FORMS FOR CHANGE:
AN ARCHITECTURE OF MEANING

BY NINA KIM

A.B. Architecture
University of California
Berkeley
1984

Submitted to the Department of Architecture
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE
at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
June 1987

Authored by Nina Kim.

Certified by Edward Robbins.
Assistant Professor of Anthropology
in Architecture

Accepted by Judy Dayton Mitchell. Chairman.
Department Committee for Graduate Students

© NINA KIM 1987.
The author hereby grants to MIT permission
to reproduce and publicly distribute copies
of this thesis document in whole or in parts.
ABSTRACT:
A socially responsible role for architecture and architects is one which consciously responds to a particular set of socio-cultural values. These values, regardless of interpretation, are in a state of constant change. In the modern context, various forces have accelerated this change. Therefore an architecture which either reflects or responds to change creates more meaningful environments. This becomes increasingly necessary. Through an analysis of three dwellings, characteristics of forms are found which respond well to change. These are 1) Multi-functional versus differentiated. 2) Configurative versus figurative. 3) Complex images and elements versus free eclecticism.

Thesis Supervisor: Edward Robbins
Title: Assistant Professor of Anthropology in Architecture
This work is largely composed of the odd generosities of my MIT Professors, punctuated by the indulgences of family and friends.

In particular, I am grateful for the guidance of Ed Robbins, Jack Myer and Imre Halasz. I thank also Hassan Abouseda and Greta Jones for comaraderie in our absurd condition and Miriam Conway for her patient eyes.

And to those unnamed who influence me continually, my gratitude is no less outstanding for having remained unspoken even if this proves to be my last chance to get it in print.
The premise of this thesis is that architecture is integral to society. Architecture has a particular value and therefore a concomitant responsibility. This thesis then is not directly concerned with how architecture is done or the particular tasks of the architect. It hopes to guide one momentarily away from issues of how to issues of why.

To think of why is to think of motivations, both internal and external, that sustain our interest and love of architecture. The why is, of course, a difficult and subjective topic and in the day-to-day we tend to skirt the issue. Most questions that begin with why are fundamentally subjective as is architecture. This can be problematic since answers to such questions involve judgements and may easily lapse into the mainly idiosyncratic or prescriptive.

We must none-the-less be subjective but also examine and perhaps validate our subjectivities by continually contrasting them against other worlds. If we don't, we will passively participate in creating environments increasingly motivated by economic forces alone. By default, we will become party to the unnecessary deterioration in the quality of our environments.

This thesis will propose a definition of meaning in architecture. After an overview of changes in 20th Century Korean urbanism, we will apply our definition of architectural meaning to three examples—a Korean vernacular dwelling and two contemporary dwellings. Our conclusion is that forms which adapt and respond to changes in the physical and also non-physical environment are more meaningful for they maintain a continuity.
CHAPTER ONE
Meaning in Architecture

Meaning is a difficult concept, for it means too much. Meaning begins in the correspondence of sensate form to invisible idea, logically links intention and response, then expands through private association to join all a thing is with all it can be in the minds of its creators and perceivers. Finally, meaning carries through the shared experience of form and idea to philosophical bedrock. Most crucially, meaning is that which joins people through things, transforming forms into values, values into forms. Understanding values is the purpose of study.

-H.Glassie

Part A : Mechanics of Meaning
Meaning in architecture is a difficult topic but one that should be of increasing concern to the profession of architecture. This is, in part, due to the changing relationship between the architect, client and the user. The equation between the architect and the client was more direct in the pre-industrialized world. The client was almost invariably the user and the architect shared the same cultural world. Architects could directly access the requirements, physical and otherwise, of the user.

Today the equation is more complex. The architect deals with clients who are usually not the users. There is a built in distance brought about by the division of labor in industrialized society. Patrons of architecture have primarily become government, institutions, speculative developers or corporate heads while users are citizens, buyers, and employees.
This distancing between the architect and the user has created a reliance on the architect's ability, in so far as s/he is concerned, to imagine and project the needs and more importantly, the values of the people who will later come in contact with the building. It is apparent that it is not sufficient for the architect to substitute his/her own values for theirs.

Architects who care are obliged to understand the meanings other will assert, perceive or interpret in forms, as well as to understand their own values with which they design. Unfortunately, architects do not often address the complexities of meaning in architectural form. Rather, we tend to pursue the topic only in so far as it reinforces our individual design patterns. Meaning works to support our own design beliefs.

To the extent that contemporary architects do address meaning, it is more often than not through a self-conscious interest in symbolism. Symbolism is a glamorous topic, yet is only a piece of the larger definition of meaning in form. Our preoccupation with symbolism can placate our curiosities for further understanding. In practice, an emphasis on symbolic aspects in design leads most often to monumentalist and aestheticist interests.

There is, however, a discussion outside of architecture from which we may profit, i.e. the recent work done by anthropologists, sociologists and linguists. These divergent fields have looked at meaning and its relation to material objects in complex ways. They have worked to find new possibilities with which meaning may be applied to environmental design and architecture.
We will look at some possibilities these fields have examined, starting from the rather simplistic notion of meaning in objects. We will then look at meaning in architectural form. That discussion is largely influenced by the recent writings of Preziosi and Minai.

Since our early days as tool makers, much of our attention has been focused on objects and details of the environment. Objects were used and manipulated as extensions of or substitutes for the appendages of the body itself. Material manipulation as an intervention in the environment has enhanced and amplified our power or control.

Tool use and manufacture soon progressed past the initial utilitarian functions. Created objects came to serve more than material need; they developed meanings. This ability to use the material environment as a tool and as an externalization of ourselves allowed access to internalized abstract conception. This access has allowed us to study, challenge and compare such concepts. These externalizations as artifacts of culture are vehicles for communication much like the verbal language itself.

Consequently, much work has sought to apply linguistical models to the built environment. Semiology is roughly defined as the study of meaning. Most of the work in this area has been focused on language, although recently, attention has been drawn to the built environment.

Meaning can be seen as internal to those who perceive or receive the message and thus is subject to interpretation and sometimes
misinterpretation. As in all communication, the transfer of messages is dependent upon the perception of those messages. The burden and responsibility of communication is upon the sender but the message is validated by its receiver.

Paradoxically, this validation is not easily understood or categorized by the design community. It is not a simple matter of observation nor can this reception be referenced by architects in books or publications assuming they have either the time or the interest.

The environment, particularly in the modern context, is so rich with information and communication, both intended and arbitrary, that we must select and edit that which we perceive. Perception is our conscious awareness of a select portion of that which our unconscious self is aware.

Meaning then is not intrinsic to a material object. Although we may communicate with specific intent, it is through the reception that meaning is awarded. Intended meaning is necessarily transformed and personalized by the receiver.

This is a rather strong statement to apply to architecture. More often than not, architects remain confident that their work will be interpreted as intended or they are unconcerned. Creative intent in design is undeniably an important aspect of meaning in architecture. Yet, it is a difficult topic to approach since intention in design is not often expressed.
When expressed, intent often suffers from self-conscious evaluation. When fear of judgement affects intent in the process of articulation, the expressed intent becomes suspect. Similarly, it is hard to account for creative intent because it often is laden with rhetoric. The value of an architect's intentions camouflaged as a marketing tool is undermined.

Ultimately, intentions are only important in so far as they are translated into the final product. They are only interesting when they find form in architecture. And once they do find form, it is only through the response of the perceivers that intentions can find meaning and be of value.

Other architects may disagree entirely to the application of semiology to architecture, preferring instead to employ the cloak of intuition or the ambiguous yet powerful unconscious. But a conscious understanding of the intuitive does not mutate it into the rational. Nor does a conscious state necessarily impose a self-consciousness where one is overly concerned with evaluation. Rather, an understanding of intuitive decisions and hidden values undeniably enables us to approach design more responsibly.1

Responsible design is critical when one considers that the production of any object, especially architecture, is a social act.2 The material resources and specialized tasks of construction, along with the number of people who will later come in contact with the building, deeply integrates the making of architecture into society.
Meaning in architecture, as awarded through use, is ultimately agreed upon by social contract. Such an agreement is determined by a specific system of values, ideas and images which in any society are always in a state of refinement.

Additionally, meaning is context specific due to the inherent choices involved in its making. The construction of architecture manipulates only a select portion of the available resources and methods of assembly. The determination for such a selection is context-specific. Quite simply, the construction must match the available technology and the materials must be at hand or available for use.

In summary, the meaning and ultimately the value of our created objects, such as architecture, as artifacts of culture, are defined through the response of the receivers or perceivers. Such meaning is necessarily agreed upon by social contract and is specific to a particular cultural context which can be defined as a shared set of moral values, religious and philosophical understandings, and social organization.

The difficulty is measuring response and thus meaning. "We know that the way a message is received, the relative decoding process and the errors made in decoding are the decisive factors in creating a productive relationship between (architectural) communication and social behavior."
Part B: Mechanics of Communication

In the discussion of meaning in architecture, various categories and definitions of meaning have been suggested. The nature of the definitions have much to do with the goals of the author. Definitions later used by environmental behavioralists are inherently different from those that evolve from work done in communication theory. For our purposes, a definition will be presented that can be later used in a design and analysis of architecture of a modest scale. To begin, we will use a simple breakdown of meaning:

Responsive meaning: What a building does to you

Representational meaning: What a building tells you

The first part deals with the implications of modification or amplification of behavioral patterns. Stated crudely, the environment is a stage on which our daily patterns are played. This stage can facilitate these patterns or it can obstruct them, thereby forcing redefinition of the patterns. Through an investigation of the qualities of this stage and our particular interactions with it, we can read much about ourselves.

As an example, let us take a building in which the circulation pattern is highly centralized. This material configuration may tell us something specific about the nature of the tenants. Such a configuration may reflect the tenant's political organization; perhaps it is highly centralized; access to the organization might be monitored and controlled as access to a building would be. This spacial organization of the building would then mirror the political organization of the tenants.
Tenants comfortable in such an environment would probably not find comfort in an environment not so well organized. A building that has multiple circulation systems scattered throughout may make the tenants of the centralized building uncomfortable. Perhaps they would feel vulnerable because the loose edges make it near impossible for them to control their territory.

