has been continually on the verge of crisis is World Heritage criterion vi, which requires buildings “to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.” This description has changed several times, but the crucial word has remained *event*.¹⁷ In contrast to other criteria, this one pertains to political history, traditionally conceived as a history of events. With this criterion UNESCO opens the door to raw “global history”



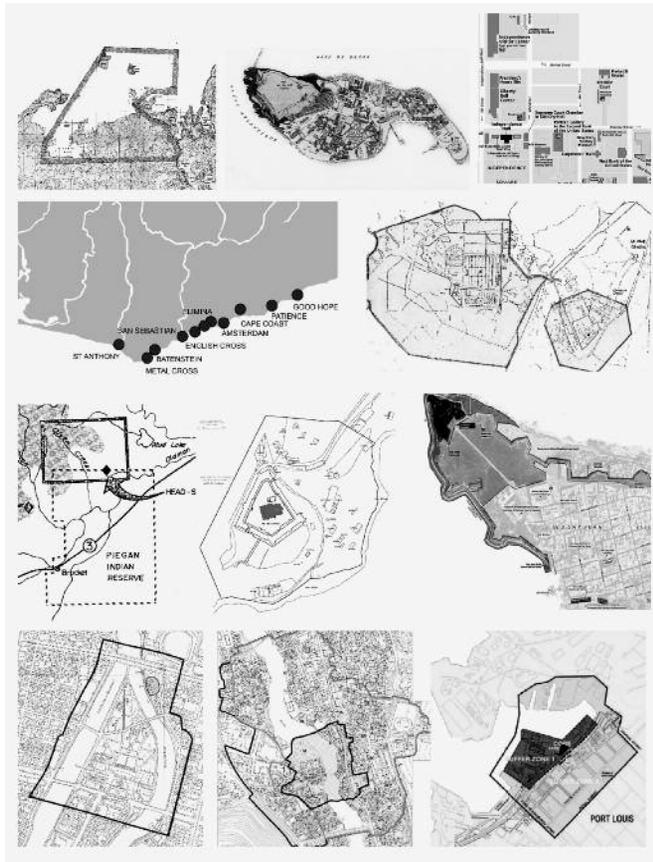
and does so nervously, judging by the caveat that “this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria.”¹⁸

Only eleven out of over a thousand sites have been inscribed on the World Heritage List for this criterion alone.¹⁹ Among these buildings with *no* architectural value except one that indexes global history, we find overwhelming evidence of human violence: one genocide (Auschwitz); one atomic bomb (Genbaku Dome); one ethnic war (Mostar Bridge); slavery (Island of Gorée); and indentured labor (Aapravasi Ghat). These are the constitutive events of a global history of refugee life. Moreover, many of these sites are monumental because their architecture was originally designed for the containment of forcibly displaced masses.

UNESCO’s discomfort with this brand of monumentality is barely repressed. Look at the paperwork for the case of the

Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, which was inscribed onto the list “as a unique site” in 1978 *and whose inscription limits further inscriptions* “of sites of a similar nature.”²⁰ What does this caveat mean—that there is room for only one genocidal space in global architectural history? That if the interdiction were lifted, turning concentration camps into monuments would become the norm? Here we have the seeds for a dystopian heritage industry, one where humanism and humanitarianism would be quite compatible.

My point is that the struggle to maintain this division resembles but predates the monetized machinery that Monk and Herscher describe as splitting citizens from citadels today. The



Maps of the eleven sites inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of selection criterion vi alone, showing sites and buffer zones. From left to right, top to bottom: L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site, Canada (1978); Island of Gorée, Senegal (1978); Independence Hall, United States (1979); Forts and Castles, Volta, Greater Accra, Central and Western Regions, Ghana (1979); Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940–1945), Poland (1979); Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, Canada (1981); Rila Monastery, Bulgaria (1983); La Fortaleza and San Juan National Historic Site in Puerto Rico, United States (1982); Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome), Japan (1996); Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2005); Aapravasi Ghat, Mauritius (2006).

struggle originates in the irrevocably split way culture exists in the official international imaginary: culture as owned (contained in buildings as “property”) and culture as lived (sustaining continued dwelling and targeted by genocide).

UNESCO uses criterion vi to police the scarcity of World Heritage, distinguishing it not only from “mere refuge” but from whatever other cultural products seem dangerously abundant at any given moment. Most recently the World Heritage Committee has debated whether to remove the word *preferably* from the “restrictive language” of criterion vi. This would mean that association with an *event* alone would no longer suffice to qualify a site for inscription, a gesture that is perceived

for various reasons to prevent African states from inscribing “intangible” heritage into the World Heritage list and, therefore, onto a map.²¹ Some heritage advocates are looking for ways to leverage intangible categories to earn disenfranchised groups new cultural rights or new visibility, pushing the definition of heritage toward the “untranslatability” of language rather than the irreducibility of events.²² But even if they succeed, the intangible will be pinned in place. The comparative method is robust enough to survive a questioning of the original qualities imputed to architecture in the 1950s—monumentality, objecthood, tangibility. But there is one criterion that must remain for its incommensurability: location.

One lesson in intellectual history that can be drawn from this aspect of enforcement of World Heritage is that the usual epistemic relationship between international law and global history has been reversed. As Anson Rabinbach puts it, following Mark Osiel, in the case of genocide law “the legal and the historical often work at cross-purposes: the law aims at inclusivity and generalizability, history at distinctions and differentiations.”²³ But in heritage law, criteria intended to foster inclusiveness are being used to make discriminations, even as historians are setting their discriminating eyes on an ever broader, more inclusive field.

4.

Between housing and remembrance is a spectrum of things buildings do. Any historian interested in repairing this polarization would do well to remember that no textbook has the power of law. Textbooks are for helping us do our homework. They are subject to revision and to the unpredictability of learning.

Of all the ways of writing global history, Monk and Herscher follow the track of violence. Others are possible, as Frederick Cooper reminds us, including the history of “thinking like an empire,” the history of capitalism, the history of religion, and, we could add, the history of cultivation. All of these can be written—are being written—as architectural histories. The challenge is to think of them not merely as “other criteria” for a history of disjunction or conjunction—not to expand but to explode our comparative horizons.

Notes

Many thanks to Zeynep Çelik Alexander for help thinking through and editing this text.

1. Mark Mazower, “The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933–1950,” *Historical Journal* 47, no. 2 (June 2004): 379–98.

2. This fixity was coproduced through another distinction, that between the legislation of art and architecture as, respectively, “movable” and “immovable” cultural property. This problematic categorization is not my subject here. For more, see the landmark commentary by John Henry Merryman, “Two Ways of Thinking about Cultural Property,” *American Journal of International Law* 80, no. 4 (October 1986): 831–53.

3. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees “the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state” and “the right to leave any country . . . and to return.” United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 13, available online at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

4. See Dirk Moses, “Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, ed. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19–41; and Ana Filipa Vrdoljak, “Human Rights and Genocide: The Work of Lauterpacht and Lemkin in Modern International Law,” *European Journal of International Law* 20, no. 4 (2009): 1163–94.

5. Raphael Lemkin, “Acts Constituting a General (Transnational) Danger Considered as Offences against the Law of Nations” (1933), trans. Jim Fussell, Prevent Genocide International, <http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/madrid1933-english.htm>.

6. The debt of the Hague Convention and other postwar heritage law to the “humanization” movement of the 1930s is addressed in greater detail in my forthcoming book, tentatively titled “Designs of Destruction: Monument Survival and International Order in the Twentieth Century.”

7. Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (London: B.T. Batsford; New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1896). See also, Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoğlu, “Toward Postcolonial Openings: Rereading Sir Banister Fletcher’s *History of Architecture*,” *Assemblage* 35 (April 1998): 6–17.

8. The Committee for the History of the Cultural and Historical Development of Mankind was established in 1950 at the initiative of evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley, who supported the “optimization of diversity” agenda. “Interconnection” was the term pushed by Annales School historian Lucien Febvre, who became the editor of the *Journal of World History* in 1953 in part to field dissenting opinions. For a blow-by-blow account of the extensive diplomatic intrigue that ensued, especially after the entrance of the USSR into UNESCO, see Poul Duedahl, “Selling Mankind: UNESCO and the Invention of Global History, 1945–1976,” *Journal of World History* 22, no. 1 (March 2011): 101–33.

9. Claude Lévi-Strauss, “Race et histoire” (1952), in *Race et histoire, Race et culture* (Paris: Albin Michel/Éditions UNESCO, 2001), 111.

