PROSCRIBED SCENES FROM A MONUMENT

by

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Abstract

In producing the historic monument through attention to a neatly defined
prescription of privileged concerns, architectural scholarship yields an
effluvium of discarded issues proscribed by the conventions of scholarly
tradition. This study proposes that a ‘monument’ arises from the unstable
dialectic between spatial practices and history. By privileging the monument as
document of history, scholarship elides the spatial practices and the
experiences of architecture’s occupants. This study explores the implications
of instating these experiences and spatial practices to the ‘scene’ of
architectural discourse using the moving image as representational tool.

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‘The Meaning of a representation can be nothing but a representation’
Charles Sanders Peirce

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Scene

INT. YAZD MOSQUE, YAZD, IRAN - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

In a high niche on the qibla wall, the tall, erect figure of a grandfather clock overlooks the sanctuary like a still sentinel or anachronistic ghost. Two other entities enact a more aggressive guard at ground level, grilled metal masks slatting their inscrutable gaze. Massive aqua blue bodies stand on spindly legs fit with wheels, set for motion but for the electrical cord that binds each to a wall.

The apparent fierceness of these industrial air-conditioners belies their dependence: constantly they demand water, and incontinence necessitates the bright plastic buckets between their legs. Looking again, they resemble nothing more than two apathetic guard-dogs, made torpid by the heat of the afternoon and the energy demands of their industrial innards.

Discretely squatting in a crook of the iwan, a plump, pastel green cabinet pullulating with books and pamphlets offers these through glass doors and in loose piles upon its head. Its brood of books is scattered throughout the mosque. Within niches set into plastered walls they sit with casual perfection, placed there by one with an eye for composition.

Words scratched into the plaster crawl upon the wall surface with a fluidity of movement not afforded the nearby Allahs imprisoned within a matrix of brick-size units.

Curtains congregate in the gallery to the east of the iwan, slapping complaints of the wind against carved stucco walls and wooden balustrades. Worked into a sufficient agitation they curl themselves up and around their top string. Left in peace they languorously hang, sagging toward the ground under their own weight. In the opposite gallery an ample copper tea urn reflects and assembles all activity.

The spaces of the mosque move with the infinite echolalia of multiple fans, whose fragile forms strung across the iwan resemble frenzied dragonflies captured and hung by malevolent children.

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Introduction

The celebrated walls of a historic monument contain these myriad elements: the fourteenth century congregational mosque of Yazd. The mosque’s monumental architecture of plan, structure, and decoration indexes the human activity of building programs and artistic production and patronage. The quotidian elements described serve no less as indices of human activity, but here of the activity of everyday life, of present, continual occupation. The discourse of the historic monument discards such temporal objects and the ever-changing, yet always present occupants of architecture.

The monument is, as Lefebvre observes, ‘determined by what may take place there and consequently by what may not take place there (prescribed/prroscribed, scene/obscene)’. This thesis attends to the discourse of architectural scholarship that constructs the historic monument as itself a monument, determined by what may and may not take place there, a monument with its own scene and obscene.1 Poised for self-reflection, this study asks: in what ways and to what effect does architectural scholarship, in producing the historic monument through attention to a neatly defined prescription of privileged concerns, yield an effluvium of discarded issues, proscribed by the conventions of scholarly tradition? In other words, what is the obscene of the historic monument?

Multiple registers of the term ‘monument’, each with their respective obscenes, are embedded within the meta-level definition of monument as discourse. The first section, Effluvia 1: Living Bodies, Spatial Practice, establishes the experiences and spatial practices of occupants as a productive part of architecture; these practices are often proscribed, written out of the historic record. The second section, Effluvia 2: Living Monuments, Monumental Practice, unpacks the contested term ‘monument’ to investigate how the monument arises from a collapsing dialectic between the production of space through spatial practice, and the

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production of history through (seemingly given) space. To privilege the monument as a
document of history is to elide the synchronic spatial practices that render the site a ‘living
monument’. This section is appended by a case study in Appendix 1, Monumental practice:
the Yazd Mosque. The third section, Effluvia 3: Representational Practice, focuses on the
representational practice of the architectural scholar as one form of spatial and monumental
practice. This section investigates the possibility of the moving image as a medium for
incorporating spatial practices and experiences in architectural representation, and
supplements the video submitted as Appendix 2, ‘Between Prayers’.

A central aim of this study is to champion the proliferation of representational forms
within scholarship. 2 The appendices, both case studies situated in the mosque of Yazd, utilize
representations that exceed those conventional to the practice of architectural history,
incorporating genres of writing and visual representation that, although generally marginalized
in architectural scholarship, do occasionally find greater acceptance in other fields. The
undertaking constitutes not an anthropological study of the occupants of monuments nor of a
particular mosque, but rather estimates, through the detour of the practice of occupants, an
anthropology of the monumental body itself. A foray of architecture into the edges of
anthropology, this study vis a vis Ricoeur, undertakes ‘the comprehension of self by the detour
of the comprehension of the other.’ Only through obverting our ‘scene’ might we question the
status of our discipline and thus the status of what we prescribe and proscribe.

Addressing monumentality per se through the lens of a specific building, the objective
of Appendix 1 is to problematize the notion of a monument as an artifact distinct from the social and/or
corporeal practice of a space – its spatial practice. An unorthodox history, this written representation

2 Much of this work is indebted to Charles Sanders Peirce: his published work on phenomenology, grounded, with all his
work, in the system of semiotic. Although I do not engage Peirce directly in the text, his concept of infinite semiosis to
approach an ‘object’ provided the starting point for this study. Acknowledgement of his influence is limited to this scant
footnote, and the opening epigraph, which will at times reappear.
sets up an anthropo(morpho)logical account of a monument. Alternatively, it may be read as a series of stories within the frame story of the mosque: ‘every story is a travel story – a spatial practice’. The video, rather than a document of spatial practices or a building, makes claim only to status as a spatial construction. Rather than representing specified spatial practices, prescribing a route, or describing an itinerary through the monument, thus reifying some restricted meaning, the video constitutes a *rout* (a flight or retreat after defeat) away from architectural convention, revealing only the scholar’s practice as an im-passive tourist, a participant voyeur, or voyageuse.

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Effluvia 1: Living bodies and Spatial Practice

Architecture produces living bodies, each with its own distinctive traits. The animating principle of such a body, its presence, is neither visible nor legible as such, nor is it the object of any discourse, for it reproduces itself within those who use the space in question, within their lived experience. Of that experience the tourist, the passive spectator, can grasp but a pale shadow.
Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space.

Just as the bodies produced by architecture elude discourse, so too the meaning of Lefebvre's enigmatic quote remains just beyond grasp. Lefebvre's poetic allusion to living bodies does intimate, however, that one might consider architecture as a productive or reproductive force, generating manifold occupants; an intimation which in turn presents a converse: the possibility of an architecture that these diverse occupants produce or reproduce through the multiplicity of their activities and experiences. The following close reading of the passage, without reference to Lefebvre's work as a whole, offers an unfamiliar definition of architecture; discloses one obscene of architectural scholarship; and identifies the challenging nature of the scholar's relationship to this obscene. What is this relationship? What are the implications of the scholar's attempt to recoup, through obverting her 'scene', that which she has conventionally proscribed?4

For Lefebvre it is architecture that 'produces living bodies'; he does not state that buildings produce living bodies. Untying the automatic equation of architecture with building, we might consider a building as only one of many figurations of a larger concept, 'architecture', and propose that living bodies enact another figuration.5 Architecture is a contested term; architects, quick to protect the conceit of their profession, habitually limit the

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4 Lefebvre's epigraph structures the video portion of this study. I don't engage his work in critique, nor furnish it as the conceptual 'ground' for my study — rather his words are presented as a point of departure. As a thinker outside the confines of architectural discourse, he provides a focus on architecture alternative to that from within the discipline.