Similarly spacial configurations relate to our social organization. Using the example above, a centralized organization will allow for certain social interaction and prohibit others. Daily contact in hallways or elevators may foster recognition of co-tenants or even chance relationships. Perhaps a greater sense of community is formed through shared environment than in a building with multiple entrances.

The reciprocity of spacial organization to social organization can be further illustrated in the Hongkong Bank where the elevator landings occur only every fifth floor. The landings are expanded and the event of passage is celebrated. The exaggeration of communal space is intended to encourage a greater sense of community by facilitating personal contact in the building.¹⁷

Spacial configuration and our relationship to it contains information about our culture. The measure is our behavior. Meaning thus can be found in the behavioral patterns the environment facilitates or obstructs as measured by our response.
Representational meaning is what the environment tells us. This category is somewhat richer than the first. It is connected with concepts like metaphor, association and symbol.

Earlier, we have discussed creative intent in design. We saw that some of the problems of accommodating intentions in design. Intent was only useful as far as it was transferred into the form itself. Realization of intent in form is of interest in this category.

The built environment can say many things. These non-verbal messages can be divided into at least two categories: iconographic and metaphoric.

Iconographic representation in built form can be defined as a literal translation of idea into form. In the Christian tradition, a goblet of wine that represents the blood of Christ is iconographic. In architecture, the cruciform formed in the plan of the apse and transept of a cathedral is iconic representation.

The iconographic belongs to the conscious level where talk is of objects and sets of objects rather than the relationship between them.

Semiology, concerned with iconographic communication, tries to define specific elements, distilling language to the smallest meaningful bit. It is concerned with elements, objects and sets of objects. This contrasts with the next category of metaphoric communication.

In extreme, an icon can be an object of uncritical devotion as in a religious icon. Confusion can occur between the icon and that which it represents. At worst, the icon can come to be more meaningful than that which it
signifies. A cross or national flag are often good examples of this.

Iconographic representation is popular among those currently practicing as post-modernists. Yet, as is the danger in the iconic, forms and images are used without responsible regard or understanding of the forces that combined to create the prior forms. Additionally, the iconic can be used in the deployment of disparate elements with conscious disregard for their relationships. This is eclecticism.

In eclecticism icons are used haphazardly to manipulate and utilize attributes of the previous form. The "Palladian wallpaper" cladding of Phillip Johnson’s International Place in Boston is an example of this tactic. In this humorously named project, the fenestration pattern is an arbitrary use of a previous style. The "Palladian wallpaper" has little relationship to the function of the office towers and no relationship to the overall form or massing of the building.

Iconic representation can be both a translation of idea into form and also a correspondence of one form to another in order to associate one with the other form’s attributes. The iconographic is processed on the conscious level where there is an awareness of both the perception of the icon and the association of its attributes.

Conversely, our second category of representational meaning, the metaphoric, appeals to the unconscious. A metaphor, in both verbal and non-verbal communication, is the suggestion of likeness or analogy. It is an allusion to
another object, idea or event. The metaphor gains meaning through association.

The early works of Frank Lloyd Wright is clearly illustrative of the attempt to use metaphor in architecture. With his emphasis on the horizontal direction with cantilevered eaves and horizontal massing, Wright sets up a harmonic relationship with the open vistas of the great plains region.

The long horizontal building masses, running parallel with the ground plane, give the visual impression of an integral relationship with the earth. The buildings belong to the ground. They are of the earth and make continuous reflection of it in their horizontal lines.

This example also illustrates another characteristic of metaphor; metaphor as it is communication on the unconscious level, talks primarily of relationships between elements. It is not focused on the specific elements as in iconic representation. In the previous example, a specific relationship between man and landscape is communicated by a metaphoric allusion of the building mass to the ground plane. Man, particularly in the farming region of the great plains, is in harmony with the land.

In another example, the built form alludes to a completely different relationship between man and the natural landscape. In the Villa Savoie in Poissy, Le Corbusier has lifted the major living spaces from the ground plane and has underscored this strained relationship by apparently supporting the mass on thin stick like columns. The built form is alien and abstracted from the landscape. Its relationship is strained. The relationship between form and ground is a
metaphor for the relationship between man and
the natural environment. Corbusier held that the
natural landscape was damp and unhealthy. Man with his new industrialization of the 19th
century had redefined his relationship and
dependance on the land. He had risen above it.

That Le Corbusier and Wright worked with full
conscious intention of their contrasting attitudes is
important to note. This illustrates the need for
the conscious manipulation of metaphoric
representation. The designer must be aware both
of the motivation of forms and also of the
product of such motivation.

Metaphoric representation then is a manipulation
of form to suggest a relation to another idea or
image. A metaphor deals with the relationships
between rather than an identification of the
elements. This processing of relationships is on
the unconscious level. Just as the iconographic is
semantic, the metaphoric is syntactic. The
reception and processing of the metaphor is
mostly unconscious and, unlike the conscious
reception of the icon, individual interpretation is
encouraged.

Up to this point there has been a conspicuous
absence of any discussion of conscious symbolism.
The use of Symbols in architecture falls both in
iconic and metaphoric communication. Symbols
are an elevated form of both. Symbols by
definition have particular cultural significance.
They carry cultural baggage built up over time.
The understanding of symbols and even their
identification is dependent on a finite context or
a relatively coherent world view. The use of
symbols then require great care and an
understanding of the context in which they will be used.

Breaking representation communication into iconic and metaphoric does not preclude communication that is both iconic and metaphoric. Just as symbols can be both iconic and metaphoric, there are many possibilities and combinations of modes of architectural communication.

Similarly, the breakdown of representational and responsive is not intended to suggest a dichotomy. It is the layering and interaction of these modes of communication that will create rich and textured environments. Multi-dimensional meaning is as unavoidable as it is something to celebrate.

In summary, architectural communication for us falls generally into two categories: responsive meaning and representational meaning. Responsive meaning is behavioral. Through an understanding of how forms can modify or enhance our social organization or behavioral patterns we can find information about our culture. Representational meaning is the intentional or arbitrary messages directly perceived. Representational meaning is further divided into iconic and metaphoric. The icon is a straightforward translation of idea or event into form. The metaphor relies on more poetic allusions and deals with relationships between objects rather than the characteristics of the objects which is the focus of the iconic. The icon is semantic and is processed on the conscious level. The metaphor is syntactic and processed unconsciously.
1 Glassie, H. *Passing the Time in Ballymenone.* Page 33.


6 Krampen, M. Page 6.

7 Preziosi, D. Page 22.


14 Preziosi, D. Page 5.


17 See special issue of *Progressive Architecture.* Mar 86. Pages 67-114.
18 Bateson. Page 139.


22 Bateson, G. Page 139.

23 Global Arch. 'Le Corbusier, Villa Savoie'. Text by Richard Meier.

24 Minai, A. T. Page 152.

25 Ibid.
The interplay of environment and culture is one of the basic themes to which anthropologists have devoted themselves. If their studies have established anything, it is that the environment is no mere given, no neutral constant, no passively endured condition. Rather, it is an integral part of man's life-world, as deeply shaped by social conditions as social conditions are mediated by it.

-Geertz

In the previous chapter we have briefly discussed some precedence for meaning in architecture. As in most discussions in architecture, the examples come from western Europe and America. We will now divert from that path and focus on work in East Asia.

As a general note, the intent is not to construct a false dichotomy between East and West; or to further reinforce a hegemonic notion of the Orient. Instead, we will use East Asia as a specific context in which to discuss the notion of meaning in architecture.
Industrialization and subsequent forces have impacted many developing countries in more dramatic ways than in the west simply because of the acceleration in the rate of change. Many developing nations have undergone industrialization in a fraction of the time of the industrial revolution of the West.

Urbanization as a product of industrialization, rapidly and dramatically altered the environments of many relatively isolated countries. These countries have had to account for upheaval in their relatively homogeneous cultural structures.

The industrialization of developing nations has brought with it demands for change. Who is responsible for it and their reasons are not of importance in this thesis. What is of importance is the nature of such change. Largely it seems that the change equals westernization. The import of western symbolic systems is both directly related to and independent of industrialism and the new aesthetics. The industrialization of underdeveloped countries necessitates an understanding of western symbolic systems when they find such systems inserted into their cultural structures.  

In the study of the environment of East Asia much attention has been drawn to China. China looms large because of its historic significance. Additionally, because of a more relaxed political environment, much is going on in architecture and city planning in China.  

Japan has also enjoyed much attention in the media of environmental studies. Our romance with Japanese architecture is longstanding. The
current economic prominence of Japan has added to our interest.

Korea, on the other hand, has almost been neglected in comparison. Caught between the two, the 5000 year old culture has lost its independence in the eyes of many. Reischauer, by treating it as a variant on the Chinese cultural pattern, has relegated Korea to near insignificance. But with ever increasing media coverage of the escalation in student riots and the 1988 Summer Olympic games, Korea now demands attention.

Part A: Urbanism in Korea

The Korean peninsula has historically been a strategic zone for both cultural and military contact in east Asia. Although racially and linguistically distinct, Korea's early culture which later influenced Japan, was derived from contact with China.

Additionally, the geographic vulnerability of the peninsula has lead to much military contact in Korea over the centuries. Even today, Korea is host to the security interests of the US with troops in excess of 40,000.

The geography of the peninsula is highly varied. Approximately two-thirds of the terrain is mountainous and only one-fifth of the land is suitable for cultivation. This arable land falls mostly along the southern and western plain regions. A mountain range along the eastern coast forms a spiny backbone to a country whose overall area is comparable to the combined areas of England, Scotland and Wales.
Early urbanism was a variation of the Chinese model and was structured on principles of Geomancy. Occurring primarily in the southern portion of the peninsula, early Korean cities were administrative centers. In the last days of the Yi Dynasty (1300–1910), only an estimated 4.5 percent of the national population resided in cities of over 10,000 inhabitants.

In this century, the agriculturally based economy was forcefully turned toward small scale industrialization with its major ties to the Japanese industrial centers during the Japanese occupation of 1910 to 1945. By 1944 an estimated 13% of the population resided in cities with over 10,000 inhabitants.