10. Lucia Allais, “The Design of the Nubian Desert,” in *Aggregate, Governing by Design* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

11. Criterion i asks sites “to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.” UNESCO World Heritage Committee, “The Criteria for Selection,” <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>. The criteria are explained in a regularly updated document titled *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. For the current document, see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>. For a typical treatment of Riegl, see Jukka Jokilehto, “Theories and Concepts,” in *A History of Architectural Conservation* (London: Elsevier/ICCROM, 1999), 213–44.

12. *Berlin Modernism Housing Estates: Inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List*, ed. Berlin Monument Authority (Berlin: Braun, 2009).

13. The Erbil Citadel project’s connection to nation-building in Iraq is confirmed by the role played in its “revitalization” by the unusual, centralized “UNESCO Office for Iraq,” headquartered in Amman. On the damage of Iraqi antiquities in 2003, see Geoff Emberling et al., eds., *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq’s Past* (Chicago: Oriental Institute Museum, 2008.)

14. Thomas G. Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis, and Richard Jolly, “The ‘Third’ United Nations,” *Global Governance* 15 (2009): 123–142.

15. “The most recent activity of construction on the tell has not produced outstanding examples of a continuing building tradition; rather it has contributed to encroachment upon the surviving Ottoman edifices.” ICOMOS [International Council on Monuments and Sites], “Erbil Citadel (Republic of

Iraq) No 1437,” in *2014 Evaluations of Nominations of Cultural and Mixed Properties to the World Heritage List*, ICOMOS Report for the World Heritage Committee, 38th Ordinary Session, Doha, June 2014, WHC-14/38.COM/INF.8B1 (Paris: ICOMOS, 2014), 83, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-38com-inf8B1-en.pdf>. On urban heritage, see Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers, eds., *Reconnecting the City: The Historic Urban Landscape Approach and the Future of Urban Heritage* (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2015). On intangible heritage, see Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, “Protection as Dispossession: Government in the Vernacular,” in *Cultural Heritage in Transit: Intangible Rights as Human Rights*, ed. Deborah Kapchan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 25–56.

16. These adjustments are discussed in Abduquail Yussuf, “Article I: Definition of Cultural Heritage,” in *The 1972 World Heritage Convention: A Commentary*, ed. Francesco Francioni (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 23–50.

17. See UNESCO World Heritage Committee, *Information Document: Analysis of the Application of Cultural Criterion (vi)*, WHC-01/CONF.208/INF.13 (Paris: UNESCO, 2001), <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2001/whc-01-conf208-inf13e.pdf>.

18. UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (Paris: UNESCO, 2013), 21, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>.

19. The complete list of sites registered for criterion vi alone, in chronological order of inscription: L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site (Canada, 1978); Island of Gorée (Senegal, 1978); Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940–1945) (Poland, 1979); Forts and Castles, Volta, Greater Accra, Central and Western Regions (Ghana, 1979); Independence Hall (USA, 1979); Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump (Canada, 1981); La Fortaleza and San Juan National Historic Site in Puerto Rico (USA, 1982); Rila Monastery (Bulgaria, 1983); Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) (Japan, 1996); Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2005); Aapravasi Ghat (Mauritius, 2006). See “World Heritage List,” UNESCO World Heritage Centre, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>.

20. From the report: “The Committee decided to enter Auschwitz concentration camp on the List as a unique site and to restrict the inscription of other sites of a similar nature.” UNESCO World Heritage Committee, *Report of the Rapporteur on the Third Session of the World Heritage Committee*, CC-79/Conf.003/13 (Paris: UNESCO, 1979), para. 46, no. 31, available online at <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/repcom79.htm#31>.

21. These debates are about the inscription of intangible heritage on the World Heritage List, not on the “List of Intangible Heritage,” which is also kept by UNESCO and subject to a different international convention. UNESCO World Heritage Committee, *Information Document: Analysis of the Application of Cultural Criterion (vi)*, WHC-01/CONF.208/INF.13 (Paris: UNESCO, 2001), <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2001/whc-01-conf208-inf13e.pdf>.

22. A remarkable instance of this politics of untranslatability is in Barbara Cassin and Danièle Wozny, eds., *Les intraduisibles du patrimoine en Afrique subsaharienne* (Paris: Demopolis, 2014).

23. Anson Rabinbach, “Raphael Lemkin’s Concept of Genocide,” *Internationale Politik Transatlantic Edition* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 70–75. Rabinbach is commenting on Mark Osiel, “Ever Again: Legal Remembrance of Administrative Massacre,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 144 (1995): 463–704.

24. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 197.

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MAN'S STRUGGLE FOR SHELTER IN AN URBANIZING WORLD

CHARLES ABRAMS

New York Times, BARBARA WARD, "... Charles Abram's authoritative study, *Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World* . . . is the first comprehensive attempt to bring together information on the urban problem at present lost,

of urbanism and the almost complete failure of governments and agencies to come to grips with it . . ."

TODAY: "Ever since Charles Abrams helped write this country's first public housing law in 1933 he has been both a burr and a benefactor to those who provide man shelter in what is often a harsh environment



and even restricted, in official documents and surveys . . . Probably no expert in the field of housing knows the developing world as does Mr. Abrams

No one is more aware of the gap between what is being studied and done today and what needs to be known and accomplished before tomorrow."

The Economist, London: "In this pioneering book Mr. Abrams underlines again and again, the degree to which the great international agencies have

virtually excluded housing from their programmes. American assistance bypassed the whole issue until the impact of Castro on the restless urban squatters in South America produced a sudden spurt of housing loans under the Alliance for Progress. In fact, if there is one theme more than any other in Mr. Abrams's wide, discursive, intensely well informed study, it is the gap between the gathering world crisis

Case Conference and A S W News, England: "The sheer size of the problem discussed has made Abrams modest and realistic where he might have reacted with flamboyant and futile gestures . . . A brief review cannot do justice to this book. It should be read by anyone whose thinking extends as far as the kind of world his children are going to live in."

Middle East Journal: "... a very important work — it is the first to deal with world problems of urbanization and housing . . . It is indispensable in its field. Chicago Tribune, Ill. ed.

... MAN'S STRUGGLE FOR SHELTER is based on the author's work as a United Nations consultant and advisor to more than a dozen nations . . . It is significant reading for all Americans who deal with our own metropolitan difficulties . . . it will appeal widely because its clear style and conviction provide information and assault the conventional as well.

Progressive Architecture, SUMNER KELLY: "This is a most unusual book, its title is classic but its

Charles Abrams.
Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World (1964).

For the Love of (Shared) Politics

M. IJLAL MUZAFFAR

Daniel Bertrand Monk and Andrew Herscher's piece has brawling potential, which is not necessarily a bad thing in the production of scholarship. Such occasions can bring passion and energy to discussions that otherwise would just stew on the polite heat of disciplinary exchange. Brawls are good so long as at the end of the day we can raise a glass to shared politics. Looking forward to that moment of lubrication, I would like, for now, to add some friction to the mix.

As Monk and Herscher point out, the term *global history* has the potential to render meaningless any ethics of engagement across difference that might be built on it. The very idea of global history can become, the authors stress (and I completely agree with them), a space for stifling politics. In this space we can talk of difference, but by putting all those differences in an infinitely comparative format we make them readily understandable through the same lens. This lens becomes the eye of a new god, the sympathetic globalizer, looking at all places from a nonplace of all-knowing. This god-view can understand all politics but have no politics of its own. The global itinerary of comparable "locals," both buildings and subjects, resulting from this view grants one uninterrupted access, a power readily utilized by contemporary discourses of preservation and humanitarianism. "Because," Monk and Herscher argue,

while global history endows each historicized building with a status consistent with an expanded definition of architecture, and while global humanitarianism endows each assisted person with a status consistent with an imperiled population, buildings and people are being defined in ways more or less suitable for inclusion within given paradigms of classification or action.

What global history could have done—and should have done, the authors argue—is to stress the irreducibility of difference between different contexts rather than reducing them to one another: "Posed as a triumph of the singular, this integration erases any words we might possess to describe the actual state of affairs."

But here, constraints of publishing, themselves built on the presumed limits of our attention, stifle the next question that must be asked and answered in the wake of these assertions. How are those "actual state of affairs" to be communicated across differences of concern and politics, if not by utilizing a language and concept of history that has some universalizing potential? After all, the very terms *refuge*, *refugee*, and *shelter*

(and, for that matter, *architecture* itself) flatten differences of experience and understanding. If we get rid of these flattening universals, how do we build political solidarity, empathy, and shared goals? Would emphasizing “the actual state of affairs” not create (again) a taxonomy of exaggerated difference in which all things are so particular that nothing common can be discerned among them? And would not that compartmentalizing, that assertion of absolute difference in which nothing is comparable to anything else, simply form the split side of global history that made every thing comparable to every other thing?