5 The term 'figuration' has been borrowed from Barthes, which he distinguishes from 'representation' - 'a space of alibis (reality, morality, likelihood, readability, truth etc.). See Roland Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), 55-57.
buildings conferred this title. In a contrary, though not an innovative move we might call for a broadening of the definition to include all spatial construction and structures, including the spatializing acts of individual occupants.6

Lefebvre maintains that the animating principle by which architecture produces living bodies is embedded and reproduced in the occupants' experience of the space (here we could say - 'or of the building') through use. Occupants must habituate the space in order to become a living body-figuration of the architecture.7 Therefore we can understand that living-bodies are occupant-bodies in a habitual relationship with a given space. When the space changes, the habit by necessity changes, and therefore so too the traits of the living body change. If the habit changes, the space by necessity is redefined, and therefore so too the traits of the living body are redefined. And so it follows that 'there are as many spaces as there are distinct spatial experiences'.8 An unfamiliar 'living architecture' surfaces: architecture as the multiple definitions of a space, arising with the experience of each individual occupant, 'each with its own distinctive traits' as she inscribes her identity on the space through her mode of inhabitation. And it is

6 Grosz, writing from outside the discipline, defines architecture as 'the art or science of spatial manipulation', and asks whether architecture can 'be thought, no longer as a whole, a complex unity, but as a set of and site for becomings of all kinds'. Elizabeth Grosz, Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 71. She calls for recognition that 'its 'identity', as fluctuating and fragile as it might be, is contingent upon that which it "others" or excludes'; this paper constitutes a response to this call, although conceived and largely drafted before I read her work.

7 I have drawn the relationship between animating principles and habit from C. S. Peirce. 'Peirce links the concept of "habit" to that of "rule of action". A habit is not merely a blind behavioral event, such as a reflex response to a stimulus, but a general structure of intelligibility that can guide further forms of behavior... Habits that instantiate rules are capable of sustaining beliefs that give the organism or self a stable location within the world,' Robert Corrington, An Introduction to C. S. Peirce (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1993), 37.

8 Merleau-Ponty quoted in De Certeau, 118. Discussion of architecture's living bodies would be enriched through integration of Merleau-Ponty's theory of 'flesh'. Unfortunately there is space in this study for only a brief introduction. Merleau-Ponty describes the world as a continuous 'flesh' shared by bodies each sentient and sensible, subject and object. Directly critiquing Descartes, he proposes that the mind is not split from the body: the body is thinkable itself, the site of a sentient subject. The different sensory experiences access different worlds, each providing a 'complete map'. The separate sensory maps collected by the body cannot be overlaid onto the others, but require integration, a process that takes place within the body. Might we therefore define the living body as a response of the sentient body to a given set of sensory stimuli (whether a building, space, film, painting etc.)? Merleau-Ponty might also argue that since the 'world' is also sentient, the building, space, film etc. must also produce multiple living bodies. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968). See in particular chapter four, "The Intertwining – The Chiasm".
these modes of inhabitation or spatial practices of the multiple occupants that constitute the outward manifestation, that is, the visible representation of the multiple living bodies.  

Since the passive spectator is not engaged in a habitual use of the space, Lefebvre duly observes that the tourist, if passive spectator, grasps—in both the sense of comprehension and of physical acquisition—only a pale shadow of the architectural experience. The tourist far from passive, however, experiences the space even on a first encounter. The space grasps the tourist, as it grasps all who enter it. Experience is a physical comprehension—a grasp—of the space, through being grasped. That comprehension, not yet habitual, remains as transitory as the space and body circumscribed by their mutual, transient grasp.

Yet even for a spectator, might the superimposition of multiple pale shadows present an ever-closer approximation to experience, an ever-closer approximation to habit? Does the tourist, far from passive, in accumulating sufficient shadows, or experience, generate through a productive relationship with the space, another living body, albeit different from the habitual lived body? Lefebvre would seem to argue that there are bodies proper to a space, and that the tourist experience is not one of them. Yet are the occupants who habituate the space categorically ‘proper’? All bodies are proper to the ‘scene’, but improper when the perspective changes, when they are excluded from the scene (and become part of the ‘obscene’). The scholar, whose conflation with the tourist has been noted and almost institutionalized in critical anthropology, constitutes a living body in her own right; yet her proper place as ‘outsider’ engenders massive issues of inter-subjectivity.

This issue, paramount in contemporary anthropology, has not prevented that discipline from practicing and expanding. Architectural scholarship however, continues to exclude human experience from the domain of its practice and has scarcely acknowledged

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9 By way of example: some weeks ago a friend mentioned that when occupying the elevator on her way down to exit the building, she always felt that it was an entirely different elevator, although the very same one, from that she took up to the office each morning. Her own practice (ascension, descension) altered the familiar space she occupied.

10 These insights came out of some fruitful conversations with Professor Elizabeth Grosz.

11 This issue is further explored in the Video Between Prayers.
issues of inter-subjectivity. Lefebvre confronts the architectural scholar with a difficulty even more immediate: since 'living bodies are neither visible nor legible', no discourse even exists. Yet I have suggested that the occupants' modes of inhabitation, or *spatial practices* constitute the outward manifestation of 'living bodies'.

Following Michel De Certeau, we might approach living bodies, and living architecture, though the discourse of *spatial practices*. Engaging the work of Foucault, De Certeau culls spatial practices from a larger fund of ‘minor’ practices. *Minor practices* are defined in opposition to the foregrounded practices that organize discourses and the normative institutions within a society. Such everyday practices, a 'multifarious and silent reserve of procedures', 'have not been “privileged” by history'.

Distinguishing between 'place' and 'space', De Certeau notes that the former implies stability as a ‘configuration of positions’ ruled by ‘the law of the proper’. Building design and city planning assemble place: an established order of elements (rooms, circulation, walls etc.) in proper position. Space, however, is ‘a practiced place’: spatial practices ‘actuate’ space though 'vectors of direction, velocities and time variables'. Moreover, space is an 'effect' of the practices that 'orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities'. Clearly, space is not stable: each occupant manifests a singular spatial practice – a mode of inhabitation – borne of her social identity, and in a unique dance, space is temporarily choreographed from the competing claims for position and the ‘contracts’ of relative propinquity.

Unlike place which can be mapped, (conventional architectural representation constitutes an armory of mapping devices), space, not afforded 'the univocity or stability of a “proper”', resists mapping. De Certeau suggests that we might, however, *render* space ('a

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12 De Certeau, 48. De Certeau briefly notes, however, that there do exist ‘numerous works that provide methods and categories’ for analysis of spatializing operations and spatial systems': these examine structures. De Certeau's analysis ‘moves from structures to actions’: specifically, 'narrative actions' – one form of spatial practice.

13 De Certeau, 117.
treatment (traitement) of space) through stories, recalling spatial practice. As noted earlier, an individual’s spatial practice, arising from her ‘own distinctive traits’, inscribes her identity onto the space. Accessing and documenting spatial practice we might provide a ‘treatment’ of architecture’s living bodies: the experience, the habit and the competing practices of a living architecture.

The definition of living architecture proposed earlier - as the multiple valences of a space that arise with the experience of each individual occupant, as she actuates it through her spatial practice – exacts the incorporation of living bodies, to which Lefebvre so poetically alludes, as productive part of architecture. Having acknowledged that these living bodies are as productively architectural as the physical construction, we must venture into the ignored tangle of activities within and outside the margins of the archive, our amassment of prescribed representations, in order to access the spatial practice of a building. Yet scholarship, no more guaranteed of a successful grasp than tourism, remains liable to reveal little more than a ‘pale shadow’ of its ever-receding object. Moreover, since a definition of the architecture would vibrate somewhere between a building, and the multiple experiences and practices of its occupants, a project attempting to map this relationship would most likely only illuminate its ineluctable unmappability. Nevertheless, despite the evident difficulties of instating occupant experience into scholarly focus, any architectural history that tenaciously continues to address the building alone can only claim to be building history, the production and consumption of a documentary artifact.

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14 The terms place and space are not stable terms of an opposition. The collapsing dialectic of history and practice are addressed in Section 2; see footnote 26 for commentary on the place/ space opposition.
15 Even architecture as a professional discipline is an embodied practice, and the history of this should also take into account spatial practice. Grosz, 149.
Conventional scholarship favors architecture as a historic artifact. The monument is a building with an inextricable link to the past, whose accessibility remains foundational for the discipline of architectural history; the monument even has embedded in its etymology a link to memory and so history.\footnote{Monument: Middle English, from Latin monumentum literally, memorial, from Monere to remind.} Yet as Alois Riegl notes in his trenchant, much-cited \textit{Cult of the Historic Monument}, use of the term \textit{monument} has reflected varying relationships to history; relationships that give rise to diverse maneuvers in which buildings are either intentionally built as monuments with commemorative value, or acquire monumental status through subsequent ascription of value.\footnote{These values will be discussed in greater detail in Appendix 1.} Moreover, Riegl perceptively identifies apparently opposing relationships to the \textit{monument}, one associated with its ‘documentary’ utility, and the other with its affective dimension. ‘Historical value’ and ‘Age value’ manifest these two relationships.