This three fold population increase during a 35 year period strained the already fragile infrastructure. Being the primary benefactors, the Japanese fostered urbanization yet they did not foster the necessary and costly infrastructure. There was little development of adequate waste disposal, water sources, electricity, communication networks, and financial establishments. This short sightedness spurred by exploitative motives created serious problems with which Korea, some forty years hence, is still grappling.

The industrialization of Korea altered the rigidly hierarchical social and political order of traditional Korea. Since its early days, Korea had been ruled by a succession of monarchs beginning with the Three Kingdoms Period (100B.C.) and ending with the Yi Dynasty (1392–1910). This highly-centralized, confucian-oriented system was ruled by the aristocratic class (Yang-bahns) who held all official and private power.
The traditional Korean political system was not an artificial creation based on the fiat of law (i.e. constitution), but rather, it embodied the ethics of society. The subjects did not seek or demand rights but merely sought favors or sympathy. Hence all wealth, opportunity, education and power within this feudal system was controlled by the ruling class, the Yang-bahns.\(^{1}\,^{4}\)

As mentioned earlier, Korea's urban areas were administrative rather than trade centers. An estimated 80% of the Yang-bahn class resided in cities where they actively maintained their ties to court politics.\(^{1}\,^{9}\) The physical definitions of cities mirrored this political and social hierarchy. Early Korean cities were fortress cities modeled from the Chinese. Access was controlled much like membership to the Yang-bahn class. Social status and political position was mirrored by proximity to palace grounds.

With the Japanese takeover in 1910, this socio-political system was destroyed. The Japanese introduced their own system of government with its highly differentiated and functionally specific administrative roles. Such positions were opened to all Koreans who passed their civil service examinations regardless of social or economic background. In practice this disrupted the established social order and awarded political power only to those recruited or screened by the Japanese.\(^{2}\,^{6}\)

The physical environment was similarly disrupted. Land ownership, traditionally held by the Yang-Bahn and leased to farmers,\(^{2}\,^{1}\) was often confiscated and redistributed by the Japanese.
The social and political power of the Yang-bahn’s was further dismantled when in 1949 a land reform was legislated which brought an end to the semi-feudal tenancy system. This new industrialism further eroded the traditional social stratification with the introduction of a middle class. Small subsistence feudal farmers were shifted to income earning tasks like fishing, mining and factory work. Similarly, a new professionalism developed with the emergence of a self-sufficient class of lawyers, doctors, teachers.

Social status was shifted to economic status of this middle class. New self-sufficiency and financial security lessened the traditional bonds of family and political affiliations. The traditional confucian norms and hierarchial social relationships were eroded by egalitarian norms.

With it major economic ties to larger industrial centers in Japan, the eventual fall of the Japanese Empire brought a collapse of the fragile Korean economy. Korean urban centers without the necessary support of urban infrastructure was heavily strained. This fragile condition was further aggravated by the division of the peninsula along the 38th parallel after WWII. This essentially divided the industrial centers of the south from the centers of natural resources in the north.

In the subsequent years of the Korean War (1950-53), the already strained urban centers fell into chaos. By the end, much of both the urban centers and rural landscape was destroyed. A US survey estimated destruction of the war to
include: 35% housing, 70% factories, 40% heavy industry, 55% bridges, 95% local roads and 15% national roads.²⁵

Urban areas experienced unsurpassed population increases immediately following the war due to 1). the return or release of Korean patriots expelled or imprisoned by the Japanese, 2). the return of laborers exported to Japan during the Japanese occupation, 3). North Korean refugees, 4). heavy rural migration due to political and social instability of rural area, 5). expectations of increased opportunities.²⁶ The population influxes of Korean cities, unreasonable even under pre-war conditions, were unassimilatable in post-war conditions and as a result squatter settlements proliferated.

Part B: Seoul the Capital City
Currently holding over 9 million people (13 million in greater Seoul area), Seoul was first settled in 18 B.C. in the Paek-che dynasty during the Three Kingdoms Period.²⁷ For the next 1000 years it remained a tiny settlement undergoing many name changes and hosting a variety of uses.

Seoul became the official capital city in 1394 during the Yi Dynasty. Nestled between mountain ridges, Seoul was a fortress city laid out under principles of geomancy. The city was planned on the North/South axis with a double ring of walls each with four gates. The 10-mile outer wall was built in 98 sections according to the 98 characters of Chinese classic letters and then divided into sections that each represented Korean provinces. The gates were opened at sunrise and closed at
dusk with the ringing of the bells 33 times to signify the 33 heavens of Buddhism. Thus, the city and its architecture was planned with intrinsic social meaning and religious symbolism.

Seoul was settled in a pattern that reflected the rigid social stratification of the Korean social and political system, as earlier discussed. In the northern section, under the Puk San (North Mountain) in close proximity to the Royal Palace, lived the aristocrats, the Yang-Bahns. Those with waning careers or in political disfavor settled in the southern section by the Nam San (South Mountain). The rank and file officials lived in the western sections and the petty official in the eastern sections.

This remarkable physical demonstration of social status would erode with the influx of population in the early twentieth century.

In 1862 Seoul had reached a population of over 20,000 which overflowed its original wall and gates. By 1960 the population was 1.5 million and in 1970 five million. By 1980 the population was over 9 million. Currently, about 1/4 of Korea’s total population resides in Seoul in an area of 630 square kilometers which is 1/200 of the total land area of Korea. This gives a density of 14,220 people per square kilometer.

As discussed earlier, the unprecedented in-migration stressed the inadequate urban infrastructure of Korean cities. The modernization was further frustrated by the irregular street patterns formed by the clustered settlements. These cluster forms are predominately single storey dwellings surrounded by a single ring of
dusk with the ringing of the bells 33 times to signify the 33 heavens of Buddhism. Thus, the city and its architecture was planned with intrinsic social meaning and religious symbolism.

Seoul was settled in a pattern that reflected the rigid social stratification of the Korean social and political system, as earlier discussed. In the northern section, under the Puk San (North Mountain) in close proximity to the Royal Palace, lived the aristocrats, the Yang-Bahns. Those with waning careers or in political disfavor settled in the southern section by the Nam San (South Mountain). The rank and file officials lived in the western sections and the petty official in the eastern sections.

This remarkable physical demonstration of social status would erode with the influx of population in the early twentieth century.

In 1862 Seoul had reached a population of over 20,000 which overflowed its original wall and gates. By 1960 the population was 1.5 million and in 1970 five million. By 1980 the population was over 9 million. Currently, about 1/4 of Korea's total population resides in Seoul in an area of 630 square kilometers which is 1/200 of the total land area of Korea. This gives a density of 14,220 people per square kilometer.

As discussed earlier, the unprecedented in-migration stressed the inadequate urban infrastructure of Korean cities. The modernization was further frustrated by the irregular street patterns formed by the clustered settlements. These cluster forms are predominately single storey dwellings surrounded by a single ring of
These clusters are crustacean forms with a hard outer shell protecting their soft centers. These clusters form in random patterns that respond largely to topography or boundaries established by the original boulevards of Seoul.

Due to the continual pressure from the growing population, there has been rapid development of areas south of the original city boundary of the Han River. Traditionally seen as a strong psychological boundary, the Han river is a real physical boundary with its width ranging from 300 to 500 meters. Consequently, large parcels were available for development.

In the 1970's hugely scaled apartment complexes began to dominate this area. The resultant scale of the environment defined by these super blocks is widely divergent from that found in older sections of the city. These developments due to their size alone, have inadvertently become monuments to the modernization of Seoul and in turn of Korea.

Presently this area, known as Kang Nam, is the site for most of the facilities planned for the '88 Olympic games. In addition, this area is drawing much of the new construction for office, retail and residential use.

The ultra-modern facilities of wide boulevards, new utilities, and easy access to the newly completed subway has made this area widely popular as the population of Seoul escapes the deteriorating conditions of the older and much less convenient districts of the city. They seek a more streamlined, modern, and consequently more western lifestyle.
These newly developed areas hold populations with relatively similar incomes and social status. This trend of social and economic homogeneity finds little precedence in contemporary Seoul where most districts contain a more diverse population.

Part C: Residential Architecture of Seoul

In many developing nations, heavy rural emigration, higher fertility rates and longer life spans are factors in rapid urban growth. This population increase has created housing shortages. These housing shortages, often of crisis proportion, are further aggravated by an inability to consider the often central role that the dwelling place has in our lives. Quite clearly, the immediacy of demand has overshadowed any concern for the relationship between self and house.

Seoul is no exception. Never in its history has Seoul faced so acute a housing problem as during the last 25 years. Seoul has grown from 1.5 million in 1960 to 9 million in 1980. By the year 2000 Seoul is projected to hold over 14.3 million. The response has been to rely on high density housing that could be rapidly constructed. The apartment complexes developed in the Kang Nam area south of the Han are intended to relieve some of the pressure. Yet it is not so immediate a solution since those who can afford the condominiums are not often those who are in greatest need of housing.

While the growth of the population in Korea seems to be tapering off, adequate housing is
still in demand in order to upgrade the many squatter settlements of Seoul.

In 1980 over 2.5 million dwelling units were constructed in the city. An estimated 70% of this new housing was supplied by the private sector while only 16% was supplied by local and national governments. A 1975 survey of housing types in Seoul shows a dominance of single family detached houses (85.5%) with apartment units at only 4.6%. However, the remarkable rate of development in the Kang Nam area in the past decade has clearly altered these statistics in favor of apartment units.

Because of the proliferation of these developments, apartments units appear to be popular in Seoul. But many question whether their popularity is due to any specific qualities or to the absence of affordable alternatives.

Because of the issue of quality in the environments of these large scale developments and the growing publicity of the '88 Games, many design professionals in Korea have begun to critically assess the character of their modern environments. The profession is wondering if it is now possible to regain their lost link with the traditions of Korea.