Though Monk and Herscher might well know the way out of this dilemma, it still needs to be spelled out, if not in the space of their text then in the responses to it. This will allow us not only to challenge the universalizing potential of global history but to map out strategies to redeploy it. The authors might tell me, for instance, to go pick up Anna Tsing’s *Friction*, which asserts that we cannot, and should not even try to, get rid of the universal if we are to build shared politics across difference.¹ We need to remember only one thing: Universals are not evil; they are just universals and should be treated as just that. The danger, the flattening, slips in when we forget that universals are only concepts that we need in order to talk across difference. They are not actual reflections of the world they describe. They are strategic concoctions that we need in order to communicate the particularities and politics of each situation to one another. Universals have that potential just as they have the potential to foreclose the space of politics.

In Monk and Herscher’s text, the term *shelter* possesses that double edge. The term can be deployed strategically as a universal that allows for particular political connections: a term to establish a politics of one’s own and to recognize others’ politics. One could say, “We are using the term *shelter* because it already has a certain currency in institutional agendas that we want to challenge,” or that “We are using the term *shelter* to communicate through a familiar concept an alternate understanding of occupation and displacement in a particular context.” But to deploy *shelter* as a strategic universal we have to *declare* our politics through it first. Monk and Herscher shy away from using that double edge to their advantage.

They resist laying out their own politics in using the term *shelter* and decline to delve into how others have used the term. For them, declaring politics seems to be a second step, one following the first step of identifying the phenomenon in question itself. The two steps represent different roles. Monk and Herscher want to take on the role of identifiers, not activists. Their use of the term *shelter* deliberately seeks to procure a neutral space that stands before political action. As they declare in their text, their goal is only to identify a dialectical unfolding of the discourses of global history and humanitarianism and how that dialectics has displaced the problem of providing “shelter” with that of providing a credit card. But what does invoking the term *shelter* mean in this criticism if

not an ahistorical, apolitical, basic “human” right? Does that invocation of the human being and her rights not reserve the most inconspicuous political space of all, a space from which one can speak for all history and all politics?

That is the danger in not declaring a political framing—or in declaring it only as secondary to a more fundamental problem of shelter. The very use of the term *shelter* already lays out a strategy and politics, albeit an invisible politics, the very kind it seeks to unseat. One cannot use the term *shelter* and proclaim neutrality or, worse, mere criticality. The phenomenon is the politics; critique is action; and analysis is activism. We can create two steps, but we have to acknowledge that the first also leaves a footprint.

Charles Abrams, the prominent U.S. housing activist, chair of Columbia University’s Urban Planning Program, and New York City’s rent commissioner, deployed the word *shelter* in the 1950s to fight against prevalent racial discrimination in housing and to institute protection of “rent control” for the economically vulnerable.² The goal of using the term was to invoke the idea of a “fundamental human right.” Shelter defined the human as an entity that had fundamental rights prior to or outside the law. This strategy worked well, because the demand to institute this right prior to law was made to an existing legal and state structure.

In the 1960s Abrams’s fame sent him on a host of international development missions where his use of the word *shelter* as a fundamental human right produced the opposite effect.³ Abrams was selected for these missions in part because the United Nations (UN) was looking to scale back the development promises it had made earlier. The development schemes of the 1950s, which turned complex political problems into technical ones with the help of new Third World governments, had failed miserably. A new development rhetoric of “basic human needs” was developed at this time, led by the term *shelter*. In this case, however, by appealing to *needs*—if not *rights* prior to law—the UN did not seek to make demands on law (national or international) but to bypass it. To speak for shelter as a basic need, a human right that preceded legal definitions and debates, the development agencies carved out only a sphere of action for themselves and their new modus operandi, the nongovernmental organization (NGO). This entry into the national through the backdoor of “shelter” did not seek to strengthen the nation-state and its laws but to undermine them in perpetuity, claiming a right to intervene and speak for the “shelterless” everywhere. What Herscher and Monk find disturbing in Iraq is the latest turn of this bypassing maneuver, wherein the NGOs are being replaced by an even more impervious instrument, the credit card. But why preserve the very term, *shelter*, on which that imperviousness is based? Monk and Herscher come close to repeating the very phenomenon they seek to challenge.

We can discern one reason for the centrality of the term *shelter*

in Monk and Herscher's text. With the emphasis on restoring the idea of shelter to the discourse on shelter, the authors seek to clear the fog of sameness cast on the refugee and interrupt the dislocating power of the credit card. The emphasis on shelter is meant to relocate the refugee in a specific space, time, and circumstance so that the story of the "actual state of affairs" could be told.

But by creating that opening through the term *shelter* without giving it a strategic edge, that story cannot be told. The refugees are asked, again, to appear as refugees in need of shelter, a need defined from a nonspace of analytic observation. Their particular circumstances appear, again, as appendages to this predefined basic need. The term *shelter* can never tell the politics of the story, of the refugee, or of the critic. No one ever demands only shelter. No one is ever displaced from shelter, that neutral basic human need. *House, housing, shelter* are always already imbricated with religious, political, social, and economic meaning. The historically loaded word *shelter* hides those dimensions through which displacement is imagined and redressed. The term *shelter* reserves only a neutral entry point for the critic.

This is not the only way to use the term *shelter*. The term can be deployed strategically as a universal that speaks of difference rather than silences it. The term can be deployed intentionally to talk across difference, rather than presumed indifferently to precede difference. The term can form a universal that brings us together—strategically, politically—to tell stories of how collectives are formed and why we should not forget that.

Forgetting was precisely what Abrams's invocation of the term *shelter* sought to do. On a mission to Karachi in 1957, Abrams identified thousands of refugees occupying the streets of the city as squatters a decade after they had migrated from India following the partition of the subcontinent.⁴ He stressed the need to understand refugee/squatter "motivation" as a desire for continued free resources and to operate outside the law. Rather than eviction, Abrams stressed the need to distribute "basic" property rights in order to establish "basic" shelter. For Abrams, politics was greed, a "flaunting" of the law, a deviation from basic human needs. Provision of shelter was a means of restoring the human in the refugee and preventing her from turning into a squatter.

The refugees, however, sought to remember: to remember themselves as refugees. They indeed demanded shelter but not on the terms Abrams offered it; that is, as a human right. They demanded shelter as a religious and political entitlement. In legal terms, the refugees, as Abrams described them, were not refugees at all. They were citizens of Pakistan who had migrated from Urdu-speaking parts of India at the time of partition and, unlike Punjabi-speaking migrants who were settled in the Pakistani parts of divided Punjab, did not have a corresponding Urdu-speaking province in Pakistan. On the one hand, this

prolonged their “settlement.” On the other hand, it gave the question of their settlement the symbolism of settling the future of the nation above any ethnolinguistic logic. By insisting on their refugee status, they sought to secure themselves as the embodiment of the nation and not one of its provinces.⁵ To do so, the refugees called themselves *muhajirs*, a term that invoked *hijrat*, the journey taken by the Prophet Muhammad in 622 CE from Mecca to Medina to protect his followers from persecution and memorialized by caliph Umar as the beginning of the Islamic calendar. Upon arrival in Medina, the *muhajirs* were hosted by the local *insars*, who not only provided food and shelter to the *muhajirs* but took responsibility for incorporating them into the *insars*’ economic life.

The *hijrat* was thus not only a traversing of geographical space but a folding of economic and political space—a centered otherness that resisted political and economic marginalization by claiming a right to hospitality. The *muhajirs* of Karachi, from elite politicians to worker organizations, invoked this history to sway the balance of power well outside the com-



“The author is greeted in a village in India.” From Charles Abrams, *Man’s Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World* (1964).

mercial center of Karachi. The careful balance of belonging and otherness challenged the nativist claims put forth by Sindhi traditional and landed elite. The *muhajirs*’ demand for shelter capitalized on the universality and international currency of the term *shelter* but opened it to a host of new dimensions that resisted passivity and marginalization in both international and national arenas.

What should happen to the history of this dimension of shelter? Should we ignore it, consider it a secondary, local framing that is to be unpacked by area-studies specialists? Or should we consider that dimension as the necessary embodiment of the term *shelter*, an embodiment without which the term has no meaning, no form, like a soul without a body?