The relation of the scholar to the historical monument transforms a building into a \textit{document}. The monument’s ‘documentary’ or ‘historical value’, Riegl writes, ‘arises from the particular, individual stage it represents in the development of human activity in a certain field’. Founded through scholarly research, ‘[it] rests on a scientific basis and therefore is acquired only by means of reflection.’\footnote{Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin,” \textit{Oppositions} 25 (1992): 33.} By contrast Age value ‘appeals directly to our emotions’, an effect that is ‘evoked by mere sensory perception’.\footnote{Riegl, 33-34.} This affective response arises from the perception and appreciation of the passing of time; ‘a sense of the life cycle’ evidenced in traces of age. Unlike historical value, which is ‘little capable of winning the masses’, age value ‘is not restricted to the educated’. Affectivity – a potential facet of any architectural experience – is often proscribed from the discourse of the historic monument. Yet the affective nature of the monument ‘is essential; it is not simply a question of informing, of calling to mind a neutral bit of information, but rather of stirring up, through the emotions,
a living memory." The scholar, identifying (with ostensible 'objectivity') and valuing the historical (documentary) monument for its utility as repository of such 'neutral bits of information', elides the subjective attributes of affect.

Riegl perceives several related oppositions contained within the concept of the monument: documentary utility and emotional effect; 'reflection' and 'sensory perception'; ostensible 'neutrality' and subjectivity. On the other hand, he explicitly grounds the interpretation of the history told by the monument in the subjectivity of scholarly practice - just as he grounds the subjectivity of immediate, sensory response in 'age' - the concrete evidence of history.

How can a monument be the sign of a stage in human development and the product of a contemporary spatial practice? That is, how can we extend the conception of the monument to include both history and the multiple practices of its occupants? Foucault, who advocates the study of discourse as a monument, presents the terms monument and document in contradistinction when discussing the production of history. While he thoroughly interrogates the term document he offers scant clarification of the term monument, other than to say that it is a 'totality' built of documentary material. Given the contradistinction of the two terms, Foucault's meaning may be further gleaned through contrast. Ultimately, though, the term monument is supposed to be (literally) self-evident. The document, 'as a sign of something else', requires deciphering, interpretation; the monument, by contrast, is not to be interpreted, but described 'in its own volume', non-allegorical, 'silent' and 'inert'. Thus he clearly opposes the document as a material artifact produced by history, against a conceptual contemporary entity (the monument) with documentation as its raw material. The practice of 'history has altered its position in relation to the document: it has taken as its primary task, not the interpretation of the document.... but to work on it from within and to develop it: history now organizes the

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21 A building might motivate both claims: as document and for its emotional effect. Historical value and age value provide only one example of competing values that could be lifted from Riegl. Riegl examines how such competition is played out in the conservation arena; I hope to show that competing claims for the 'monument' are endemic to the term, and complicate any study of the obscene.
document, divides it up, distributes it, orders it, arranges it in levels, establishes series, distinguishes between what is relevant and what is not, discovers elements, defines unities, describes relations... Foucault distinguishes between the ‘reconstitution’ of history through the document-monument and the active, present imposition by the work or practice of history. The aim of the ‘traditional’ historian is to ‘reconstitute’ the past utilizing the document as the ‘possibly decipherable trace’ of silenced voices, of events; by contrast the work of the archaeology-aspirant historian of ‘our time’ consists of the ‘intrinsic description of the monument.”

Foucault’s distinction between history and the practice of history can be related to Riegl’s division between concrete ‘age value’ and interpreted ‘historical value.’ Unlike Riegl, however, Foucault attempts to sever the monument from its ‘documentary’ function. He observes that a document cannot truly remember the past: ‘the document is not the fortunate tool of a history that is primarily and fundamentally memory; [the practice of] history is one way in which a society recognizes and develops a mass of documentation with which it is inextricably linked.’ That is, when we speak of history, our present account reveals less about a past – and more about our relation to the ideological concerns of the present. The purported documents of history are less signs for events than events themselves, practices that position themselves in relation to other documents. A monument, rather than fulfilling its purpose to remember, commemorate, or document, becomes subject to the practice of history: an account that takes up certain (arbitrary) elements of the artifact toward a purpose that must be explicitly or implicitly ideological. Thus Foucault advocates a practice of history that no longer masquerades as memory: ‘history must be detached from the image that satisfied it for so long, and through which it found its anthropological justification: that of an age-old collective consciousness that made use of material documents to refresh its memory.’

Whatever the merits of Foucault’s project, is his conception of the monument adequate? Can we in fact conceive of the monument as a circumscribed system that does not

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22 Emphasis added. See Foucault, 6-7. Foucault notes that ‘our time’ can be traced back to Marx; clearly, however, he refers to the practice of historians under the influence of structuralism.
require anything outside ‘its own volume’? Can we ‘detach’ the monument from history? Where Riegl perceives instability in his opposition between history and practice, Foucault insists on their stability in order to detach the practice of history from the illusion of any factual basis in the past. Yet history and its practice are inextricably entangled, prohibiting the assignment of any stable value to either term. As Foucault argues, when we speak of ‘history,’ our present narrative does not refresh our collective memory or illuminate the past so much as reveal a particular relation to the present and its concerns. That is, a ‘history’ is not in fact ‘history,’ but the practice of a discipline. In the case of architectural history, that practice must be considered along with all other practices that engage a space, including the social practices of its occupants.

The ‘history’ of a monument is never simply a chronology of its physical evolution, but also a series of perpetuated and displaced spatial practices. Just as the built form of a monument undergoes alteration, addition and renovations, so too can we argue that the social practice of the monument is a diachronic or historical process. Monuments, then, arise from both history and also from a (present day) synchronic competition of monumentalizing intentions and practices. Monumental practice constitutes a form of spatial practice, a set of individual narratives privileging distinct ideologies and typically marginalised or elided in historiography. The appendix Monumental Practice brings to the fore those practices at the congregational mosque of Yazd that are in various ways ‘monumental’. By exploring such practices within one building an account of the site alternative to that of the artifact materializes – an anthropological account of the mosque as a living monument. The objective of thus addressing monumentality per se through the lens of a specific building is to problematize the notion of a monument as an artifact distinct from the social and/or corporeal practice of a space – its spatial practice. From these competing practices, the living monument arises as another conceptual ‘monument’ inextricably entangled with the concept of a monument as a historic document.

23 It is through these monumental practices that a building or space attracts the various values identified by Riegl.
24 This dialectic mirrors the opposition presented by Foucault: the practice of archaeology (‘non-interpretive’ and ‘non-allegorical’) marked by the monument, versus the ‘traditional’ practice of history, marked by the document. Against
For the traditional scholar of architectural history, the monument arises from its relation to the past. With history as her conceptual object, she fashions the building as a documentary monument to access and reconstitute a past from which it emanates. We might say that hers is the concern of place; she endeavors to ‘properly’ position both the artifact and past events. In so doing, she performs an illusory withdrawal of the monument from the present, proscribing from her domain the practices and concerns of the living monument. In contrast, the would-be scholar of the living monument engages monumental practice as her conceptual object. Her concern is the polyvalent monumental space effected by the ‘conflicting programs or contractual proximities’ of synchronic ideological practices. Her work seemingly locates the meaning of the monument in the present, accompanied by an illusory removal of the monument from history. Yet these two conceptual monuments, as two ostensibly stable terms in a dialectic relationship, collapse endlessly into one another. Scholarship itself is a form of spatial, monumental practice, in which the architectural historian inescapably privileges certain ideologically burdened concerns grounded in the present. Similarly, the moment we contemplate and elucidate ‘present day’ monumental practice we are already interpreting ‘history’; the present is irredeemably subsumed into history’s domain.25

The monument can thus be said to arise from a collapsing dialectic between the production of space through spatial practice, and the evidence of history through (seemingly given) space. The two conceptual monuments, the living and the documentary, might blissfully co-inhabit the same building, competing but unaware of each other. Yet the moment the scholar of one monument becomes aware of the claims of the other, those claims become part of the history that burdens her practice.

Foucault, however, we must i) restore, with Riegl, the concept of the monument as a document of history and ii) understand the opposition between these two conceptions of the monument as an unstable dialectic.