One development that has drawn much attention is the Olympic Athletes' and Reporters' Village. This project of 5700 housing units to be built for the games will be sold afterwards to individuals. Designed by Woo and Williams of Cambridge in association with the Korean construction firm of Il Kun, the village may be a hallmark in the
development of contemporary Korean architecture. In this project, Kyu-sung Woo has distilled a particular lesson from the vernacular tradition of Korea. The fan shaped site plan is intended to recall the introverted organization of traditional Korean villages.
Part D: The Korean Vernacular Tradition

Pre-industrial vernacular architecture as an institution has been much discussed, analyzed and perhaps romanticised by the profession of architecture. Because of the many uses of the term vernacular, it would be useful to define this term for this thesis.

The vernacular tradition is building without conscious aesthetic or stylistic interests. It lacks all aesthetic pretense. The vernacular works with the site or microclimate and has respect for surrounding buildings and neighboring spaces. The vernacular works with materials locally available and with methods of construction limited by the local expertise and technology.
Chapter Two

The vernacular tradition is also characterized by a persistent adjustment of relatively few models. Since these models are built up over long periods of time, there is great uniformity in the individual examples. Yet, the individual houses are rarely identical. They are uniquely adjusted to the circumstances. The vernacular tradition in Korea is characterized by all of these conditions.

What follows is a discussion of the Korean vernacular dwelling. We will look at what is considered to have been a nobleman's house. Earlier in this chapter, we referred to this class as Yang-bahn's. While this class of house is not the most typical, it is the focus of our study because it somewhat exaggerates and illustrates the qualities of the more modest house.

The house of the Yang-bahn is not a single structure but a walled complex of small structures. Some attribute this to the availability of construction materials. Quality timber for long spans was scarce in Korea. Large spans were costly and difficult. Thus numerous smaller pieces were used in construction.

The use of smaller pieces in construction is responsible for at least one outstanding feature of the vernacular; the natural curve to the roof line. With gradual technological advances and increasingly efficient structures, the curve was no longer necessary. Yet its persistence leads one to believe that over time it had become an aesthetic preference.

The roof form may have had some relationship to the landscape. Perhaps the horizontal line
much like the pitched roofs of the early work of Frank Lloyd Wright discussed in Chapter One.

The roof was distinct from the walls with deep overhangs. The walls were distinct from the groundplane with a zone defined by the knee-height platform.

This platform defined a particular relationship between the building and the ground. The meeting of built form to ground was realized in an intermediate form—the platform. The structure then was in relation to the ground and not in juxtaposition to it.

The tri-partite division metaphorically alluded to a relationship to the landscape. Man inhabits the middle kingdom between heaven and earth. This metaphor of man's metaphysical relationship to this world is an example of representational meaning.

Both the roof form and the tri-partite division of the elevation emphasized the horizontal direction more than the vertical. It has been argued that in art and architecture, the horizontal signifies adapting oneself to the demands of the environment while the vertical signifies making demands on the environment. If we accept this argument, the Korean Vernacular indicates a greater concern with an equilibrium or integration with, rather than a domination over, the environment.

Because the vernacular lacks aesthetic pretense, our discussion falls largely in the category of responsive meaning. Social and individual relationships communicated through behaviour are
in the form of the vernacular. For example, the organization of these structures of the dwelling complex was highly reflective of certain social relationships between sexes and classes.

Traditional family life in Korea was rigidly patriarchal. Power and property was passed to the male heir. Women when married were likely to affiliate with the new family. Women's roles were severely restricted to domestic duties and were mandated by the husband. Relationships between sexes were highly structured.

The dwelling reflected these relationships rather straightforwardly. Living quarters for men and women were physically separated. The domain of the men did not often even share a party wall with the domain of the women.

The vernacular Korean house was typically divided into three parts for the patriarch, women and servants. Relative to the other structures in the complex, the men's domain was centrally located. Servants quarters and storage in front of the men's domain formed a three dimensional wall containing the entrance gate. And the more intimate and isolated living quarters of the women were located behind the master's quarters. The male's domain was the focus of the complex just as the patriarch was the focus of family organization.

Found behind the male's domain was the women's domain, it was more isolated and constricted. Women with limited extra-domestic activities did not often leave the complex. Their movement was easily monitored by the patriarch due to both his social and physical position.
Movement between the men’s and women’s domain was similarly controlled and limited. The patriarch and perhaps a select few adult males had access to the women’s domain while no women were allowed into the men’s domain. If we equate access with dominance and power, the relative social position of the sexes was truly reflected in this system of access.

Similarly, entrance to either domain illustrated the relationship between the sexes. Occasionally there were two entrances to the dwelling’s inner compound. One entrance was reserved for women and one for men. The men’s entrance which was then always larger and more elaborately detailed called attention to itself in location and form. It is the main entrance and dominated.

Access and organization of the domain for men and women illustrated the communication of responsive meaning. Through behavioral responses of movement and access, the complex social relationships were created and reinforced.

Similarly access and organization of the complex reflected a characteristic of the social organization of Korea. The Yang-bahn class held all wealth, opportunity, education and power. In such a feudal system class division was strictly maintained.

In the organization of the complex, the quarters for servants largely made up the front wall. Servants, seen often as commodities, were housed next to the storage rooms with very little physical differentiation between the two uses.

Servant’s quarters were isolated from the living quarters of the Yang-Bahn’s and were sited to
Korean vernacular courtyards were seldom landscaped. 

Front wall with main gate in the vernacular tradition.

Thus the location of the servants' rooms in relation to the main living quarters reflected a strict division of classes. The bi-modal social organization of the Yang-bahn and peasant classes was the message communicated by the physical form.

The number of small structures of the Korean vernacular formed exterior spaces. These courts were typically bounded on three or four sides. The landscaping of these courts was widely divergent from the meticulously manicured traditions of China and Japan. The Korean courtyard, if it did not function as a workplace, was more natural and unmaintained. Some believe this indicated a willingness to be in harmony with and to accept the forces of nature. 

The notion of interior courts in tandem with a walled dwelling is often believed to illustrate the inward focus of oriental culture. This is a bit simplistic.

A wall as a barrier insulated the home from outside forces. The dwelling was more secluded and peaceful. Yet, while it increased privacy from the outside, it reduced internal privacy. 

Some believe that the internal focus of walled dwellings encourages greater familial intimacy. Yet, while it clearly reduced internal privacy, privacy and intimacy are hardly interchangeable. It was the behavior of the family which finally determined intimacy.
The form of the courtyard dwelling could only encourage or impede such behavior. The internal privacy was a function of the dimension of the court. The smaller the court, the greater was the acoustic and visual intimacy of the family unit.

The courtyard and walls of the complex, through behavioural responses, communicated responsive meaning about the relationship between members of the family and between the family unit and society.

We have seen some responsive meanings of the Korean vernacular. Meaning was found through behavioral responses. The form of the dwelling communicated a patriarchal society, a rigid social hierarchy, an integrated relationship to nature, family organization and the relationship between the family unit to society.

One of the critical points from our study of both responsive and representational meaning in the Korean vernacular tradition is the relationship between elements rather than the qualities of the elements themselves. Meaning was communicated in the relationship between male and female domains, between servant's and master's quarters, between individual structures as they define courtyards, and between built form and earth in the form of platforms.


6 Reischauer, E. Page 399.


9 Pak. P.22.

10 Reischauer. Page 400.


15 Hong. p.3.

16 Ibid. p.3.

18 Hahn. P.8-9.

19 Ibid. P.7.

20 Ibid. P.11.

21 Pak. P.27.

22 Ibid. P.197-8.


24 Han. P.501

25 Hong. P.42.

26 Ibid. P.42.


28 Ibid. P.36-37.


30 Hong. P.2.


32 Kim, J. Page 13.

33 Seoul Metro Govt. Page 44.

34 *Physical Profile of Cities in the ESCAP Region*. Page 161.

35 Seoul Metro Govt. Page 144.

36 Physical Profile of C. Page 159.

37 Seoul Metro Govt. Page 43.

38 Ibid. Page 43.


43 Seoul Metro Govt. Page 41.

44 Ibid. Page 40.


46 Ibid. Page 37


48 Ibid. Page 37.

49 Lee, K. Page 106.

50 Rapoport. Page 68.

The time of a work holds its own validity from which the sense of truth can be drawn to inspire a work of another time.

-Kahn

As we have reviewed in Chapter Two, changes in the economy, society and politics have altered the daily patterns of all Koreans. The environment has been rapidly transformed to accommodate these new patterns as well as aesthetic concerns.

We will now examine two contemporary houses that in many ways exemplify professional responses to these changes. For the purposes of this thesis, it is held that architect designed dwellings are valid examples of cultural trends because of their deliberate and often conscious construct.

Our intent in examining these homes is to understand how the changes of the 20th Century have impacted the house form in relation to the vernacular discussed in the previous chapter.
We will first briefly look at a house built in 1977 which we will call House One. Even though House One is almost a prototypical contemporary dwelling we will limit the discussion because it has few inspirational qualities.

House One is located in the Kang-nam district, south of the Han River is Seoul. As reviewed in the previous chapter, this area has been recently and rapidly developed. Currently it is by far the most popular area of Seoul.

The neighborhood of House One is homogeneously well-to-do. In itself this homogeneity is unique in the city of Seoul. This is apparent to anyone visiting the area. Without entering any of the houses, one will feel the difference in the wide, well maintained streets which are patrolled by a special police force.

The streets are clean and quiet. Yet, they lack the vitality and life of the streets of the older districts.
House One is sited on a slight rise that gives it a limited view to the south. It is a walled dwelling and is nestled close to its northern boundary and opens south to the view and the sun. The house is constructed of cast-in-place concrete infilled with masonry. It is a two-storey dwelling that is bulky and appears substantial with a wall that surrounds and protects it. These qualities characterize most contemporary dwellings in Seoul.

Like the vernacular, the wall insulates the home from acoustic and visual intrusions from the active street life of urban Seoul. The continued popularity of the dwelling type indicates a preference for less internal privacy over external privacy.

Curiously, while walled dwellings are not exclusive to Korea or even East Asia, they continue to predominate in most the residential areas of Seoul. Perhaps the proximity of the city to the demilitarized zone has contributed an element of vulnerability unusual in most other contemporary environments. In turn, perhaps this vulnerability has sustained the walled dwelling type. Certainly manipulation of fear has consistently been a device of social control in post-war South Korea.