All universals have embodied forms, embodied politics. *Shelter* did not just mean to the *muhajirs* in Karachi something particular that we can invoke only in its pure universality. Our invocation is also embodied; it makes sense in particular spaces, to particular collectives and individuals, for particular ends. We cannot invoke the term *shelter* except strategically.

We can either strive toward recognizing that strategy or let ourselves be strategized, deployed in others' strategies willy-nilly. To not recognize the duality of the term *shelter*—a duality mobilized by the *muhajirs'* invocation of *shelter* in Karachi and (surely also) by those removed from Erbil Citadel in Iraqi Kurdistan—is to foreclose to others a position that we reserve for ourselves. This is not an argument for context but for a different understanding of universals that cannot exist without context.⁶

In this vein, I would like to consider the other strand of the dialectic identified by Monk and Herscher: the movement of global history. The most potent strategy for creating the possibility of refuge in architectural history and geopolitics is not to



get rid of the universal of global history only to replace it with a universal discourse of shelter. Rather, echoing the *muhajirs*, the possibility of refuge will best be created by strategically redeploying the idea of global history itself. By this I do not mean to suggest what Mahmood Mamdani calls doing “history by analogy,” the very mode of generalized history Monk and Herscher caution us against.⁷ Nor do I mean to suggest rehearsing the pitfalls of the “area studies” model of history, which makes the uniqueness of each account so particular, the expertise of the historian so deep, that the only people interested in listening to you are those in your “area.” Global history not only can speak to the difference of meaning that surrounds the titles of *refuge* and *refugee* in a particular context; it can also show how those particularities relate to other particularities.

Muslim refugees
at Purana Qila
(Old Fort), Delhi,
India, 1947. AP Wire.

The model of global history can be redeployed to develop a language of communicating across difference, of building solidarity and strategically shared politics, just as well as it can erase that possibility.

Recall that the idea of global architectural history was not so smooth when it was put forth in books such as Francis D.K. Ching, Mark Jarzombek, and Vikramaditya Prakash's *A Global History of Architecture*.⁸ The idea had a rub and offered productive friction to the previous ideas of global history it countered. Those versions of "global" history were rigorously Eurocentric. That in itself cannot be considered as a problem. The pedagogical damage wrought by that bearing stemmed from the fact that those earlier texts did not declare or even acknowledge that focus, nor did they discuss the politics of maintaining it. All good things began in Europe, if not the United States, simply because they did. The idea of global history now under our scalpel made new cuts in the smooth and sealed flesh of the European global history. This feat turned the acceptable way of looking at the world in architectural pedagogy inside out. If after this move its edge became dull, if the openings it created started to close sooner than imagined, if the scars it left in place were covered over with a tan that appeared more a sign of touristy privilege than its limits, that is because we have forgotten how and in what concrete circumstances it made its original mark.

Let us remember that context and identify those contexts that surround us now when we invoke the term *shelter*. The ideas of global history and shelter were developed by political agents for political ends. If they have done their job, we can replace them with new universals or redeploy them. But we have to first identify the concrete spaces in which we are going to do so and for what ends. And then we have to remember to raise our glasses, together, to those strategically shared ends.

Notes

1. Anna Tsing, "Introduction," in *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 1–20.

2. See Charles Abrams, "Rising Rents and Rent Control," in *The Future of Housing* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1946), 303–4.

3. Abrams summarized the "reports" of these missions, often written with his longtime collaborator, Otto Koenigsberger, in *Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964).

4. On the UN mission to Pakistan, like most of his international missions, Abrams was accompanied by Koenigsberger, a German-born one-time citizen of India who had been chief planner for the state of Mysore. After India's independence Koenigsberger moved to London to head the Center of Tropical Housing at the Architectural Association and later the Development Planning Unit at the University of London. See *A Housing Program for Pakistan with Special Reference to Refugee Rehabilitation*, prepared for the Government of Pakistan by Charles Abrams and Otto Koenigsberger, 14 September 1957 (New York: United Nations Technical Assistance Administration, 1957).

5. This possibility was opened even before partition by the leader of the Muslim League and Pakistan's first governor general, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who declared Urdu the national language of the future nation. Jinnah insisted

on Urdu as the representative language of Pakistan not simply to invoke the memory of the early-twentieth-century Muslim educational and literary renaissance. Urdu was advanced specifically to cull the demands for giving that declaration to Bengali, the language of the majority of the far-strewn parts of west and east India then being assembled into Pakistan. For Jinnah, the establishment of Bengali, despite its literary affluence, would give way to regional dominance in a country that, though constituted of an ethnic and linguistic assemblage, was being put together on the basis of a presumed higher commonality: Islam.

6. The universal that Ana Tsing seeks to resituate as a strategic concept is the very idea of globalization. She argues that globalization is not a process that is happening “out there,” encompassing areas hitherto unaffected by it. Instead it is a universal—akin to such concepts as “environment,” “civilization,” “human,” and “rights”—that people appeal to in order to negotiate the particular circumstances surrounding them. The same universal can kill and save lives, stifle solidarity or build it. Universals float in unevenly shared spaces. People deploy universals in particular concrete situations to achieve particular concrete ends. I can pick up the phone and call a friend at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in Karachi to plan a cotaught travel course on architecture and globalization. In doing so, I would be appealing to the universal of globalization to negotiate my concrete goals—to get a particular grant, a certain cachet, a better shot at securing tenure. My friend might agree to participate and appeal to the same universal of globalization. But he would be doing so to negotiate a different set of goals and circumstances. We both deploy the same universal in different concrete circumstances, producing different effects and different politics. We, the particular actors in particular situations, are the sites of politics, not the universal itself. This duality must be remembered when blaming or deploying a universal such as global history. What displaces or refuses refuge is not the concept but the particular actors who deploy the concept in particular circumstances. See Tsing, *Friction*.

7. Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 9.

8. Francis D.K. Ching, Mark M. Jarzombek, and Vikramaditya Prakash, *A Global History of Architecture* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2007).

Architecture: The Global Imaginary in an Antiglobal World

MARK JARZOMBEK

Daniel Bertrand Monk and Andrew Herscher argue that the discipline of global history, because it supposedly champions an “inclusive and heterogeneous arrays of ‘local’ sites across the globe,” fails to diminish the sway of the universalist assumptions of the Enlightenment. Even worse, global history is a “perversion” of that older project. The *new* universalism—by the sheer weight of its dialectical majesty—transforms the great buildings of the past into sites of exclusion.¹ Monk and Herscher use the word *global* as the telltale signifier of this tragedy as it moves up and down various academic and economic registers: from “global history,” to “global history of architecture,” to “global architectural history,” to “global histories of architecture,” to land ultimately at the doorstep of “the globalization of the history of architecture.”

I would like to disentangle the components of this position. First I will differentiate the disciplinary project that goes by the heading global history from “a global history of architecture.” Then I will tackle the question of the geopolitical. In this, I feel that Monk and Herscher’s argument would be strengthened by broadening the historical focus rather than targeting the word *global*. To demonstrate just how slippery the word is, let me start by pointing out that though Monk and Herscher argue that global history has reinforced the focus on “local sites,” the more normative understanding of the task of global history is that it tries to challenge the localist point of view. World history is the more likely target of Monk and Herscher’s critique, especially since the scholar they cite in reference to the discipline, William H. McNeill, is generally thought of as a world historian. Global history took shape only in the last ten years and then as a general response to world history and the intensification in the previous decades of a type of scholarship that was nation-, region-, or locality-based.

I do not, however, want to belabor the difference, except to point out that global history (or even world history) is an altogether different animal from “a global history of architecture.” Unlike world history and global history, no scholarly organizations, no established peer-reviewed publication venues, and hardly even any conferences are dedicated to the subject. Whereas global history is mainly taught in humanities programs, a global history of architecture is taught in the context of a survey class in schools of architecture. If it is taught at all! In the United States, most schools of architecture continue to

teach from a Eurocentric platform, and only a small percentage have adopted something like a global history perspective.² In Europe, the situation is even worse. The dean in a top school in Germany told me, “Why teach global history when our students do not even know anything about German history?” The only history class that is required at that institution is one on German castles. The situation is no better in other places. A global history of architecture thus has limited institutional traction or support.

But what exactly is it then? A global history of architecture is *not* a return to the encyclopedic worldview. Nor is it a bland validation of the great monuments of the past or the rejection of those buildings. Finally, it is not a prioritization of the “everyday” world, and it does not dismiss the messy reality of how people live in complex urban, peri-urban, village, and rural environments. And because architecture’s history goes back thousands of years, one cannot limit a global history of architecture to the time period after colonialism. As history, it is built on evidence as well as on conjecture and critique. A global history of architecture can be written from a trans-horizonal perspective, just as it can be written from a stationary position.³ All of this leaves open a vast intellectual and disciplinary territory for discussion and experimentation.