25 To return to De Certeau: ‘place’ and ‘space’ provide parallel terms for an equivalent collapsing dialectic. Interpreting ‘space’ and spatial practice we rely temporary positions and proximities, thus constructing ‘place’. In order to investigate place we participate in a conceptual space of ‘conflicting programs and contractual proximities’ wrought by the competing spatial practices of scholarship. The claims for the monument identified by Riegl, that I have designated document and emotional effect similarly slip into each other.
We can neither stabilize nor resolve this unstable dialectic of practice and history. Even the mere recognition of the other practices necessarily displaced through any scholarly practice remains limited. For the tautology and truism that ‘we do not see what it is that we do not see’ limits our capacity to confront the ideological mechanisms that drive our own practices. The obscene of our monument includes not only that which we exclude from the ‘scene’, but also those unacknowledged (unseen) mechanisms that define our ‘focus.’ In a perpetual dance of displacements, even as we achieve consciousness of unseen ideologies and attempt to represent that which has been proscribed from our ‘scene’, another obscene arises. As we address the obscene in our representational practice we are thus presented with a seemingly irresolvable quandary. How do we cope with the obscene, given the blindness that necessarily shields at least part of it from view?

Our representational practice must actively contend with the force of its constructions of ‘scene’, and the elusiveness of its intended object. While total agency over the displacement of scene and obscene is impossible, we can actively and consciously relinquish the attempt to grasp the monument as an intended object, and propagate openness to a multiplicity of other representations into our own practice. Multiplicity, achieved through the proliferation of representations and producers (the dispersion of ideological mechanisms), may be the only strategy that can place scholarly practice at the service of what inevitably perishes in discourse.

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26 Disclosure of factors that situate the scholar with respect to his subject has become a norm in anthropology. Though an important practice, disclosure does not resolve the fundamental distance between the object and its representation, between the theoretical demarcation of a discipline and its expected results and the methods of achieving those results.
'Looking at a work of architecture is, in many ways, like watching a televised football game; it can only be understood, even by professionals, if several cameras are constantly focused on what is going on, and instant replays are always available from whatever point of view may suddenly become necessary.'

Oleg Grabar The Great Mosque of Isfahan

Intimating that architecture is an aggregate of synchronic spatially placed actions, or 'plays', Grabar calls for a multiplicity of spatial and temporal perspectives in representation. As we confront the universal, almost instinctual imperative to document that which we study, through the proliferation of representations we might relinquish the ever-illusory grasp of the object, the architecture. Appendix 1, The Yazd Mosque furnishes a written account; and verbal description is indeed a comfortable expedient. Yet as Grabar's lines above illustrate, the use of moving image as representational mode also springs to mind: that is, the still photograph familiar within architectural scholarship, proliferated at the rate of 24 per second over a changing perspective.

Although he critiques the limitations of representational modes conventional to the architectural history 'professional', Grabar privileges the visible aspect of architecture, if not explicitly equating architecture to artifact. Grabar's use of the verb to look, metaphorically indicating study, conforms to a long tradition in philosophy that privileges the sense of sight, linking the eye to intellectual understanding.\(^27\) He assumes that a certain mode of spectatorship might actually apprehend the 'architecture' if a form of representation could replicate an eye situated within the building. The architectural 'scene' is limited conventionally to that which is seen. Account of the obscene directs attention to the senses omitted from architectural discourse: architecture grasps occupants-as-sensorium, yet the scholar's eye alone estimates the value of a monument.

Obverting architecture to a new definition, one of perhaps many, calls into question and redirects the dominant discourses, and challenges conventional representations. Although architecture as artifact submits to the supremacy of the eye, does not Lefebvre’s earlier assertion that ‘architecture produces living bodies’, in which the experience of the occupant constitutes a productive part of architecture, compel the restitution of all the senses to architectural discourse?

Having identified multi-sensory living bodies as a productive part of architecture, and their practices as a productive element in attributing monumentality to a space, the question of how to document these inevitably follows. Grabar’s assumption – that access to certain visual representational tools facilitates understanding of an architecture – collapses if we consider architecture not only as a ‘work’ but also as (summarily) a space produced by the experience of the occupant. Since these experiences are, according to Lefebvre, ‘neither visible nor legible’, representation requires some great feat of imagination or technological invention. Instead I have suggested we might access only the spatial practices of occupants, which constitute the outward, sensible, manifestation of architecture’s living bodies.

Michel de Certeau notes that spatial practices may be narratively represented by what he defines as ‘tours’ or itinerary, and ‘maps’: verbal descriptions of space oscillate between ‘going’, that is, organizing movements, and ‘seeing’, the presentation of tableaux. Cinema does both. ‘The motion picture […] is the very synthesis of seeing and going – a place where seeing is going. It is a tableau that organizes movements: a tableau movant.’

28 Riegl too wrote of the fine arts and architecture: ‘is seeing however really the sole sense function that reveals to us the nature of things, that is, their extent and delimitation in relation to each other?’ Alois Riegl, “Late Roman or Oriental?” [1902], in German Essays on Art History: Winckelmann, Burckhardt, Panofsky and Others, ed. Gert Schiff, The German Library Series, vol. 79 (New York: Continuum, 1988), 180. An exploration into the senses and the ‘living body’ of architecture would benefit from in-depth consultation with the work of Merleau Ponty (see footnote 8). This is unfortunately beyond the scope of the current study.

29 Giuliana Bruno, The Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture and Film (London: Verso, 2002), 245. Bruno argues that De Certeau’s ‘cartographic binarism’ of tour and map is a false opposition; she nevertheless immediately proceeds to ‘synthesize’ them. Although I agree with Bruno that in film seeing and going are brought together in a unique way, I am not convinced that de Certeau’s distinction between tour and map is to be discredited. The map, as Bourdieu observes, is ‘a model of all possible routes’. The itinerary is one route selected from all those possible. De Certeau’s distinction, based on narrative, is consistent with this position. It should also be noted that the facility, and consequent tradition, of films to
Presented to spectators at the recorded rate of 24 per second, accompanied by a sound track, the still images made to move do more than reconstruct motions. Emotion is a familiar effect of moving images, requiring no elaboration. Cinema has the ability, moreover, to elicit multi-sensory experiences in excess of the audiovisual. Laura Marks explicates in detail how this is achieved through the viewer’s ‘narrative identification’ and through synesthesia, the intersensory links that allow ‘the perception of one sensation by another modality’. Indebted to Bergson and Merleau Ponty, Marks notes that these links are culturally and contextually determined. Certain writers of anthropology have tendered the term ‘submergence’ as a rough correlation to narrative identification. The viewer is able to ‘submerge [her] position in that of the imagined other’. That is, film provides an artificial opportunity to inhabit another’s sensorium and assume another’s identity. Which is not to claim that the ‘position’ the viewer inhabits constitutes a concrete ‘reality’; submergence relies upon the viewer’s own sense-memory and the personal context that she projects onto the film. ‘Cinema with its distinctly dream-like state of reception induces a vivid but imaginary mode of participatory observation’. Furthermore, by engaging all senses to mediate a cinematic environment, film constructs a spatial experience. Might scholarship utilize the potential of this medium to evoke bodily motion, emotion, and the senses in order to render (produce a ‘treatment’ of)
architecture's living bodies? What are the implications of attempting to document "living architecture" through the spatial practice of film?

Acknowledging cinema as an affective and multi-sensory experience is not to claim that this medium might 'grasp' any architectural experience, nor even that it may irrecusably document spatial practice. Armed with a representational tool appropriated from anthropology – accused 'handmaiden of colonialism' – the architectural scholar attending the spatial practices salvaged from the ob-scene of her discipline necessarily confronts identical issues of inter-subjectivity and the consequent crisis of representation that have vexed anthropologists.

Since early in the development of cinematic technology, anthropology has utilized the moving image as a form of ethnography: documenting the motions of cultural practice, providing visual evidence for remote study and artifact for preservation or museification.34 Akin to the monument, through documentation the ethnographic objects too are 'transform[ed] into [...] objects of official custody, specialist knowledge and public display as they would have been in a museum.'35 A discussion of how anthropology has addressed concerns of representation exceeds the scope of this paper; relevant here is the distinction between document and representation that fuels debate on the documentary film, a genre within which the ethnographic film is located.

A representation is identified as a document discursively. Whether marked as document by the author or not, the relationship to reality or factuality with which it is associated (and by which it is defined as a document) is imparted by the critical discourse that

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receives it. For example ‘history’, to return to Foucault, ‘is one way in which a society recognizes and develops [...] documentation’. Like the term ‘historic monument’ examined by Riegl, the designation of document to a representation reflects a value attributed by a specific (and preferably ‘specialist’) beholder.

The term documentary ‘designates a particular subjective relation to an objective cinematic or televisual text.’ The discourse that generates the cinematic object, through production techniques and marketing tactics, certainly influences how the product will be consumed; ultimately, however, consumption depends on any viewer’s subjective documentary identification with the film. ‘Specialist’ viewers will interrogate an offered documentary; they will question the authenticity and factuality of its content, and the sincerity of presentation, in order to determine not only the validity of its nomenclature, but ultimately its utility as a document.