Since it sits on a rise, one must enter at the street level which is about seven feet lower than the house level. After passing through the gates you immediately climb to the house level. Consequently, the sequence of entry is congested. It is disorienting to make the direction and level changes mandated by the hilly site.
Curiously this recaptures the quality of the complicated entry sequence of the vernacular. In our earlier example, one could never directly enter the compound. Instead, it was necessary to make a series of turns and gain entrance through a series of thresholds before one fully arrived. In House One, one must enter the gate from the street, then rise to the ground level.

Once at that level, the door to the house is difficult to find. Many try to enter through the sliding glass living room doors. This would be the most natural choice since the patio doors are the most dominant feature on the front side and appear to be an entrance. Consequently, the actual front door is not the immediate first choice and is not often used. In relation to the massing of the house, it also appears tacked on. It has become shoe storage and a mud room rather than its planned stature as the formal entry.

The living room that views the garden is centrally located in the house and is much used. Yet, designed as the "western" room its use has become seasonal. It is used in the summer to capture the breezes through the opened patio doors. The couch and chairs are moved upstairs for storage in the "Korean" living room. The family sits on the cool wood parquet floor downstairs.

In the winter, the family uses the upstairs "Korea" living room where there is the traditional undol (radiant heat) floor. The furniture is moved back downstairs and the family sits on cushions placed directly on the warm undol floor.
Undol floors were invented and continuously used by Koreans since pre-historic times. Originally packed earthen floors were heated by channelling smoke beneath. Presently, steam heat is circulated through pipes laid in a concrete slab. Undol is a highly efficient heating system since it locates heat underfoot and utilizes the rising warmth.

It is acutely comforting to feel the warmth through bare or stockinged feet. It soon becomes a habitual pleasure to sleep as most Koreans do, on cotton mats placed on these floors radiating warmth.

Similarly, in hot weather the unheated slab retains the cool of the night. It is pleasurable to sit on the cool slab and borrow its coolth. The thermal mass moderates the temperature swings of day and night by radiating coolness stored in the day and again cooling down at night.

In House One, in either season, one of the rooms lays fallow—auxiliary space and furniture storage. Certainly, this duplicity in space is not fully in response to the seasonal need for warmth and coolth, for the traditional undol is pleasantly cool in the summers. Is this then the dichotomy of the westernization of Korea played out in the house? I think not. But this duplicity as well as the redundant front entry, might indicate new aesthetic criteria or a desire to incorporate, and in so doing create, icons of a more western lifestyle.

These unusual elements hold representational meanings as defined by the distinct absence of responsive meanings. Yet, there is more. Since the upstairs is little more than a few bedrooms,
there is much roof space over the downstairs rooms. Yet these roof terraces accented by pipe railings are unused. At most they help to reflect light back into the second floor since they are painted a glaring white. Laundry is sun dried and draped not on these terraces but in the yard below.

These unused patios might testify to a disinterest in accessible outdoor spaces. If the family wanted to be connected to nature they need only inhabit these patios. Yet, the starkness of material and the feeling vulnerability and exposure seems to discourage use of them. Because of their abstraction from the ground plane and the absence of enclosure, these patios seem to indicate nothing larger than faulty execution.

Generally, House One functions well enough. Yet the redundancy of space largely caused by a confusion of style seems to make a poor compromise between more traditional lifestyles and a desire to incorporate domestic architectural fixtures from the west. The awkwardness of House One begins to approach tragic proportion since it is in many ways typical of the current residential development of Seoul.
Part B : House Two

The second example, which will be called House Two, was designed and built in 1978 by a prominent Korean architect for his own use. The house is sited on a modest plot in the district of Mia-dong which is in the north-eastern part of Seoul. Most residential districts of Seoul hold a highly varied population. Mia Dong is similarly mixed but can generally be characterized as strongly middle-class.

Within this district, the diversity of architectural styles, elements and materials suggest that in fact there is no easily recognizable context or continuity. Each house is in apparent isolation and established by local decisions.

House Two has a consistency of form and a cohesion that is absent from the earlier example. This internal consistency seems to draw the house further inward from its boundaries. And while making some gestures to its adjacent neighbors, the house mostly responds to internal constraints.
This sort of decision making seems to detract from a consistency at a larger scale. Such localized design leaves the neighborhood seemingly disjointed and chaotic. The variety of forms, surface textures and elements have little relation to one another. The environment is distracting when viewed by outsiders.

Yet, the environment is not intended for outsiders. Recognition of subtle variations of orders and a complex pattern creeps gradually into one’s memory. Recognition of place is through identification of landmarks and individual pieces, not through a rational order like street names or numbers. Understanding is through specific experience and not by arbitrary order.

When one asks for directions, a common answer would be to trace the path which guides one past landmarks or point references. For instance, to get to House Two from the financial district, one would be told to take the road that passes Kong Kuk University out to Do Bong Ku (county) and Mia–Dong (district). The street will fork so take the street that goes toward Dae Jee Movie Theatre. Shortly there will be another fork in the road and here take the street that runs by the girl’s high school. Two street lights after the school, take a left up the hill toward the church. The house is up the street from the grocery store which is the left spur of the first V in the road.

The trip would take some forty-five minutes and success depends on one’s familiarity with landmarks of the city, both major and minor. This requires a data base of incrementally compiled landmarks. An outsider would be lost
quite early. An insider, who has established an understanding of the patterns nestled within patterns of Seoul, would quite clearly construct the path in their mind. Even if their knowledge was not specific to the minutiae of grocery stores of Mia-Dong, an understanding of the development patterns of Seoul would more likely insure success than would a knowledge of the street address of the house.

They "rely increasingly on systems of landmarks for their guides". Yet, Seoul's degree of physical legibility is low as compared to that of the west. The environment is seemingly "so disordered as to impose an intolerable strain." both at the city and neighborhood levels. Yet there are some less legible structures that encourage continuity.

In House Two, continuity of form at the neighborhood scale is maintained through two devices. First the massing of the dwellings are uniformly scaled, and are box-like. The forms seem constrained as if to maximize the ratio between floor area and surface area. Clearly, the most efficient volume to surface area is the cube. Our example, House Two, is almost a perfect cube. Its overall length on all sides is roughly equal to its height.

Continuity is also established by the walls which surround each house. Uniformly from two to three meters high, the walls of most contemporary Korean houses are planes interrupted only by a door and a large gate. Affording privacy and security, walled dwellings have evolved past the strictly utilitarian. The
walls themselves, as in the vernacular tradition, are all that most will likely see. The walls then have seemingly displaced the actual dwelling as a symbol of house.

The wall of House Two is made up of a standard sized brick with a charcoal colored water-struck finish. As it traces the plot, the wall representationally acknowledges the adjacent properties.

Properties abut House Two on the north, south and west sides. Access to the property is only possible through the east side, where House Two is sited on the elbow of a small spur. The street frontage is about thirty feet.

Because the wall plays such an important role in the image of the house, much attention is paid to the front wall and gates in Seoul. In some houses the walls and front gate, extravagantly detailed and richly constructed, are outrageously out of proportion with the dwelling. The gate is distracting and hugely incongruous. The gate becomes a statement or a theatrical ploy.

In House Two, this is not the case. The construction and material of the wall is the same as the house. The wall, although physically distinct, is certainly in scale with the house.

The height of the wall, continuously 8.5 feet on the east side of the plot, matches precisely the height of its neighbor to the north. This forms a continuous line followed down the block that suggests a cohesion to the block that the materials and forms do not. This gesture, while not difficult or sophisticated, suggests a
consideration of the context that goes beyond design isolated in an office. This sort of fieldwork suggests not only a professionalism but also concern for the area outside of the sites' boundary.

This matched top line also occurs on the front wall of the east. There is however a differential of about 1.5 brick courses between the existing wall height to the north and to the east. To accommodate this difference, the architect has manipulated the incremental nature of units of brick.

Along the eastern wall facade the wall is topped with a course of rowlock which horizontally lays the bricks out with its shortest edge showing. The north facade-wall uses a course of soldier which vertically lays the brick with its longest edge showing. In this way the two walls, north and east, meet at the same height in the corner.

While it is a formal convention to "stop" a wall in some manner, both for aesthetic and functional concerns, this more sophisticated manipulation of the materials support the notion that it was done with the formal intent of acknowledging the adjacent properties.

This dimensional matching to encourage a continuity along the block is used in tandem with a far more complex device. This second device is the form of the continuous wall "adjusting" to meet its neighbor.

At its east end, the wall's planar nature is interrupted. Here it steps slightly back—not more than the depth of one brick for the length of 1.5
bricks. This notch in the wall meets the existing wall.

The notch is at a significantly lower height. As the wall steps back, it steps down 5 brick courses. This allows a dimensional tolerance. The new wall does not have to precisely match the height of the existing.

The north edge of the wall is treated differently. A single vertical row of header coursing rises from the ground to the height of the neighbor's wall. Here this special vertical coursing ends and the wall continues with a standard coursing until it reaches the top height as defined by the cornice line of the neighbors wall.

Both the adjustments the wall makes as it ends on both sides and the matching of cornice height and wall height are relatively minor moves. Yet they suggest an interest in and an awareness not only of neighboring structures but also a formal system that contributes to a sense of neighborhood continuity.

These small moves indicate a willingness and interest in some formal cohesion of what in most cases is an eclectic nightmare of disparate forms, materials and dimensions.

Without gymnastics, these small devices acknowledge the individual dwelling places within a larger context. As such, these devices communicate metaphorically of the relationship between House Two and its neighbors. The material of the walls which "adjust" to the walls of its neighbor metaphorically communicate and
acknowledge a meeting and continuity. As reviewed earlier, this is representational meaning.

The gates within the front walls also have representational meaning. The main entry to the dwellings is through the gate; a pair of doors that are slightly off axis with the street. The less attractive doors for the car-port are surreptitiously out of view along the eastern portion of the front wall.