But a global history of architecture—as a still relatively empty signifier—most certainly should not be confused with an actual discipline such as global history. Even more important, although global history and “a global history of architecture” have the word *global* in their titles, neither is a global phenomenon. In their separate ways they are esoteric academic projects. In other words, just because the word *global* is in their titles does not mean they are globalized or even have that ambition.

What *is* global, however, is the recently emerging, *geopolitical* institutionalality of architecture’s history. That is the true subject matter of Monk and Herscher’s critique, as indicated by the last phrase in the catenation: “the globalization of the history of architecture.”⁴ But why go after semiotic ghosts only to let the real monster in the room off the hook.

Let me explain.

In the 1970s, the world was still understood as “The World.” Books were written with titles such as *World History in the Making* (1934), *World History: The Story of Man through the Ages* (1949), *History of World Peoples* (1954), and *World History: The Story of Man’s Achievements* (1962). In the field of architecture, Sigfried Giedion’s *The Eternal Present* (1964) represents the last hurrah of this approach. In good Hegelian fashion it divides history into three ages, with modernism the culmination of all architectural and space-making sensibilities. In the 1980s, this worldview began to be challenged, as was the proverbial canon. *Universalism* was the accusatory word. In the field of architectural studies, a generation of scholars and intellectuals entered into the breach, following one of perhaps four approaches: semiotics, phenomenology, contextualism, and

Sigfried Giedion visiting the House of Arpachiyah, Tell Arpachiyah, Iraq, ca. 1953. From Sigfried Giedion, *The Eternal Present: A Contribution on Constancy and Change*, vol. 2, *The Beginnings of Architecture* (1964). Photo: Jacqueline Tyrwhitt.

tradition/vernacular studies/preservation. Among these, the last two are relevant to our discussion for the way in which they took up the question of the local.⁵

The contextualists were inspired by Jean-François Lyotard (*The Postmodern Condition*, 1979), who argued that we had reached the end of the writing of history as the story of humanity and should thus seek out the plurality of small narratives that compete with one another. Peter Unger (*Philosophical Relativity*, 1984) went so far as to state that different contexts set different epistemic standards. In the field of cultural history, Carl Schorske (*Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, 1980) exemplified the contextualist view. In the field of architectural history, Manfredo Tafuri (*Venezia e il rinascimento*, 1985) offered a thesis about microhistory. Contextualists tended



to view buildings not as the product of autonomous design thinking but as cultural phenomena or manifestations of power and ideology. “Critical Regionalism,” made popular by Kenneth Frampton, could also be seen as a branch of contextualism; it spawned a minidiscipline that scoured the world for overlooked local architects who could be both modern and yet close to their supposed roots.

This prolocalist attitude took shape, that is, in the era of postmodern recuperation, long before the discipline of global history even existed.⁶ The prolocalist attitude emerged at a time when no one wanted anything to do with a history that went back to the much-maligned origins of civilization, a tendency identified as the toxic residue of Enlightenment pretensions. But what at the time was an opening in the discursive/political arena quickly became a narrowing, at least in the discipline of architecture. Revisionism morphed into discipline creation.

Though the emergence of localist historiography is usually associated with postmodernism (speaking generally here for the sake of argument), one cannot see this in isolation. In fact, it paralleled the emergence of another new discipline, the “history of modern architecture.” We might forget that until the 1970s modern architecture did not have a dedicated scholarly “history.” The only history it had was given either through Giedion’s high, civilizational perspective or through the lens of “great men.” Modernist history was also taught not by scholars but by interested practitioners in the context of the studio. Only in the late 1970s did modern architecture become a proper historical field. Freed from the obligation of having to deal with architecture’s problematic “origins,” this discipline began to look almost exclusively to the history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Museum of Modern Art played its part with shows such as Louis Kahn: 1901–1974 (1974); The Architecture of the École des Beaux-Arts (1976); Le Corbusier: Architectural Drawings (1978); The Architecture of Gunnar Asplund (1978); and Russia: The Avant Garde (1979). Frampton’s *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* appeared in 1980.

The disciplinary restructuring of the late 1970s and 1980s is important to my argument, since the history of modern architecture in the United States usually begins with Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock’s International Style exhibition (Museum of Modern Art, 1932), then moves to the arrival of Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and others, before coming to the gradual dissemination of modernism into professional practices. In my view, however, modernism’s self-naturalization as an architectural practice differs from the type of modernism that began to take form as a complex, multivalent geopolitical institution in the 1980s. In that context, one has to include the first Ph.D. programs created in schools of architecture, such as MIT’s in 1975. Soon followed by others, most have produced graduates with a specialty in twentieth-century modernism. One can also point to the Venice Architecture Biennale of 1980, titled *The Presence of the Past*, for which Rem Koolhaas penned a polemical piece titled “Our New Sobriety.”⁷ Architecture’s return to functionalism would be marked, so Koolhaas hoped, by methodological rigor. The emergence in the 1990s of computation as a research field added to the disciplinary thickening around the modernist ethos.

Parallel to this was the rise of a movement that at first blush seemed to be a reactionary gesture: traditional architecture. Old buildings have been discussed for centuries, but the idea of putting the word *traditional* in front of the word *architecture* to indicate a type of disciplinary thinking and production developed only in the mid-to-late 1970s. Book titles demonstrate this. Take the example of Japan:

1927: *A Brief History of Japanese Architecture*
 1930: *Impressions of Japanese Architecture and the Allied Arts*

Left: Nine covers of the ten-volume edition of Teiji Itō, *Nihon no minka* [Traditional Japanese Houses], with photographs by Futagawa Yukio (1957–1959).
 Right: Cover of Teiji Itoh, *Traditional Domestic Architecture of Japan* (English translation, 1973).

1935: *Japanese Architecture*

1936: *Fundamentals of Japanese Architecture*

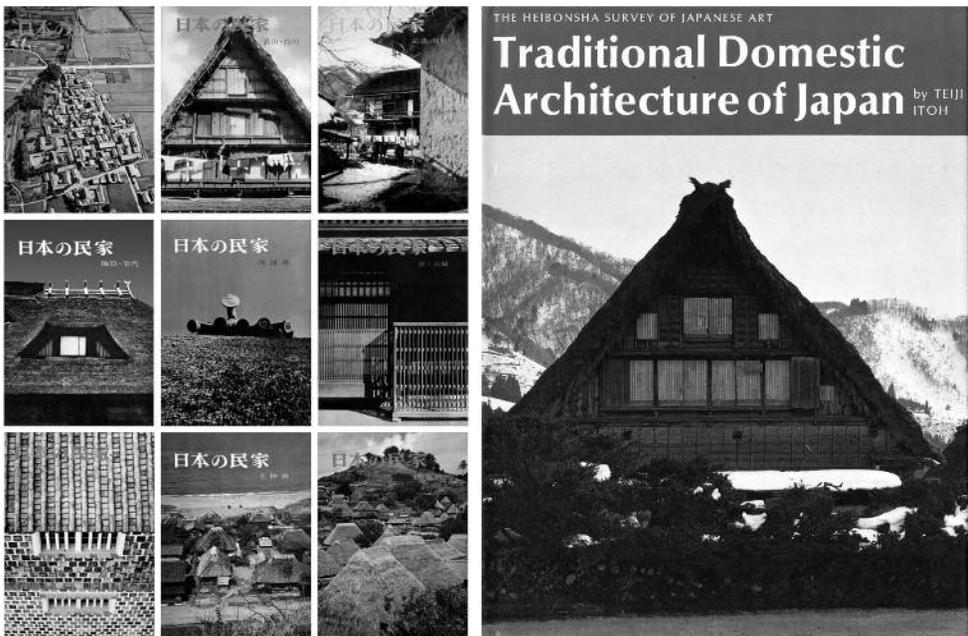
1941: *A Short History of Japanese Architecture*

1962: *Guide Book to Japanese Architecture*

1972: *Traditional Domestic Architecture of Japan*

1989: *Traditional Japanese Architecture* (film)

The rise of traditional architecture and its corollary vernacular architecture can easily be indexed as part of an interrogation of modernity that began in the 1960s. But it was more than that. From the start, both were geopolitical movements. One need only point to legislation such as the British Museum Act (1963), the U.S. Wilderness Act (1964), the National Hispanic Heritage Week (1968), and the Indian Antiquities and Art Treasures Act (1972), all leading to the International Convention on Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage (1981).