Representations that either resist reality or are denied the document’s relation to reality are defined as fiction: art or artifice.

To document is to participate in the search for, and indeed the production of ‘authenticity’ common to both tourist and scholar: for the latter, to ‘not-document’ – to produce artifice – is proscribed, an obscene. ‘Science’ Foucault notes, ‘is, literally, a power that forces you to say certain things, if you are not to be disqualified not only as being wrong, but, more serious than that, as being a charlatan.’ The postmodern individual knows truth to be fleeting, subjective, and contradictory, nevertheless, scholarship hounds the factual: siphoning facts that are deterministic and resolute.

37 Emphasis added. Foucault, 7.
38 Sobchack distinguishes between three modes of viewing a film: documentary, souvenir (home-movie) and fiction. She describes how these three modes are subjectively ascribed to moments within films of all genres. Vivian Sobchack, “Toward a Phenomenology of Non-fictional Film Experience,” in Collecting Visible Evidence, ed. Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 241-254.
The scientific requirement to reproduce fact, which is then to produce facts ("saying certain things"), limits the representational tools at the disposal of a discipline. But perhaps of greater import is the relationship inversely stated: that the representational tools prescribed by a discipline defines and delimits the facts that this discipline produces. How we document determines what we say.\(^40\) Architectural scholarship has long excluded the moving image from its toolbox, and it has (perhaps accordingly) abrogated from its domain those motive and emotive architectural forces that counter the immobile built artifact.

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Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself (I am large, I contain multitudes)
Walt Whitman Leaves of Grass.

The video ‘Between Prayers’ provides another study of the mosque of Yazd, as a response to my own call for the proliferation of representations (and representational mediums) in an endless displacement of the ‘scene’.\(^41\) Such a proliferation has not as its primary aim the amassing of documentation, but rather the \textit{exposing of contradictions} between each representation, and thus the fundamental destabilization of all representational forms. Each focus excludes, and every representation is limited.

The attempt to document spatial practice with film or video succeeds only imperfectly. The \textit{meaning} of representation can be nothing but a representation, C. S. Peirce tells us. Which is to admit that through no form of documentation do we apprehend the \textit{object}.

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\(^{41}\) See appendix 2.
All attempts to mentally **grasp** the architecture constitute another representation. Perhaps inevitably we are led to the observation of Trinh T. Minh Ha: ‘...*i call it No Art, No experiment, No fiction, No documentary. To say some thing, no thing, and allow reality to enter. Capture me.*’\(^{42}\) To grasp the object is to exclude the obscene; to grasp the obscene is to make it scene. Producing representations and encountering them, might we allow ourselves to be grasped, rather than to grasp?\(^2\)

A film that ostensibly represents a building is not only, or perhaps even, a document, but a collateral monument. It evokes the architecture, and might **incorporate** the building with the bodies of occupants, their practices and daily objects, that which is otherwise detritus to the flows of undocumented time. Through affectivity, submergence, and the multi-sensory involvement of the spectator, the film, as a space, is inhabited and practiced, producing its own living bodies that are **grasped** as they inhabit the space of the film. **The meaning of a monument is another monument.** Those who view the moving image, go to the monument – and in the same way that when visiting the building itself we experience only a pale shadow of all that the architecture is, visiting the film we also grasp only a fleeting semblance but from a different perspective, one of many, highlighting in scenes that which might otherwise remain forever obscene.

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\(^42\) Trinh T. Minh Ha, 53.
Haji Abbas at the congregational mosque of Yazd
Guidebooks and tour guides steer the typical tourist visiting the Islamic Republic of Iran upon a conventional itinerary of museums, historic sites and monuments, punctuated by frequent respites at restaurants, hotels and souvenir stores. Although the tourist’s intention in travel may be to engage in what they consider an ‘authentic cultural experience’, in Iran, as elsewhere, a number of those buildings identified as historic monuments by scholars and relevant authorities, that stand in the cities most frequented by tourists, have been stripped of any function extraneous to that of a museified artifact, albeit one remaining in situ.

The Congregational Mosque in Yazd is an exception. Vibrantly active as a place of worship and religious congregation, it is also the site of varied casual activities prohibited within the typical patrolled halls of a museified mosque. The tourist enters without purchase of a ticket and is permitted to witness almost all activities of the mosque community. Her presence of course alters those activities, in ways often imperceptible, often all too obvious. Nevertheless, the artifact of the building is enlivened by the performance of its occupants.

The congregational mosque of Yazd provides a useful site for exploring several monumental practices for various reasons: a wealth of textually documented Yazd history provides urban and social context for the many restorations and additions undertaken on the congregational mosque by successive dynasties; construction took place at a period in which patronage by those in power was common; and the intended function of the original and all intermediate construction – as a mosque – has been predominantly maintained. Of critical interest to this study is the way in which accumulated restorations and additions and the ongoing practices within the building attest to several monumental functions beyond the
relatively recent designation of the historic monument. Attending to the lived performance in synchrony with the building as artifact, I will, over the course of the study, define and detail five principal forms of monumental practice relevant to the congregational mosque of Yazd: that of religious remembrance; the practice of patronage; representing the community; the scholarly production of the historic monument; and the practice of tourism.

The different ways in which the mosque operates as a monument are not attributable to distinct periods, and the practices for which we have records do not describe a continuous past, but rather caper over dynasties and centuries. The structure of this study will, nevertheless, roughly conform to the posture of linear history, providing case studies or case stories of moments that mark the practice of the mosque.

Excluded from the archive, past practices and former incarnations of those that persist in altered form are retrieved with difficulty; scouring the scattered chance traces within written documentation and tapping informants for living memory we may only aspire to adumbrate that which we can no longer observe. Many monumental practices that have affected the material construction, such as those associated with patronage, are noted as historic fact within the archive of the historic monument, which has provided invaluable data, representations, and analyses. Contemporary practices may be observed, and culled from testimony, and may therefore confirm plural realities, including urban myth, personal legend.

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43 This study was originally conceived as a response to Francoise Choay's The Invention of the Historic Monument within which she elucidates the development of the concept and practice of the 'historic monument'. Within the introductory chapter Choay distinguishes the historic monument from the 'original monument', a category that she does not clearly define through either description or example.

44 The practices that I have identified bear certain relationship to the taxonomy of monumental values established by the art historian Alois Riegl. I will assume that the reader is familiar with his work The Modern Cult of Monuments; it is not here the intention to either elaborate or challenge his theoretical observations on the monument, but reference will be made to certain of his 'values' during the course of this study.

45 For information on the social context and practices of the fourteenth and fifteenth century I will draw primarily from Holod-Tretiak's citations of three histories of Yazd outlined later. Again, Holod cites a record of inscriptions by Iraj Afshar in her contribution on the congregational mosque of Yazd in Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, The Timurid Architecture of Iran.
In order to situate the reader a general introduction to the site follows - 'Scholars guide to the Congregational Mosque of Yazd'; further historical and formal details of the mosque will emerge in the course of the study. For the sake of brevity the congregational mosque of Yazd will be notated as the Yazd mosque, except where it occurs in direct quotations.

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and Turan (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986). Holod’s account will be used for discussion on the inscriptions. The testimony of Mehdi Abedi provides information on significant twentieth century practices in Michael M.J. Fischer and Mehdi Abedi, Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990). I will also utilize my own observations and collected testimonies from two trips to Yazd, the first in 1999, the second in 2001.
Plan d'ensemble, 1898

La Mosquée de Téhéran

1. Maison de l'Imam
2. Mosquée de l'Imam
3. Mosquée de la Reines
4. Mosquée du Trésor
5. Mosquée du Chah
6. Mosquée du Sultan
7. Mosquée du Général
8. Mosquée du Prince

Les photos sont situées dans le nord-ouest de la mosquée.
First documented within two fifteenth century histories, *Tarikh-i-Yazd* and *Tarikh-i-Jadid-i Yazd*, the Yazd mosque was not engaged by Western scholarship until Arthur Upham Pope included it in his extensive *Survey of Persian Art* in 1938-1939. Maxime Siroux published a more extensive, though not exhaustive, analysis of the mosque in 1947, including a chronology of construction phases and a measured plan. Siroux limited his textual analysis to the later of the two histories noted above. Renata Holod-Tretiak undertook a closer reading of both the historical accounts as well as a compendium of local histories in her unpublished 1973 dissertation. Holod-Tretiak generally corroborates the periods proposed by Siroux, but adjusts certain dates and ascriptions. Following Siroux and Holod-Tretiak, an outline of the major construction follows:

**Masjid-i-qadim:** At the end of the eleventh century Kakuyid ruler 'Ali ibn Faramurz and his Seljuk wife, Arslan Khatun built a mosque complex on the site of an even earlier mosque for which there is no positive record. The new construction included a dome, a large eyvan (suffah), a courtyard, three gates, a minaret, a library with a portal, [...] a winter hall and two galleries. Additions and restorations took place under multiple local patrons during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including a large prayer hall commissioned by Kakuyid princesses.