The main gate is constructed of clear finished pine. In itself, the wood is a relief to the metal gates more common in Seoul which thunder and clank when used. Yet the noise of those metal gates herald a visitor and serve to announce arrivals and departures to living quarters more distant. Movement is more easily monitored.

The gates of House Two are of a simply constructed horizontal tongue and groove slats. They open by pulling on a four inch iron ring. Their considered simplicity is in stylistic contradiction with the characteristic flexibility of wood so often demonstrated in traditional construction. The two dimensional composition of the gates is contrasted by the more playful and occasionally idiosyncratic use of brick as discussed earlier. Curiously even the frame for the gates in the wall does more work in its corbelling than does the gates.

Contrasted with the intricate woodwork of the vernacular gates, this studied simplicity might be a statement. While the function of both gates are nearly identical, this stylistic distillation might be in itself a statement against the iconographic use of elaborate wooden gates in contemporary Seoul.
By using the pull rings of the vernacular, these gates tease one into a comparison. As such, the design is an iconic message.

In our example of House Two and also in House One, the wall surrounding the house trace the borders of the parcel. Never does the wall physically engage the house. The two remain distinct. The wall is the border. The structure placed within the wall is then the house. This contrasts with the vernacular tradition.

Previously in the vernacular example, we saw that the servant's quarters and storage rooms made up a three dimensional front gate to the dwelling complex of the vernacular. In that example, structures and inhabited space often helped compose the walls. Clearly then, the house and wall were less distinct. The house was sometimes the wall. The wall was sometimes the house.

The courtyard vernacular was formed around and focused on the court—negative space. The design of the courts was of equal concern as the design of the living quarters. Conversely, House Two focuses on the enclosed living quarters—positive space. This reversal has compromised the altogether casual interplay between outside and in; this interplay characterizes most westerner's understanding of East Asian architecture.

By placing the built form in this way, House Two is an object in the landscape. The structure dominates. The outdoor spaces and the walls which define the boundary play supportive and subservient roles. The relationship between positive and negative space becomes less casual
and more alien. This effectively devalues the landscape by this newly imposed hierarchy.

The cantilevered bulk of the second level further exaggerates the strained relationship. Cantilevering five feet, the second floor is low to the ground—just seven feet. Because of the cramped headroom and the depth of the overhang, the space beneath becomes dark and unpleasant. It is uncomfortable to be beneath such an invisibly supported bulk. This zone is lifeless and as such becomes almost a barrier between the landscape and the house, functioning like a moat.

This zone is further examined in a related gesture. In the traditional house a continuous knee-high wooden platform intermediated between the ground and the house. This platform was used as both circulation and as usable space. When one opened or removed the panels, activity could spill out onto this platform. The platform was a zone of increased activity that afforded views, breezes, and a greater integration between the dwelling and exterior space. In fact such a system actually extended the size of the dwelling to include, both figuratively and literally, the courtyards.

House Two demonstrates this concept with the somewhat curious use of a small platform. It is unfortunately placed beneath the cantilevered second floor. This platform measures two by eight feet and is raised 8 inches from the ground. Two pairs of doors, resembling traditional sliding screen doors, swing out onto the platform. Once opened one can look directly...
out to the garden. This visually links indoor and out much in the fashion of the vernacular.

Yet the opened doors do not achieve what the vernacular does. Unlike the sliding screens which remain planer, these door swing outward. This disallows full use of the platform because the outswung doors bisect it. The doors also function like blinders; viewing out is only possible if one is at the correct angle. Largely, the depth of the doors obscures full view of the garden.

Perhaps the platform is used as a representational symbol. Since it has limited responsive or behavioral benefit, the platform and the screen doors are used here as a motif. They certainly have added a definite flavor to the elevation, yet this representational character has done nothing to mitigate the behaviorally inactive zone between house and land.

Both the emphasized figurative design and the inactive zone between the house and landscape, as reversals of the vernacular, seem to indicate a redefined relationship between man and environment. Yet, there is a duplicity in House Two on this issue.

The figure/ground diagram is somewhat misleading. House Two, in section, is a split-level. As one moves through the house, it is by half-levels. Since there is a drop of forty-seven inches on the entire site, the split-level organization gives more of the house a direct relationship with the outside.

This split-level configuration effectively creates the semblance of separate courts on all sides of
the dwelling. For in section, the house reaches out much as a plan drawing of the vernacular did.

To the south, where the iconic platform is placed, there is a more formal garden. To the north, off of the kitchen and laundry, is the more utilitarian court for outdoor work and food preparation. To the east is, of course, the entrance court which is questionable for it is small. And to the west is a very private court, shielded somewhat from view of the slightly intrusive neighboring house to the south.

While we may be able to intellectually convince ourselves of the viability of these four courts, they are more abstractions than truly working spaces because they lack clear definition and understandable boundaries. In the vernacular tradition, the courts were always bounded on three or four sides affording privacy and control. The primary spatial quality was containment.

When in House Two, we find these outdoor spaces defined on as little as two sides, that primary quality of containment is not achieved. The space bleeds out and literally dissipates.

In particular, the utilitarian north court is the only successful of the four because it is bounded on three edges. Yet because of its tight dimensions and the low overhang above it, the court is really a porch.

The rest of the courts, while intriguing in the abstract, are truly "yard" in their realization. This however does not invalidate the gestures. Should there be some physical definition to
separate the east and west from the south court—a minor move, a simple visual obstruction—the split-level plan could link indoor spaces to outdoor courts. This could reshape the traditional pattern to meet the constraints of the modern context where open land is less available. And by doing so, this might re-establish a continuity of concept by redefining the form.

The split-level organization further resembles the vernacular in its relative equity of rooms. As one moves gradually upward, one incrementally penetrates into more and more private territory.

One enters at the drawing room/receiving room level. Half a level up one finds the kitchen/dining area, up one level more is the parlor/main room. Proceeding further, one finds the bedroom/inner chamber and then up another level is the sleeping loft.

One’s vertical progression is restricted by increasingly intimate use. Much in the way one’s horizontal progression into the vernacular courtyard dwelling was more intimate, so is the progression into this contemporary dwelling.

Pregnant with behavioral communication, the organization of House Two is strikingly consistent with the vernacular tradition. While the form has been redefined, the behavioral pattern is maintained. This is replete with responsive meaning.
Our analysis is summarized in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSE ONE</th>
<th>REPRESENTATIONAL</th>
<th>RESPONSIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walled Dwelling</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Sequence</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Door Dilemna</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western &amp; Eastern Rooms</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof Terraces</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSE TWO</th>
<th>REPRESENTATIONAL</th>
<th>RESPONSIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walled Dwellings</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gate</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Heights</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall End Adjustments</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of House to Wall</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyards</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Floor Cantilever</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Level Platform</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Level Organization</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-use Rooms</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on Horizontal</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-partite Elev.Division</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table of meanings in contemporary Korean dwellings.

CHAPTER FOUR
Conclusions and Further Discussions

Time and space must be revealed in such a place that human beings are given their dwelling place, their ethos. When we reduce the human need for shelter to a material need, we lose sight of what we can call the ethical function of architecture. I agree with Hegel’s claim that the highest function of all art is not to entertain or to amuse, but to articulate a binding world view; to express to human beings who they are and who they should be. When works of art come to be for art’s sake, that is to say, when the point of art is reduced to that of furnishing occasions for aesthetic delight, that highest function is lost.

-Karsten Harries

From the examples discussed in the previous chapters, some conclusions can be drawn. Since they are summarized from the discussion of contemporary Korean and historic precedence, they are clearly specific to Korea but implications are of greater consequence.

There are three major form characteristics that arise. These are 1). multi-functional versus differentiated 2). configurative versus figurative, and 3). complex versus eclectic.
Part A: Multi-functional versus Differentiated

In considering contemporary Korean architecture it is important to note one characteristic of the vernacular. There was little physical distinction in the forms. Spatial characteristics did not determine use. The form vocabulary was limited and consequently consistent since there was little variation in materials or methods of construction. Consequently, rooms were spatially indistinct and largely interchangeable. As we have seen, the storage rooms could be used as servant's rooms.

Instead of form alone it was the organization of the spaces and their relative scale that denoted use instead of their individual characteristics. The individual rooms were multi-functional and accommodated a diversity of activities. As noted in Chapter Two, the main room (\( ^{4.01} \)) was used to dine, study, sleep and to entertain.

In contemporary Korea, this main room is similarly used. Even when there is a surplus of space in the house, the main room is the center of activity.²

The rooms of House One had designated uses and specialized forms. Many rooms could only support one use. In particular, we found redundant and wasted space of rooms that were neither "Korean" nor "Western." This is a phenomenon that can be found also in contemporary Japan.

In contrast, House Two followed more closely the vernacular where rooms accommodated various uses simultaneously or singularly. Here all rooms of the house, with the exception of the Kitchen/Dining, are multi-functional. The rooms
hold no particular spatial characteristics of orientation, access and dimension, that would mandate a specific use or restrict another.

Which house better reflects the domestic behavior of the 20th century? Might it be the specialized and fragmented behavior implied or encouraged in the example of House One or the less differentiated use of House Two?

The 20th Century industrialization of Korea and its labor specialization can be translated into a greater differentiation of space through specialized use. Certainly "with the increase in the complexity of civilization comes greater differentiation of types of building and urban space...".3

Now there are office buildings, department stores and apartment buildings. Specialized zones are fostered in our cities. There are also financial districts, shopping malls and apartment complexes. This specialization of use is realized at the city scale with modern zoning practices. Without judging this to be either good or evil, specialization seems to be a function of the modern, post-industrial condition.

It might then follow that this differentiation in space use at the city scale necessarily transfers to the scale of space in the home. Yet, there seems to be specific conditions which make the dwelling place exempt from this trend toward specialization of space.

Is the dwelling a place for labor specialization? Was it ever? In the Korean vernacular there was some specialization. All domestic uses could not be accommodated in the same space and there
were special conditions of adjacencies. The toilet was not the place to prepare food. Food storage rooms were cold and would not be the best place to house elderly family members. But most rooms were multi-functional as were the courtyards. These outdoor spaces supported many uses. They were used for laundry, child play, gardening and food preparation.