The creation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) expanded the realm of traditional architecture to the great monuments of civilization. To be placed on the Heritage List, nation-states had to propose buildings to UNESCO, with the result being an increased focus on the nation-state and its architecture. Not only did we get an officially sanctioned list of great buildings, cleaned of squatters and restored for posterity; we also got apps such as Heritage, Heritage of Southeast Asia, and UNESCO World Heritage that feature thousands of pictures that reinforce the aesthetic beauty of the various national sites.

The dynamic of the purification of architectural/national imaginaries played itself out at the Erbil Citadel in Iraqi Kurdistan, the subject of Monk and Herscher's analysis. First,

the ostensibly “difficult social and health conditions within the Citadel,” as local authorities described it, convinced the Kurdistan Regional Government to evacuate the citadel, which they did in 2006. The High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalisation was then established and mandated to document the citadel’s historic heritage and plan for its so-called revitalization.⁸ The International Council on Monuments and Sites noted, in the language of modernization, that “the erection of shelters using looted building materials (252 shacks out of 588 inventoried buildings) have considerably undermined the integrity of the nominated property.”⁹ Nonetheless, in 2014, the site, which by then was “not inhabited,” was accepted for inclusion on the Heritage List.¹⁰

The effort is symptomatic of the newly globalized connection between modernization and the UNESCO-approved



nationalization of architecture’s history.

All this was magnified by the emergence of national museums. More national museums have been created in the last twenty years than in the previous one hundred. These museums need exhibitions (and curators) that emphasize the priority of the nation-state. We increasingly get books with titles along the lines of *The Art and Architecture of Turkey*, *The Art and Architecture of Cambodia*, *The Architecture of Kenya*, *Mongolian Architecture*, *Chinese Architecture*, *The Temples of Korea*, and so forth. This type of cultural nationalism has now become standard operating procedure around the world.¹¹ As a result, the proverbial canon, critiqued so strongly in the 1970s, is stronger today than it ever was, for it was in essence out-sourced to the geopolitics of the nation-state.

The ethics of the alliance between local planning boards,

Restored gate of the citadel with the statue of historian and poet Mubarak Ben Ahmed Sharaf-Aldin (1169–1239), Erbil, Iraq, 2007. Photo: Nujdar Zibari. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0.

historians, researchers, national politics, curatorship, and international institutions, all convinced of the righteousness of their efforts, is something that should be vigorously debated, but my point—since I am here only concerned with the “history” question and not the humanitarian issue—is that the type of supporting role that “history” plays in all of this should not be confused with history as a humanistic discipline. This is a history operating within the confines of powerful, narcissistic regimes of epistemological production that did not exist prior to the 1980s. That is, the intellectual and political project that began to take shape in the 1970s, often within the context of identity politics and postcolonial sensibilities, came to be magnified and formalized by a political-industrial matrix that was grounded in internationally sanctioned, nation-affirming, and nation-building ideologies.

The impact on architectural teaching was profound. In India, for example, in 1983, the Council for Architecture mandated in new standards for architectural education that students should “study the various styles of Architecture and methods of construction through the ages in the world with emphasis on Indian Architecture.”¹² Even as late as 2013, the recommended curriculum in India listed ten books dedicated to architectural history. Five had the word *India* in the title. The rest were on Greece, Rome, the Romanesque, the Gothic, and the contemporary, including readings from that nineteenth-century classic, *History of Architecture*, by Banister Fletcher.¹³ Clearly the old Eurocentric view is now “balanced” by a nation-centric view, one that is repeated in countries worldwide. In Japan, one of the leading design schools, announces this on its website:

The first year training teaches the fundamentals of spatial design. Beginning with human dimensions as a base, the spatial scale gradually expands as the subject of design is developed, moving through lighting, fashion, furniture and interior design. . . . Students then learn the elements of architecture through classes on planning and general construction, while a class on Japanese architectural history cultivates foundational learning as an architect.¹⁴

On the surface of things, the preservation industry, nation-based historiography, and traditional architecture (again, with their disciplinary foundations in a world of journals, publications, researchers, conferences, institutions, and apps) were seen as disciplines in *opposition* to modernism, when in reality tradition and modernism are two sides of the *same* phenomenon, which to some degree explains the profound lack of any kind of organized critique.

Today scholars are well aware of the false duality between tradition and modernism, but that is *not* how the disciplinary field of architecture and art history operates, especially in contexts outside of the United States.¹⁵ Take, for example, the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul, Korea, with its

Museum for Traditional Korean Art designed by Mario Botta, and—in a separate building—its Museum of Modern Art designed by Jean Nouvel. Botta was seen by the Korean patrons as a good candidate for the job of designing the Museum for Traditional Korean Art. As a good Eurocentric, the argument went, he would be sympathetic to Korea’s nation-centrism.¹⁶ Therein lies the problem I have been talking about: the institutionalization, nationalization, bureaucratization, and curatorialization of the division of modern and tradition. This is a global problem that legitimates Eurocentrism as just one manifestation of many types of centrism.

Historians of modern architecture have more or less turned a blind eye to this entire problem. The result is an unholy alliance in which old buildings in schools of architecture around the world are taught by preservationists, often with localist



leanings, whereas the twentieth-century buildings are increasingly taught by historians, producing an odd reversal of expectations. Architectural history—the discipline—has almost become a code word for the history of modernism, whereas the “historical”—now sadly often called “the premodern”—is allied with epistemologies that champion the proverbial “pride of place.”¹⁷

In the United States, the narrative restrictions that have been placed on the architectural object were exacerbated when, in the last two decades, in order to make room for the two new disciplines in the tenure system, representatives of fields such as anthropology and sociology (not to mention the old Eurocentric discipline of Renaissance architecture), which were often seen as part of the standard architectural curriculum until the 1970s, simply vanished. Today in the United States, one finds fewer and fewer architectural history scholars

Mario Botta.
Leeum, Samsung
Museum of Art,
Seoul, South Korea,
2005.

who work on material that is older than the nineteenth century. This silent purge has gone uncritiqued and is having a profound and largely negative impact on the field.¹⁸ The type of purification and magnification of architecture's history that one finds in the context of preservation parallels the purification, in schools of architecture, of architecture's broader history.

What, then, as Monk and Herscher write, "endows each historicized building with a status consistent with an expanded definition of architecture"? I do not think the answer is "the globalization of architecture's history" as associated in their minds with something called "a global history of architecture" but rather the expanded field of architecture itself—and, more precisely, its late-twentieth-century, supersized, modernist ideology. As a global matrix, this expanded field uses the discipline we call "history" as just another part of the self-naturalization of the modern while in the same breath trying to naturalize and universalize its nation-based protocols. The problem, therefore, is not history but the *disciplining* of history. The problem is not globalization but its more precise variant, nationalization, and the globally sanctioned attempt to naturalize its various epistemological productions. In the last three decades this has become a historical phenomenon in its own right, one that leads us, paradoxically, into the belly of the beast: the modern geopolitical.

To summarize: The 1970s saw the beginning of a transformation across the board in academe. This was an exciting moment of epistemological recuperation and institution building. But beginning in the 1980s, the emergent disciplinary realities of modernism and preservation, riding on the coattails of globalization, expanded their horizons beyond expectations and became the new normal. The institutions of today that define and protect these disciplines are, however, marked by an increasing intransigence and lack of flexibility. This means that, as valuable as the disciplinary innovation was back in the 1970s and 1980s, one has to make the transition into a different mind-set in order to finish the fight.

Which brings me back to that slippery word *global*.

In the face of intractable philosophical critiques, we can remove *global* from our vocabulary and see it as just an abbreviation of the word *globalization*. But that would be to ignore an unexpected opportunity to *rethink* the production of knowledge.¹⁹ With that in mind, a *global* history of architecture—not as that which is merely there to re-produce the universal but as that which is actively suppressed by it—bears witness to the inscribed limitations of architecture's status quo. As such its *first* disciplinary task is to expose the epistemological regimes—the *globally enforced antiglobals*—that define a whole spectrum of museological/administrative/pedagogical/curatorial practices that lie at the core of the architectural world.²⁰ A *global* history of architecture is not a discipline; it is an accusation.

Notes

1. I assume that Monk and Herscher's critique of universalism is the classic one that tries to expose metaphysical operations that destroy difference, whether by subsuming difference into identity or excising it from identity. I also assume that the authors are claiming that universalism has become concretized through the word *global* and, in that sense, that the word itself is the carrier of a dialectic vitality that operates for the sole purpose of completing its mission of "presence." The issue is that in detaching *global* from *globalization*, and then relinking the phrases, Monk and Herscher play on semantic slippages that keep them from digging deeper into what exactly is being "globalized" in the ultimate condition of the "globalization of architecture's history." In this response, I am more interested in showing how relations of power construct realms of objectivity. In this way we avoid the problem of a "false positive" (so to speak) of guilt by semantic association.