**The new mosque:** Although the masjid-i-qadim was well maintained and still in use, around 1325 Shams ad-Din, the Muzzafarid ruler of Yazd, planned and initiated construction of a new mosque on land he had bought adjoining the old one. The patron's death stalled construction in 1334. Holod-Tretiak argues that Shams ad-Din's plan for the mosque incorporated the existing structures into a larger unified complex “through the introduction of a new monumental axis or axes.” However, resumed construction activity under 'Arif ad-Din 'Ali focused on the southern, domed sanctuary structure and iwan, and all subsequent building programs would avoid the older mosque. After another hiatus, Muzzafarid ruler Shah Yahya's order of an oratory hall and an entrance vestibule in 1377 marked the beginning of a principal period of construction, terminating with the Timurid conquest in 1395. The vestibule and sanctuary were integrated with a series of spaces including the eastern oratory and galleries, and surface decoration was introduced, including the dome, mihrab and iwan facade. In 1423 Timurid governor Shah Nizam Karmani recommenced construction, adding the western oratory, and galleries connecting it to the sanctuary and iwan, and completing the decorative program. Shah Nizam's successor, Amir Chaqmaq and his wife Fatimah added further decoration and a bathhouse east of the portal. (The bathhouse was demolished in the early twentieth century. Excavation of its foundations began in winter 2001/2002). Other additions and restorations are documented from the Safavid and Qajar period. The mosque would not be completed with a formal courtyard until the nineteenth century. Today nothing remains of the masjid-i-qadimi, which was still extant as of the fifteenth century.

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4 Holod-Tretiak, 16.
Religious practice: the remembrance of God

O you who believe! When you are called to ritual prayer on the day of assembly, come quickly to the remembrance of God, leave your business.

Qur’an, sura LXII, 9

The paramount status of memory in the definition of a monument (as facilitator of memory) is evidenced not only in the etymology of the term monument but also with the associated English terms ‘commemoration’, and ‘memorial’. According to Riegl, ‘[a] monument in its oldest and most original sense is a human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events (or a combination hereof) alive in the minds of future generations.’

Introducing the term intentional monument to designate this most original sense, Riegl elaborates: ‘Intentional commemorative value aims to preserve a moment in the consciousness of later generations, and therefore to remain alive and present in perpetuity [...] intentional commemorative value simply makes a claim to immortality, to an eternal present and an unceasing state of becoming.’

Equating the intentional monument with its commemorative value, Riegl maintains that ‘religious beliefs [...] possess not a commemorative (monument) value but rather a contemporary one.’ He continues that a religious artifact may be considered an intentional monument ‘were it not lacking one decisive characteristic: the perpetuation of a specific moment, be it of an individual deed or an individual fate.’

Although Riegl dismisses religious edifices from the category of intentional monument, the status of mosques as vessel or prompt of memory becomes clear through analysis of the practice of the mosque. Riegl observes that the operative function of a religious edifice is not the perpetuation of a ‘specific moment’ from the past — a moment thus absent. But is not the operative function of a religious

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50 Riegl, 21.
51 Ibid, 38.
52 Ibid, 29. In this lone use of contemporary value Riegl may be referring to his own category of present-day value: ‘present day value satisfies either sensory or intellectual needs. In the former case we are dealing with values of practical use, in the latter with artistic value.’ Ibid, 39.
edifice the perpetuation of an unseen and thus absent God? Secondly, as will be shown, practices within the mosque also evoke and commemorate Muhammad who, dead and gone, in fact exemplifies ‘an individual fate’. The state of Muhammad contrasts with the reborn (and thus living) Christ of Catholic practice, within which Riegl’s writing must be contextualized.

The nomenclature of all congregational mosques, *masjid-i-jâme*, reveals the social purpose for which the mosque was built. The etymology of *masjid* (مسجد), mosque, delimits the function of the space: the place (سجد) ‘to prostrate oneself’ (سجد). Embedded within the etymology of *jâme*, meaning ‘who or what collects or assembles’, is ‘group’, from which is derived ‘Friday’ and ‘congregation’. Friday is the day for congregation at, literally, the assembling place of prostration, as mandated by the sura LXII:9, noted in the epigraph above. The congregational mosque in Yazd was constructed with this purpose.

Prostration is a part of *rak’a* (literally, ‘an inclination’), the ritual sequence of body movements that accompany *salât*, ritual prayer. While prostrated - kneeling with the body leaning forward to rest on the forehead, hands flat in front - the faithful speak the words *Allâhu akbar* (God is great) and *Subhânâ rabbiya ’l-âlâ* (Glory to my Lord, the Most High). Remembrance of God is thus both uttered vocally and performed physically with body gesture.

The architectural focus of religious practice in the Yazd mosque, and elsewhere, is the *mihrab*. The only ritualized built aspect of a mosque, the mihrab indicates the direction of the *qibla* - the Ka’ba of the Masjid al-haram in Mecca, and the direction of prayer.

Memorializing God is therefore primarily praxis, an orientation, not site-specific. In fact, *hadith* report the Prophet as saying ‘that he had been given the whole world as a masjid’, and ‘wherever the hour of prayer overtakes thee, thou shalt perform the salât and that is a masjid’. As Hillenbrand observes ‘[t]echnically, therefore, it could be argued that the term

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54 Ibid.
*masjid*, normally translated into English as ‘mosque’ does not necessarily demand a building of any kind.\(^{55}\)

Through orientation, *salât* incorporates the commemoration of the Meccan sanctuary, also known as *Bayt Allah* (house of God) into the commemoration of God.\(^{56}\) As a *masjid*, the Yazd mosque recalls the ‘sacred masjid’ of Mecca. Nevertheless, it is the memory of God that is to be evoked at the place of prayer, as evidenced by Sura XXIV, 36-7:

> ‘In houses which God hath permitted to be raised to honor; for the celebration in them, of His name: in them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, by men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of God, nor from regular Prayer [salât], nor from the practice of regular Charity’.\(^{57}\)

Practice of *salât* not only perpetuates a link between the faithful and God, and a memory of the Ka’ba, but also commemorates Muhammad. His name is ritually evoked at the conclusion of every *salât*, within the *tashahhud* (affirmation of faith):

> ‘To God be salutations, prayers and fine words. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, also the mercy and blessings of God. Peace be upon us and upon the good servants of God. I affirm that there is no God but God, He alone, who has no partner; and I affirm that Muhammad is His servant and his Messenger.’

The Yazd mosque, constructed and maintained as a Twelver Shi’ite mosque, also rehearses the memory of the twelve imams, particularly Ali. Besides the performance of their memory through practice, God, Muhammad, and Ali are remembered and represented

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56. Pederson. Both *baytallah* and *masjid* were in use, and applicable to Mecca, before the time of Muhammad.
57. Remembrance of God is not limited to prayer. Recitation of the Qu’ran, *dikhr* (literally, ‘reminding oneself’- a practice cultivated particularly by Sufism) and active service in his name (thus giving alms) are forms of remembrance. As the second pillar of Islam *salât* constitutes the central daily form of remembrance of God, repeatedly evoked in the Qu’ran: ‘There is no other God than Me. Therefore worship Me, and accomplish prayer in remembrance of Me’. (Sura XX, 14)
through multifarious inscriptions that decorate the walls.\textsuperscript{58} Of interest here is the way these inscribed names act as echoes of an oral tradition, as prompts for remembrance: a commemorative function. Thus glazed and unglazed brick repeats of ‘Allah’ form large walls that flank the mihrab. The 99 names of God wrap the sides and top of the mihrab niche. The twelve imams convene on the connecting arch of the dome and iwan.