In the modern context it seems that domestic uses have changed only slightly. There are new constraints; the laundry room cannot support many other uses. Yet there are also new conditions which encourage multi-use; the kitchen/dining room often becomes a place to study, congregate, and casually entertain.

Additionally, during the most recent decades, contemporary Koreans have altered the once quite rigid sex roles. Once the home was the primary responsibility of the women. Now the availability of store bought food products, both traditional and modern, the affordability of home appliances and the relaxation of work roles for women have redefined the role of women in society.

Buying kim-chee, cornflakes and washing machines along with the slowly disappearing belief that women should work only to usefully fill the time before marriage have given women more life choices. While women are still the primary care givers and home makers, sex-roles are less differentiated than in the past. Men are contributing to the care of themselves, the children and the home.

It then appears that the lack of spatial differentiation along with a redefinition of
traditional sex roles have exempted the dwelling place from the space specialization of the industrial era.

Lack of differentiation of space in the contemporary Korean dwelling has positive outcomes. In the urbanization of Seoul, rising land costs have necessitated crowded conditions for most. In such a world of diminishing dwelling space, multi-functional space efficiently utilizes what space one does have.

Another outcome is the home’s ability to accommodate fluctuations in the size of the family. With continual urban immigration, there is often need to absorb temporarily rural relatives who seek to relocate to the city. There is often a need to take in aging family members who can no longer care well enough for themselves. There might also arise a need to house the nephew who comes to attend college.

Part B: Configurative versus Figurative
In an agrarian lifestyle, people were dependent on the land. The landscape was so unquestionably integral it defied consideration. The vernacular courtyard dwelling clearly demonstrated this with both representational and responsive meanings.

The vernacular tradition emphasized the relationship between, rather than qualities of, the elements themselves. This accent on relationships stressed "the manner in which these relationships were achieved." In realization this was the courts or landscape or negative spaces. The focus of the dwelling often was on these spaces. They were purposefully designed features and
seldom leftover spaces. These spaces between buildings were equally concern to the design of the buildings themselves.

In contrast both the figure/ground diagrams of our contemporary Korean examples, as reversals of the vernacular, seem to indicate a redefined relationship between people and the landscape. Surely, our post-industrial lifestyle dictates that it be more strained and somewhat self-conscious.

In this way House One and House Two hold representational and responsive meanings, albeit different from those of the vernacular. This suggests a larger issue; if we view this relationship between people and the environment as alienated, are we then to assume it to be more meaningful to celebrate it as such? While this issue scarcely can by resolved in any thesis, we might be able to find some direction by returning to the discussion of form.

In the vernacular tradition, the focus of the interaction and relationship between elements enabled the dwelling complex to expand and grow with the prosperity of the family. The form had an additive nature that responded readily to change without disrupting or destroying the continuity of form. That is to say, the system was open-ended.

In contrast, the contemporary dwellings with their emphasis on internal relationships and internal consistency have marginal and stilted relations with the landscape. This, by default, devalues that landscape which in actuality represents a substantial financial investment.
Because their figurative design is in final form, it aspires to be a solution. It is a closed system.

Consequently, any later changes or additions will disrupt and even destroy that order. This then challenges the value of such design. To better understand this let us consider that in such a rapidly changing culture, one pattern in Korea has been consciously and deliberately maintained—familial piety. In the contemporary conditions of relatively rapidly changing social and economic status, the larger family relies on the more prominent members, as are the owners of House One and Two.

Consequently, such a dwelling might be asked to absorb the aging grandparents, the college-age nephew or the rural-in-laws. When the form cannot expand to accommodate these additions without sacrifice to its conceptual and physical order, that order becomes meaningless.

If figurative design is invalidated when challenged by change, and if change is central to the culture, then figurative design may be rendered invalid. Instead, configurative or space-defining forms should be in order. This seems especially true when configurative design is in keeping with the architectural precedent.

**Part C: Complexity versus the Eclectic**

In the past, because of the relative uniformity of the vernacular, the neighborhood fabric was cohesive regardless of the often fragmentary nature of inwardly focused dwellings. Such houses could not disrupt the fabric because the materials and methods of construction were consistent.
In the modern context, the selective borrowing that is the rule in developing nations often juxtoposes that which is borrowed with that which exists from the cultural tradition. In the built environment, the established patterns must accommodate these new additions. As we have discussed, some new forms like figurative architecture may have difficulty meshing. The neighborhood consequently becomes somewhat eclectic.

This difficulty has often created environments enriched with a multitude of forms, textures and color. The layered and stratified environment of present day Seoul is so enriched. Yet, it is occasionally seen as confusing by those unfamiliar with the city. This initial confusion is caused by the direct experience which can be as overwhelming as it is unexpected.

Because it is so unexpected, the receiver is inundated with new information. Everything seems to demand attention, is unfiltered and of equal vigorous value. The new information perceived is inversely proportional to the degree of expectancy. When the environment is so overwhelming, it can appear monotonous in its excess.

This initial confusion, alternating between monotony and chaos, results largely from an environment complicated by the sometimes haphazard cross-cultural borrowing that has been inadequately adapted. Borrowing without regard for the appropriateness of its application creates complication whereas borrowing with regard for situational particularities results in complexity.
A overly complicated environment is likely to be disorienting and exhausting. A complex environment is enriched with a sense of alternatives and possibilities and heightens a sense of curiosity.

In Korea, cross-cultural borrowing is inevitable. If it is viewed as an opportunity to create a bricolage of the old and the sincerely adapted new, this selective borrowing will reaffirm an appreciation of and a commitment to the tradition without sacrificing that tradition to the homogenizing forces of post-industrial world culture. Such a bricolage will speak of a cultural plurality while avoiding a commercialization of tradition or the treat of a cultural homogenized or diluted into extinction.

Part D: Korean Dwellings: Conclusions

From the three previous sections we can draw more general conclusions about residential architecture in Korea.

The redundant elements of House One testify to an uneasy mediation between the selectively borrowed elements of western domestic architecture and 20th century Korean behavioral patterns to which they could not respond or coincide. In general this exhibits not cultural confusion but an adoption that is indiscriminant in its enthusiasm.

Since House One largely exemplifies a post-war architectural trend in this class of housing, this form of eclecticism is alarming in its prevalence. If it is true that many Korean architects are seduced by the architecture of the West, then we are to hope that their borrowing in the
future exhibits greater regard for their own culture.

Still, regard for historic precedence can be belittled by any use of "caricatures of tradition, details (and more) dragged screaming from the past to be stuck onto modern concrete." As we have seen in the platform element in House Two, an icon must also find use or else its purpose is that of a motif. It becomes a stylized icon that is applied to the surface. Without use it has limited relation to the house. It can only refer back to history.

Instead, we must ask ourselves which features of the vernacular can be used to encourage continuity that also responds to current needs. Artificially sustaining elements for decorative purposes soon falters into replication. In effect this divorce begins to demean precedence by virtue of the self-referential nature of meta-symbols.

The indiscriminate use of either cultural implants or parodies of the past can result in an environment so falsified as to become meaningless. This is especially true when such action eventually erodes the built-up meaning of the environment. Instead, any recycling of forms must be validated by current behavioral patterns in order to become validated by its receivers.

Obviously, behavioral patterns are evolving and changing. They cannot be easily catalogued. This is not a simple issue for there is a reciprocity between the influences of environment on
behavior and the influences of behavior in shaping the environment.

In our studies, space that is undifferentiated by use, as in the vernacular tradition and House Two, responds to contemporary behavioral patterns. Similarly, the space defining forms we have called configurative still reflect an attitude toward the landscape that is indicative of a largely unchanged metaphysical position. And lastly, because of the complexities of present day Korea, rich with its unique culture and enriched by selective borrowings from the post-industrial world, a meaningful environment is one that mirrors this condition with complex images and elements.
Part E : Further Discussion

One shortcoming evident in this thesis is the imbalance in its analysis of representational and responsive meanings. There is a greater reliance on understanding form versus an understanding of social behavior. In other words, greater attention is paid to the sources rather than on receptors of meaning.

This is a shortcoming of the author and, in turn, a shortcoming of an educational system which trains the architect in the manipulation and execution of built environments rather than in the larger system of social environments.

The thoughts represented in this thesis come from somewhere within the boundaries of the architectural community. The author is neither confident nor qualified to jump outside to discuss or try to evaluate larger social realities. This hesitancy to make that jump is due to the realization that such a jump "has to throw light on the ideological system underlying the various codes and the various works."^1^  

^1^  

My reluctance to interpret social realities is somewhat similar to the reluctance of the architectural community. This hesitation may result from what appears to be a distancing between the architect and society.

There are a few factors which contribute to this distancing. In contemporary society the architect designs for those with different social and educational backgrounds. In the pre-industrial era, the architect and client were usually members of the same class, the elite. Similarly, today personal contact between those who design and those who
occupy is minimal. In addition architects are often interested in maintaining this distance in order to maintain an artistic autonomy.\textsuperscript{13} 

This distancing tends towards a relatively autonomous architectural subculture.\textsuperscript{14} This subculture is particularly interesting in its relation to the Modern Movement. For the scope of this thesis, distinctions will not be made between factions of this complex movement.

As a reaction against 19th century Revivalism, the Modern Movement sought to embrace "the apparent opportunities presented by the new building materials, new fabrication technologies and new models in the form of artifacts of the machine age."\textsuperscript{15}

They sought to break with the constraining and over-used conventions of the past. To them, industrialization presented "the possibility of a new aesthetic which an abstract geometric order would emerge, symbolizing a new practical realism and the chaotic ferment of modern life... It was an effort to devise a new aesthetic order without reference to past orthodoxies.\textsuperscript{16}

The Modern Movement sought to distill form to evoke a system of universal symbols. In effect, such a system effectively denied the possibility of alternative interpretation. In turn this disrupted the relationship between sources and receptors of meaning. Such a venture further isolated the architectural subculture because it chose not to acknowledge the role of the receiver.