2. In its *2014 Conditions for Accreditation*, the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) requires "History and Global Culture: Understanding of the parallel and divergent histories of architecture and the cultural norms of a variety of indigenous, vernacular, local, and regional settings in terms of their political, economic, social, ecological, and technological factors." NAAB, *2014 Conditions for Accreditation* (Washington, DC: NAAB, 2014), 16, http://www.naab.org/accreditation/2014_Conditions. Though this is the beginning of the conversation, NAAB's understanding of what "global" represents derives from ideas generated in the 1970s. The assumption, for example, that global history "starts" with indigenous cultures and moves its way up the political ladder is not what I mean by *global*.

3. I use the word *transhorizon* to include more than just issues of trade and commerce and the spread of ideas, technologies, disease, and so on. A history that moves across the horizon can be produced in many ways, including by comparative analysis or the narrative of imaginary travels. A global history does not even require that history cross the horizon in any real sense of the word. A single building can be discussed from a global-history point of view.

4. I am not sure how to read their use of the word *globalization*. They cannot possibly mean that architectural history plays a direct role in the economics of neoliberal capitalism. They probably mean that architectural history is somehow being global-ized without, however, explaining how it is thus disseminated throughout the world. "Globalization" is a semiotic indicator of the spirit of universalism present in a global architectural history's discourse. In chasing after the word *global*, Monk and Herscher thus wind up facing the problem of how the universal manifests itself in the concrete. For Monk and Herscher it does so in various texts produced by intellectuals in the field. These texts, they then imply, conceal their true class-specific meaning in the interest of a dominant ideology whose workings can best be exposed to view through an immanent critique of unwitting self-revelations. In this critique, perhaps deriving from Antonio Gramsci, the intellectuals they discuss are presented as a type of alienated class participating blindly—if not stubbornly—in a process that both enforces and propagates the hegemony of the universal. The problem, as I see it, is not the intellectuals, legitimate targets though they may be (including me), but a broader system of empowerment. That is, the problem is bigger than the authors imply.

5. The semiotic approach was pursued by Charles Jencks and others, but since it did not develop an extensive institutional footprint I leave it for a different discussion. Some strands also moved in the direction of poststructuralism and postcolonialism, but these were generally small in scale and existed at the upper end of the academic ladder. As to the phenomenologists, they championed an existentialist-type of "being-in-the-world." Readings centered on Martin Heidegger, Gaston Bachelard, and later, though in a more limited way, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

6. This has been the subject of a vast amount of speculation. Edward Soja's identification of the "spatial turn" in the social sciences is one example. Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso Books, 1989).

7. Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis, "La nostra nuova sobrietà," in *La presenza del passato: Prima mostra internazionale di architettura*, exh. cat. (Venice: Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia, 1980), 214–216.

8. ICOMOS [International Council on Monuments and Sites], "Erbil Citadel (Republic of Iraq) No 1437," in *2014 Evaluations of Nominations of Cultural and Mixed Properties to the World Heritage List*, ICOMOS Report for the World Heritage Committee, 38th Ordinary Session, Doha, June 2014, WHC-14/38.COM/INF.8B1 (Paris: ICOMOS, 2014), 80, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-38com-inf8B1-en.pdf>. See also, UNESCO World Heritage Committee, *Decisions Adopted by the World Heritage Committee at Its 38th Session (Doha, 2014)*, WHC-14/38.COM/16 (Paris: UNESCO, 2014), 189–91, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-38com-16en.pdf>.

9. ICOMOS, 82.

10. ICOMOS, 79; and UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 189–91.

11. See also, Mark Jarzombek, "The Metaphysics of Permanence—Curating Critical Impossibilities," *Log*, no. 21 (2010): 125–35.

12. "Minimum Standards of Architectural Education Regulations, 1983," Council of Architecture, <http://www.coa.gov.in/acts/regulation1983.htm>.

13. All India Council for Technical Education, *Model Curriculum for Undergraduate Programme in Bachelor of Architecture 2013* (New Delhi: All India Council for Technical Education, 2013), http://www.aicte-india.org/downloads/B.%20Arch_syllabus_2013.pdf.

14. "Architecture," Kyoto Seika University website, <http://www.kyoto-seika.ac.jp/eng/edu/design/architecture/>.

15. See, for example, Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

16. This is condensed from a series of discussions I had at the opening of the museum in 2004, when I and others presented papers. Botta gave a talk focusing on his admiration of the European cathedral, admitting that this sensibility, rather than any familiarity with Korean culture, was what got him the commission.

17. The UNESCO-ification of architecture and the complex role UNESCO plays in geopolitical epistemologies has come increasingly under interrogation by several scholars in the field. Here, my point focuses only on the sanctioned divisions of academic labor, which produce a false global.

18. The diminution of interest in pre-nineteenth-century material also applies to the field of history more generally. Jerry Bentley, editor of the *Journal of World History*, notes that of the 195 articles published in that journal from 1990 to 2006 only seventeen deal with periods before 1500. See *Global Practice in World History: Advances Worldwide*, ed. Patrick Manning (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2008), 20, 133–34.

19. My view of the use of the word *global* is more elastic than that of Monk and Herscher. Instead of seeing *global* as filled only with toxicity, I argue that the word can be redeemed and that its status of signifier can be reopened, indeed *must* be reopened, precisely because we have to face the challenge of what *global* means or could mean in the future—in a world that is indeed global, if more in imagination than reality.

20. The problem of teaching a class called Global History of Architecture—as humble a problem as that might at first seem—forces the academic world to confront the built-in mechanisms that passively oppose the teaching of a global history of architecture, as well as to actively resist a more expansive notion of what it might mean to be "global." The solution is not to reshape Ph.D. education and tenure expectations but to understand first the struc-

tural disconnect between how a Ph.D. topic is produced and how a global history of architecture is produced. The former falls into the category of disciplines that ground themselves in books and peer-reviewed publications. The latter has a target audience that consists namely of architecture students, who, in principle at least, are expected to take survey classes that introduce the broader parameters of the history of the field. Such classes, usually taught by the professors at the bottom of the academic food chain, are often seen as far too trivial for advanced scholars. The problem is all the more acute since architecture education today promotes the worldview of what is now cumulatively called the “creative class.” In a so-called globalized world, a world without obvious unifying narratives, architectural education emphasizes the universality of creativity, and this usually points the efforts of the students in the direction of modernist antihistoricism, with its built-in resistance to deep histories and the critiques necessary to come to grips with cultural questions in the twenty-first century. Students travel the world with studio professors and engage in issues far from their homeland. The assumption is that if one removes *-ization* from the word *globalization*, one magically gets to “global,” and then, if one throws a historian into the mix, one gets to “global history.” But the proximity of a global studio to global history is fool’s gold. Global history is not created through the accidents and arbitrariness of global travel and globally scaled education.

Seize the Definition

SWATI CHATTOPADHYAY

*Definitions belong to the definers, not the defined.*¹

Daniel Bertrand Monk and Andrew Herscher trace two parallel phenomena: (1) the institution of world heritage conservation, which facilitates the consumption of historic sites as global history; and (2) the dislocation of refugees from their home into a new sphere of “voucher humanitarianism.” They argue that these two processes are conjoined by the same epistemic violence that hinges on an indistinction between the refugee camp and the world itself, the latter preoccupied by the interests of a cosmopolitan elite. The coevalness of the rise of global history and voucher humanitarianism, they claim, posits a new universalism in which the connection between refuge and refugee has been severed.

Monk and Herscher’s argument suggests two corollaries: (1) that any place is susceptible to becoming a refugee camp—dislocated from history and shelter itself—residing outside the world-that-matters; and (2) that this pattern of epistemic violence is not only limited to UNESCO-style fashioning of global history but carries over, often in ways unexamined, to other arenas of global history practice, such as global architectural history. The first follows from the premise of bare life and certain populations’ susceptibility to subalternization. The second resides in a continuum between world heritage-making and the writing of architectural history surveys as a history of world monuments.

I write in the spirit of intellectual comradeship, as I share Monk and Herscher’s critical position on the intertwining of subalternity and tacit cosmopolitanism that undergirds heritage conservation, voucher humanitarianism, and certain forms of global history writing. But perhaps in their criticism of global architectural history they concede too much to the dominant forces that attempt to set the terms of discourse. This concession springs from the assumption of the unity of architecture as a concept.