Religious practice may also commemorate the site itself: after the death of the Prophet, specifically memorial mosques arose on the sites reported by his companions to have been places where he prayed, or where he was otherwise associated.\textsuperscript{59} Therefore, although a mosque may be located anywhere, certain sites are imbued with sanctity. The site of the Yazd mosque is sanctified for a different religious group. Siroux reports that members of the Zoroastrian community, believing that the mosque occupied the site of an old temple, were at the time of his research placing candles and offerings within a ruinous section of the structure.\textsuperscript{60} “Intentional monuments”, writes Riegl, “were also allowed to fall into decay as soon as those for whom they were erected and those who had an interest in preserving them had vanished”. The position of the Zoroastrians as a demographic and political minority precluded preservation and maintenance of the site; the preservation of the practice without the preservation of the site, puts into crisis the notion of the monument as solely a built artifact. The site itself, without symbol or embellishment is invested with a religious charge, and operates as a place of memory for this particular community. The memory in this case is of the site itself. The continued practice constitutes a form of commemoration: the community, by maintaining limited worship at the site commemorates the building itself now in crumbled ruins.

\textsuperscript{58} Much has been written on the practice of writing as architectural ornamentation; Grabar provides a useful account. Oleg Grabar, \textit{The Mediation of Ornament} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
\textsuperscript{59} Pederson.
\textsuperscript{60} Siroux, 122.
The practice of patronage 1

Patronage is a practice that, in directly impacting the construction of the building, sustains significant attention within traditional architectural scholarship. Approximating the complex issues of authorship addressed in twentieth century critical theory, patronage provokes questions of intention and interpretation. The meaning of a monument is unstable and subject to multiple occupations and reinterpretations, and the practice of patronage constitutes but one of these. The complicity of ideology and politics within patronage - manifested through selection of program, builder and formal content - might, perhaps, be more transparent than in many other monumental practices.

'In the early period' of Islam, according to the Encyclopedia of Islam, 'the building of mosques was a social obligation of the ruler as representative of the community and tribes'. A hadith reports the Prophet as saying 'for him who builds a mosque, God will build a home in Paradise.' With such motivation, individual patronage burgeoned over the centuries and 'the mosques thus founded were very often called after their founders.' Perhaps to remind God of their pious patronage, or to immortalize their names in architectural form, patrons made commonplace the practice of including inscriptions documenting their involvement.

Examining the historical texts on Yazd noted earlier, Holod-Tretiak suppresses the pious intent, and implicates politics in the patronage of religious constructions. The motivations are not known of the Kakuyid 'Ali ibn Faramurz and his Seljuk wife, Arslan Khatun who in the fifth/eleventh century commissioned the earliest phase of the Yazd mosque. However, Holod-Tretiak writes that '[b]y the beginning of the fourteenth century the entire complex consisted of a series of accretions since every ruler felt obliged to establish his or her presence in Yazd by building yet another addition to the original mosque hall.'

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61 Pederson
62 Holod-Tretiak, 16.
The inscriptions on the Yazd mosque testify to a number of local patrons who commissioned certain additions or restorations on the building, or invoke the reign of the current Power, including Timurid Shah Rukh; the wife, Fatimah, of Timurid governor Amir Chaqmaq; Abu'l-Muzzafar Sultan Jahanshah. Artisans working on the mosque, leaving inscribed accounts of their contribution also evidenced the urge for personal immortality.63

Other patrons invested money into the building but did not inscribe their names. Or, if they did, the inscriptions have been lost. Historical accounts document the involvement of some: for example, Safavid Shah Tahmasp without leaving an inscription erected the two minarets and constructed a dome over the existing one.64 Yet even if we no longer know who was responsible for the building or parts of it, the effect was certain at the time of its construction. An effect intended for both the domestic consumption of the entire community, and by outsiders, monumental constructions attested to the grandeur of the patron, dynasty, or city. Holod-Tretiak notes that Shams ad-Din, extending the masjid-i-qadimi, responded not to a ‘direct need for the housing of the functions peculiar to any congregational mosque’ but to ‘less obvious factors, more implicit perhaps in the nature and the style of the new constructions.’65

Without diminishing the potential of pious intent - and certainly not the pious practices within religious monuments - the mosque as a personal memorial ‘masks the will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought.’ 66 Lefebvre’s observation highlights the tendency for representations of individual power to be imbricated, if not always complicit, with the monument’s role as an index of social identity. The Timurid Historian Abdul Razzaq Samarkandi, revealing the monument as representation of a community or society, writes ‘if you have doubts about our greatness take a look at our edifices.’67 Samarkandi’s communal participation - ‘our greatness’, ‘our edifices’ - in the architectural representations of dynastic

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63 Such inscriptions, providing dates, have of course been invaluable in cataloging the building as a historic artifact.
64 Holod in Wilber and Golombek, 417.
65 Holod-Tretiak, 77.
66 Lefebvre, 143.
67 From his Matla'al-Sa'dayn wa-majma'I Bahrayu.
power, illustrates Lefebvre’s observation that ‘[m]onumental space offered each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage. It thus constituted a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one.’

A new value arises for addition to Riegl’s seemingly exhaustive taxonomy: identity value. A building valued for its representational role may be built intentionally as a representation of a given social group (the Shah-era Bank Melli headquarters; the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini), or unintentionally as was the Yazd mosque, both as an index of Muslim identity in Yazd, and after the revolution, in its negative association with the Shah era, as will be discussed.

Is the effect of ‘a collective mirror’ magnified when paired with practices within the building that are accessible to the entire community? The question arises as to whether a community is more likely to identify with a monument when the building program is inclusive of the entire community, rather than a place for a limited number due to their profession, social rank or gender. Nevertheless, does not the Ulugh Beg Madrasa in Samarkand for example, despite being accessible only to a small minority of the community, manifest a reflective effect for all who consider themselves represented by the Timurid rulers, as Samarkandi attests?

As noted, Friday prayers are by definition practiced by the entire (religious) community – the congregation. A mosque that contains this practice ostensibly remains open to all, belongs to all. As Grabar notes of the Friday Mosque in Isfahan, ‘Kings and Sultans built or sponsored works of art at the mosque, but it is the inhabitants of the city who knew

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68 Lefebvre, 220.
69 Consideration of this new value complicates Riegl’s neat rubric of intentional and unintentional monuments based on distinct and categorical values. Nevertheless, the unintentional monument as a development of the historical project, with the attending art value and historical value, remains not only valid, but critical to understanding how certain buildings have gained appreciation and been ensured survival.
70 I would like to note the less than ‘democratic’ availability of the mosque, given that the space is chequered with divisions based on the sexual distinction of individual ‘living bodies’.
then and know now how to come to the mosque." 71 Despite the ‘will to power’ or immortality of the patron, the congregational mosque as a program establishes a ‘faithful collective mirror’. Indeed, perhaps this in itself provides reason enough for a patron to commission a congregational mosque: to ‘mask their will to power’ while disingenuously effecting a representation of it.

The practice of patronage 2
The patronage of practice: Amir Chaqmaq’s new congregational mosque

Although the Timurid governor of Yazd, Amir Chaqmaq and his wife Bibi Fatima contributed to the restoration of the Yazd mosque, the mosque complex they commissioned approximately 600 meters to the south better commemorates their presence in Yazd. The Amir Chaqmaq mosque, as the work of a single (husband and wife) patron, exemplifies an intentional commemorative monument ‘designed egotistically by their makers to be memorials […] leaving a lasting testimony for succeeding generations.’ 72 Of greater interest than its status as an intentional monument is that an extant vaqfnameh identifies it as the ‘new congregational mosque’. It does not seem plausible that a lack of space required construction of a new site for Friday prayers: the new was no greater in area than the old one; and the same patrons built a large bath on land adjoining the Yazd mosque indicating expansion would have been possible.

Aspects of the new structure reflect certain changes in function: notably, following an imported Timurid model, the separation of spatial units for various activities. The patrons, having established a complex with new facilities and extra functions, were probably responding to a need for these functions. The program of the new mosque as ‘a quarter

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The pre-C.19th structure of the Yazd mosque (left) and the congregational mosque commissioned by Amir Chaqmaq (right), at the same scale. From Golombek and Wilber, 144-145
(mahalle) mosque that took care of all the religious needs of the inhabitants', and, as Holod-Tretiak has argued, 'as part of a funerary shrine compound', did not however, necessitate its status as a congregational mosque. Appropriation of this function demonstrates the monumental status of practice: the transfer of Friday congregational prayers lent significance and authority to the new site. This relocation of Friday prayers was inscribed on the mosque of Yazd through nomenclature that has persisted until today. The Yazd mosque, in distinction to Amir Chaqmaq's 'masjid-e jamé no' (new congregational mosque), attracted the qualifier 'atiq' - old.