This drive to universalize symbols and to break with conventions tampered with architectural
language systems to manipulate meanings. As Bonta writes,

Tampering with meaning at one level of language becomes a way of conveying other meanings at a higher level, a fact well known to entertainers. Finally, a new parasitic signal system encroaches over the original one. But there is a cost involved; the ultimate deterioration of language. Eventually, the conventions that are being attached lose their validity, and at that point the attach itself becomes meaningless—both in a literal and cultural sense. \(^1^7\)

This drive for the universal symbols and a value-free architecture was contradictory in three ways. Firstly, the desire to be meaningless becomes in itself meaningful at another level. \(^1^8\) Secondly there was no way to prevent their language from being conventionalized by social use. \(^1^9\) And lastly, it is questionable whether it ever was meaningless. It was viewed by its contemporaries as symbolic of an "organized life, standardized and disciplined up to the extreme that all individual character, thought, soul and feeling are lost." \(^2^0\) Rather than being "poverty stricken symbolically" \(^2^1\) it held a multitude of both representational and responsive meanings.

Since the search for the universal was a process of abstraction and because of their contempt of symbols contaminated by social use, the Modern Movement continually moved further from any larger social realities and closer to a self-referential state. Theirs was a system of architecture that spoke of architecture. For them "the problem of checking the effects on the public had little importance." \(^2^2\)

Because the Modern Movement sought to escape the conventionalization of their internal language, they were under pressure to create the perpetually
avant-garde. This seems to have been a relentless strain, yet in some form this desire for the novel remains today.

Earlier in this chapter we found that elements in our environment which are unexpected are more memorable and contain more information. The novel is that which gets noticed. Yet to make the novel is not all that difficult.

A study of imageability in Venezuela by Appleyard suggested some physical characteristics that contributed to building recall. These characteristics contribute to the imageability of individual forms. These characteristics make a building unique and novel in its context. Among these are: physical isolation and singularity, simplicity or uniqueness of shape, height and bulk and brightness of color. Yet, they would not be as noticeable in a field of like forms. Imageability relies on a relatively unexceptional context.

Curiously these characteristics contradict those found in our studies. Quite simply, our conclusions result from a concern for meaning grounded in a specific culture. Conversely the quest for the novel seems to emerge from an opposing concern: one of maintaining distance from social realities.

A reliance on originality devalues the traditional context when in such a system the tradition is equated with stagnation. When a premium is placed on originality, society becomes dissatisfied with traditional forms.

Devaluing the cultural sub-structure and relying on perpetual and commercial newness "threatens to relegate architecture to the rarefied fringes of
The need to consistently create and sustain such a subculture is anxiety producing and somewhat artificial. A subculture which is based in the perpetual avant-garde is necessarily unstable.

As Tafuri points out,

Since the thirties architectural culture has preferred to deduce from its own center what could have only been found by a complete and unprejudiced analysis of the ways in which the mythical society being addressed decodes, distorts, transforms, makes factual use of the messages launched by the builders of images. And this is a sign of the insecurity of architectural culture itself.

Both the quest for the perpetual avant-garde and the distance, self-imposed or otherwise, between the design subculture and larger society seem to have challenged the role of the architect in society.

Returning to the beginning of this section, we must now approach "the ideological system underlying the various codes and various works." For, if we perpetuate the distancing between the design profession and the "experiential social life of the larger society" we are guilty of an "abrogation of responsibility for the meanings attached to our own works." This thesis suggests that the architect "determines as precisely as possible the conditions under which he is being asked to act."

If we choose not to exercise or even recognize our subjectivities we are likely to become "agents of an authoritarian, organizational technology" that does violence to culture by virtue of its consistant arbitrariness. It also seems a mistake to cast ourselves in the role as great social
arbitrators since we are largely unskilled and untrained for such work, we must find ways to work within the limits of our professional boundaries.

Our role seems to be little more than to bring to our conscious awareness, the subjectivities we hold. As members of a complex society which is an "incessantly reverberative system"\textsuperscript{3, 2} we hold a position of responsibility.

Social responsibility can begin to be addressed if we practice with an awareness of our subjectivity. Such an awareness would likely monitor our reliance on the often internal dialectic of form and should force us to measure the validity of our design tendencies against larger social realities. When we practice architecture that is grounded in such realities, we assume a role of greater responsibility in society.
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

- TS Eliot
1 Harries, K. "Thoughts on Non-Arbitrary Architecture." in Perspecta 20 the Yale Architectural Journal.


4 Rapoport, A. Page 6.


14 Gastal. Page 11-12

16 Ibid. Page 157.


18 Bonta. Page 22

19 Ibid. Page 42.


22 Tafuri. Page 104.


27 Tafuri. Page 103.


31 Pawley. Page 126.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


RELATED READINGS:


BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Seoul, Korea


Linder, Staffan Burenstam. The Pacific Century: Economic and Political Consequences


Physical Profile of Cities in the ESCAP Region.


CHAPTER ONE:

1.01, 1.02
Tool use and manufacture. Neolithic artifacts excavated in North Hangyon Province. Korea.

1.03

1.04
Hongkong Bank. View down to ground floor of atrium which rises 13 floors.

1.05, 1.06
International Place by Phillip Johnson. Boston. Installation of "Palladian wallpaper" window fenestration and overall view of office towers.

1.07
Frank Lloyd Wright's House for Mrs. Thomas Gale. Oak Park. 1909. Horizontal building mass and deep eaves set up relationship with the ground plane.

1.08, 1.09
Le Corbusier's Villa Savoixe in Poissy. Major living space is lifted from "damp and unhealthy" ground.

CHAPTER TWO:

2.01
Map of East Asia.

2.02
Residential street pattern of present day Seoul.

2.03
Contemporary Seoul. Financial district with views of tower on Nam San.

2.04
Map of post-war Korea.
2.05
Map of Korea. 1861.
Taedon Yoyido by Kim Chong-Ho.

2.06
Main entrance of Pulguk-Sa.
Imperial Palace in Kyongju.
Silla Dynasty. 8th Century.

2.07

2.08
The March 1st Movement and massacre: a demonstration held at Toksu Palace Seoul, Korean Patriots murdered by the Japanese, Son Pyong-hu the Ch'ondogyo leader.

2.09
Refugees during the Korean War.

2.10
Street Pattern of old Seoul.

2.11
The Great South Gate. Seoul.

2.12
Crustacean neighborhood form.
Han Yang Dong, Seoul.

2.13
Yeoido Model Apartment Complex.
150,000 sq. meters. Built 1971.

2.14
Diagram of South Korean migration flows. 1961–75.

2.15

2.16

2.17
Seoul '88 Summer Olympic facilities. Aerial.

2.18, 2.19
Olympic Athlete's and Reporter's Village. Woo and Williams. Elevation and site plan.
2.20
Korean vernacular dwelling complex of the
Yang-Bahn. Plan.

2.21, 2.22
Typical roof construction.
Section drawing and photograph.

2.23
Vernacular courtyard.
Roof, building, platform.

2.24
A complex of structures non-symmetrically sited
shaping outdoor spaces. Temple complex.

2.25
Old Chinese-Korea map of the "Middle
Kingdom" between heaven and earth.

2.26
Platform as mediator between ground form and
structure.

2.27
Servant's quarters and storage made up a 3D wall
to the vernacular dwelling.

2.28
Korean vernacular courtyards were seldom
landscaped.

2.29
Manicured Japanese landscape tradition.

2.30
Front wall with main gate in the vernacular
tradition.

2.31
Courtyard dwelling with less internal privacy and
more external privacy.

CHAPTER THREE:

3.01
The vernacular example discussed in Ch.2.

3.02
House One. Preliminary Data.

3.03
Architect's rendering of House One.
Kang-Nam Ku, Seoul.
Walled vernacular dwellings formed a continuous wall along streets.

The 38th parallel; De-Militarized Zone between North and South Korea. Imposed after WWII.

Complicated entry sequence of the vernacular.

Typical contemporary Korean room with Undol floor.

Unearthed ruins of Undol floor heating system. Pre-historic.

The grandmother hangs laundry in the garden since the roof terraces are difficult to access.

General view of House Two from garden.

House Two. Preliminary data.

House Two. Plan drawings.


South and east elevations. Box-like form.

Korean vernacular wall construction "stop" with a change of material or stepped treatment.

East end of wall "adjusts" to meet neighbor with a notch.

Front gate of House Two. Note guard dog on wall.

Vernacular gate. Note pull rings.
3.20
Figure/ground diagram of House Two. Walls do not physically engage house. Grey area shows overhang. Object-like.

3.21
Vernacular courtyard dwelling.

3.22
Vernacular. Tri-partite division; roof, building face, platform.

3.23
Interior of vernacular; views, breezes, integration with landscape, extension of the dwelling.

3.24
House Two.
Small platform under overhang.

3.25
Vernacular screen doors with rice paper backing work by sliding, swinging out or up.

3.26
A plan of Korean vernacular.

3.27
House Two plan drawings.
Definition of outdoor spaces minimal.

3.28
House Two Index:
1. Entry
2. Drawing room
3. Kitchen
4. Dining
5. Laundry
6. Work space
7. Food storage
8. Main room
9. Study
10. Children's room
11. Bathroom
12. Inner room
13. Loft

3.29
Table of meanings in contemporary Korean dwellings.

CHAPTER FOUR:

4.01
Main room of the vernacular.
4.02
Main room of House Two.

4.03
"Western" room of House One with furniture removed for summer use.

4.04, 4.05
Leon Krier’s parody of modern zoning practices.

4.06
Women in the workforce.
Industrialization influences traditional sex roles.

4.07
Vernacular courtyard with physical reflection of social patterns. Relationships between elements predominate.

4.08
South yard of House One.
Looking out from patio.

4.09
Perspective of House One. Object-like.

4.10
House Two. Object-like.

4.11
Cohesive neighborhood fabric.
Tile roofs of post-war courtyard housing.

4.12
The expected message is less informative.
The unexpected is noticed.

4.13
Sometimes chaotic and eclectic streetscape of contemporary Seoul.

4.14
Mario Botta.

4.15, 4.16
Contemporary Korean dwellings;

4.17
Present day Korea. Juxtapositions of cultural traditions and influences of modernization. Note skyscrapers in background.
4.18
"Domino" prefabricated housing scheme.
Le Corbusier. 1914.