The play between the universal and the global that enables certain claims to appear self-evident is worthy of our attention. Monk and Herscher point out that the ecumenism of place championed by global history surveys has only made the local exemplars that were earlier left out of historical surveys a mere variation on the universal. Neither the general principle nor the analytic is challenged in such evocations of the local. The canon is made more capacious and the raft of universalism enables a safe ride over the raging waters of globality in the passage from the West to the non-West (the temporal and spatial starting point of the journey is suggestive). I am making a dis-

inction here between the messy process and practices that constitute “globality,” the experience of engaging with geopolitics and the global movements of populations, commodities, and ideas, and “globalism,” typically the ideological safe-ground of a cosmopolitan elite. And globality is *not* universality.

If global history today instantiates the particular as an effect of the universal, then that is far from new.² Indeed it is exactly what the imperial global history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries enacted: the mode has changed in keeping with the changing modes of capitalism, not the content of the claim to speak for and stand in for other peoples. The logic of coloniality that pervades such imperialism connects the old and new universalisms.³

A scrupulous attention to the difference between the universal and the global is in order. The universal suggests commonality and sameness: its figure is the abstract human; it does



not allow specificity of context. The global inclines toward plurality through interconnections or networks and thereby harbors the *possibility* of challenging the presumption of the universal.

In the nineteenth century and through the mid-twentieth century global networks were constructed and dominated by European imperialism. A seamless integration of universalism and globalism was deemed necessary for the project of European imperialism to take hold.⁴ Anticolonial nationalists during the decades of decolonization (and long before the period of formal decolonization from the 1940s through the 1970s) worked to claim these networks for their own purposes while still appealing to a universalism—primarily sameness—in their treatment as political subjects.⁵ An example of such network formation was the 1955 Bandung conference. Globally, the discourse and practice of post-WWII housing was lodged in

Delegates of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen walk to Merdeka Building in Bandung, Indonesia, to participate in the Asian-African Conference, April 20, 1955. National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia.

the often incompatible and conflicting goals of the new imperialism of the post-WWII era (channeled through organizations such as the World Bank and the World Health Organization) and the disparate goals of the postcolonial leaders as they strove to solve the problem of shelter in their own fledging nation-states. The propositions of shelter that came out of this entanglement were diverse and may not be subsumed within the goals and practices of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne's (CIAM) architect-planners. So let us not instantiate the housing question by citing CIAM.

Similarly, the embrace of global architectural history we see today was not simply a liberal contamination from cognate disciplines but was the work of at least two generations of architectural historians who, working on the peripheries of Euro-American history, forced a recognition of the importance of the “not-West” amid those raised in and preoccupied by the dominant discourse.⁶ So the slide of newer architectural history surveys into a new universalism needs to be seen in a different light than that offered by Monk and Herscher. If the gaze of these historians turned beyond the West, and they made the non-West appear on the scene of history as a figure of the “local,” this was accomplished to keep intact the concept of architecture. The assumption of the unity of architecture as a concept allows the screen of universalism to operate upon the built environment around the globe to see Architecture (i.e., architecture with a capital “A” marked by canonical significance). The corrective is not simply to enable refugees to inhabit or return to the citadel. To prevent universalism from taking hold, we need to disaggregate the term *architecture* and suspend its unity: reimagine the citadel.

Let us seize the definition of the global and review its networks if we wish to change the practice of history—architectural or otherwise.

Notes

1. Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Alfred Knopf), 190.

2. For a useful analysis of the problem of the universal in the practice of history, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

3. For such a discussion of coloniality, see Walter Mignolo, “The Many Faces of Cosmo-Polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism,” in *Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Carol Breckenridge et al. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); and Walter Mignolo, “Subalterns and Other Agencies,” in *Postcolonial Studies* 8, no. 4 (2005): 381–408.

4. See Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, *Empires and the Reach of the Global, 1870–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

5. See the discussion of nationalist claims in Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

6. For an account of how this played out in the realm of urban history, see Swati Chattopadhyay, “Urbanism, Colonialism, and Subalternity,” in *A World of Cities: Urban Theory beyond “the West,”* ed. Tim Edensor and Mark Jayne (London: Routledge, 2011), 75–92.

In Particular

DANIEL BERTRAND MONK AND ANDREW HERSCHER

Our essay concerns the historical atrophy of consciousness of a necessary and logical connection between refuge and refugee and, with that atrophy, of a widening “protection gap.” Ours is a revisionist history of a normative revisionist tendency, and no one should mistake it for a call for the return to a past state of affairs. By design, no affirmative program can be derived from our analysis. That said, we do not think the essay’s systematic negation qualifies as mere critique. Our inquiry into the dissociations of refuge and refugee is a *via negativa* into a contemporary condition that can neither tolerate nor recognize the demand of the displaced on thought, except as corroborating instances of the dissociation we document.

What is to some extent common to the thoughtful and provocative responses to our argument is a staging of vivid, culturally specific, ethnographically rich, historically complex, and/or politically propitious phenomena that are putatively ignored by, or subsumed into our narrative’s presumably abstract, universalizing, schematizing, or paradigmatic terms. This staging adds important details to the history whose outlines we present. At the same time, we cannot escape the impression that *this is precisely how the dissociation we document perpetuates itself*. Qualified in some of the responses as “local” or “specific,” these factemes are resources that can be processed into just the forms of particularity that we see as constitutive of the prevailing tendency we call the “new universalism.” Indeed, that the responses to our essay locate these factemes sometimes in the actions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and sometimes in the voices of individual refugees speaks to the function of *particularity-as-such*, rather than to any specific content of this particularity. Such responses ratify the returns that particularity brings to disaggregated disciplines and therefore normalizes their disaggregation.

Further, some of our interlocutors suggest a metonymy in which the universalizing terms we seek to historicize become evidence of our own disavowed or unacknowledged resort to universals. For example, one response critiques our analysis as a reification of the very terms that solicit and inform it, particularly *shelter*. For us, this is indeed a key term, whose putative universalism has emerged historically. This is why we point to *shelter* as an artifact of historically specific intersections of architecture and humanitarianism and its subsequent itinerary that runs from social reformist to socialist. We are cognizant of the term’s very different status in the writings of Friedrich Engels and in the efforts of Charles Abrams and suggest that “shelter” cannot be reduced to a product of the distinction

between “government of the social” and the humanitarian governance cited by another response. We stage *shelter*, therefore, as a trace: a repressed, denigrated, and at times annihilated component of conceptual structures within which terms such as *architecture* and *refugee* appear and corresponding relations to alterity are made possible in the process of advancing identitarian thought.

In this sense, “shelter” becomes that from which the “architecture” produced by architectural history distinguishes itself. Enacted in the chain of substitutions from *shelter* to *building* to *architecture* in Le Corbusier’s conclusion to *Vers une architecture*, this distinction has subsequently been reprised in a number of versions of architectural history, so that the history of this distinction deconstructs the self-avowed unity of “architecture.”¹ “Shelter” is also, we argue, what humanitarianism has come to distinguish the “refugee” from. Those (un)named as “refugees” are the trace that several of our respondents point to, and this trace, too, solicits historicization. That is, as presently constituted the refugee demands an account of the way that normative assessments of its place and status *themselves* assume and reproduce the fully political disappearance of the refuge as a relevant and paired concept.

As for global architectural history, we find our critique of its disciplinary self-ordering further substantiated in some of the responses. *Global* here signifies a concatenation of “local” sites rather than sites that are themselves concatenated by globalizing systems—which is why, contra other versions of global history, global histories of architecture typically begin with a precomprehended object of study (“architecture”) rather than with “globalization.” That is their prerogative, but what matters most in the present context is the way that a field of knowledge disavows its externality from its own object and, in the process, participates in a geopolitical ordering of the present quite distinct from the one against which it self-consciously distinguishes itself. Both buildings and displaced humanity “enjoy” careers that cannot be reconciled with the ones assigned them in present thought. To the contrary, in a historical moment marked by the displacement of more than 55 million people (around 38 million internally displaced people and 17 million refugees worldwide), the fate of the displaced must be measured immanently against what Theodor Adorno once called the conceptual “nature preserves” into which knowledge has cast them.²

Notes

1. Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture* (1923), trans. John Goodman (Santa Monica: Getty Research Institute, 2007), 307.

2. Theodor Adorno, “Lecture Fifteen: Metaphysics and Materialism,” in *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2000), 115.