Past a large leap across centuries of undocumented inhabitation, the transfer of Friday prayers was to again play a significant role in the exchange of power in the twentieth century.

Representing the community
Representing the community: Vaziri and the return of Friday Prayers

As noted earlier, the functional significance of the Yazd mosque resides in its nomenclature: a place of assembly of the faithful for the Friday noon prayer. During the Pahlavi reign, noon prayers were not being held at the Yazd mosque, and indeed, were not being held at all. Fischer explains that 'the Shi'i Imams forbade it [Friday prayer] because control of the communal prayers and sermons had fallen into the hands of usurpers, and these occasions were tools of propaganda and mobilization'.

A pious man by the name of Vaziri was a key figure at the Yazd mosque from the 1920's until his death in the late 1970's and played an important role in the renovation of the

Fischer and Abedi, 120. After the occultation of the twelfth, and last Imam, 'Shi'i jurists have taken differing stands on the obligation of Friday communal prayer. A minority regarded it as always obligatory, on the grounds that the reasons for the ban by the Imams was historically limited and no longer in force... Another minority regarded it as forbidden, either because there is still a living Imam (albeit occulted) and he would have to remove the ban first; or more usually, because unjust government still existed and so the reason for the original ban still existed. Many of those who took this position abandoned it with the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran: now, at last, there was a true Islamic government, and not only was the Friday noon communal prayer obligatory, but the sermons were also an obligatory organizational device for the polity... The majority through the years took a politically flexible stance, regarding Friday communal prayer, even led by state-appointed imám jom'a, as either allowable or recommended for the general solidarity of the community.'
mosque and the restoration of Friday communal prayers in Yazd. A sayyid, his name reflected the position of his ancestors who, originating from a village near Medina, served from the time of Shah Yahya as vazirs to the rulers of Yazd. Vaziri began theological studies but did not proceed far; after marriage into a wealthy family he engaged in public service, sometime around 1920. The modern library he established at the mosque in 1955 contains an important collection of manuscripts and, bearing his name, ensures his continued memory.

Until the Islamic Revolution, Yazd accommodated three large religious communities: the Zoroastrians, the Baha’i and the Muslims. During the twentieth century, prior to the Revolution, the Baha’is constituted a vocal and active group. Abedi relates that in the 1920’s they were ‘taunting the Muslims that their decaying mosques were signs of the decay of their religion, that a new dispensation was coming to replace Islam’. In response, Vaziri preached ‘The Baha’is say Islam is dying, that its death is symbolized in our decaying mosques. Let’s show them.’ He resolved to restore the mosque, yet such a plan was predicated on the restoration of Friday communal prayers. ‘There was little point in restoring the congregational mosque if one did not also revive Friday prayers.’

In order to realize his plans, each Friday Vaziri would assemble no less than the minimum quorum of five and appeal to the congregated for donations. Authorities stalled his restoration plans, however, demanding to supervise the work, due to concern over possible traces of archeological interest. The mosque as historical artifact was privileged over the mosque as an index of community identity; eventually, the authorities began restoration in 1945/46. Nevertheless, the practice of noon prayers continued despite dilapidated conditions. Maintained practice ensured the sustained community monumental value of the building.

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74 The story of Vaziri is published in Fischer and Abedi. The mosque community also provided me with information.
75 Muzzafarid Shah Yahya ruled in Yazd from 1387 to 1391 as a vassal of Timur.
76 Fischer and Abedi, 57.
77 Fischer and Abedi, 56.
Representing the community 2
Representing the Revolution: Saduqi’s power play

Another transfer of Friday prayers a few decades later also implicates power-play and patronage in social practices. Between 1970 and 1979, Ayatollah Muhammad Saduqi occupied the position of local marja' taqlid, leading cleric, and operated as Ayatollah Khomeini’s representative in Yazd. Early in his career Saduqi tore down the gharib-khāneh (accommodation for poor visitors) established as a charitable endowment, located near the Yazd mosque. On the site he built the ostentatious Hazireh mosque and library, named after the area.

‘Many people objected and refused to say their prayers there on the grounds that the endowment and land had been illegitimately usurped. Saduqi argued that the place had become an opium den and a place of prostitution, and that anyone could agree a house of God was better than a place of ill repute. But many thought that a proper tabdil be ahvān would have been to rebuild the gharib-khāneh in a modern attractive way, not eliminate the function for which it was endowed.’

The motivation for Saduqi’s suspect construction project – Yazd was not in need of new mosques – might be inferred from the power dynamics in the city at that time. The religious authority at the Yazd mosque during this period was a state appointed imam jom’a, and the mosque was identified even more so with Vaziri. The grandest mosque of the town thus identified with two other individuals, it seems plausible that the newly-appointed

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78 Literally the ‘source of imitation’, the marja’ taqlid is a supreme jurist whom the Shi’ite community follows. See Fischer and Abedi, 516. Saduqi was born in the late 1920’s, his father a theologian. He trained in Qom, befriending Khomeini there. It is of topical interest that Saduqi’s son married the sister of current President of Iran, Muhammad Khatami. Khatami’s father succeeded Saduqi senior as imam jom’a, and Saduqi’s son (Khatami’s brother in law) succeeded Khatami senior at his death in 1988.

79 Fischer and Abedi, 60. Saduqi’s decision might expose a disparity in the caché associated with different building functions. If so, is this due to the perceived status of individuals who use the building? Does architecture, activated by its inhabitants, not only reflect the activities that take place within it, but also take on the flavor of the occupants’ social status?
The Hazireh Mosque, Yazd
head-cleric Saduqi would feel compelled to affirm his presence elsewhere. Or perhaps he wanted to ensure his "home in Paradise". Regardless, at the completion of his mosque, he led prayers there, established a library, and ensured his continued memory, cast in architecture.\(^{80}\)

After the revolution, Saduqi, now Khomeini's representative of the entire southeast region of Iran, approached the imām jom'a of Yazd and declared that the imām jom'a of the Shah was not wanted. He then proceeded to lead ḥutba himself in the Yazd mosque. When the imām jom'a complained at this contender in his place, Saduqi returned to the Hazireh mosque, taking the Friday congregational prayers with him.\(^{81}\) After two Fridays in the Hazireh mosque, the congregation was moved yet again to the larger Mullā Ismail mosque, where it remains to this day.\(^{82}\) Upon his video-recorded assassination in 1982 in the Mullā Ismail mosque, Saduqi was declared a martyr and interred within a space adjoining the main hall of his Hazireh mosque.

Locals do not always connect the Hazireh mosque to Saduqi, who built it and who lies buried within. He is still part of living memory, having been a prominent, influential figure until quite recently, but remembrance may be accredited equally if not more so to two other edifices, 'Shahid Saduqi Airport' and 'Shahid Saduqi Medical Sciences University'. Bearing his name, these two buildings directly attest to his importance and maintain his memory. Of course, the functions of these two facilities, which prompt his memory through nomenclature

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\(^{80}\) The architectural pastiche of the Hazireh complex, built in the early 1970's, deserves extended study. This should include a catalogue of the regions from which came the artisans, materials and techniques employed, as this subject is well-rehearsed by the caretaker. It seems that craft is regionally specialized, and as such, a source of regional pride.

\(^{81}\) An article on the website of 'Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting' reports that Saduqi was appointed Imam-jom'a on August 21, 1979. Since other dates provided by the article are illogical, this appointment and its date should also be used with caution. See <http://www.irb.com>.

\(^{82}\) This report was researched for me at the Hazireh mosque by Hassan of Yazd. The testimony of Mehdi Abedi does not mention the confrontation of Saduqi and the imām jom'a, nor the congregational prayers held at the Hazireh for two Fridays. Abedi, implying that Saduqi could have chosen to hold Khutba at the Yazd mosque, provides the following reasons for Saduqi's choice of the Mullā Ismail mosque: 'partly because it was larger, partly because he did not directly wish to displace the imām jom'a of Yazd although he was doing so indirectly, partly because the latter mosque [Yazd mosque] had been repaired with "unclean" money of the shah's government, and partly because he did not wish to add any luster to a mosque associated in the popular mind with Vaziri.' Fischer and Abedi, 61.
alone, are not linked to commemoration whatsoever. The name itself is the monument, a prompt for remembrance.

Saduqi established his presence and power in Yazd through patronage of the Hazireh mosque. Some suggest that after the revolution, appointed as the new \textit{imâm jom'a}, he did not want to hold Friday prayers in the Yazd mosque, as an edifice tainted by the involvement of the Shah's institutions (the shah-appointed \textit{imâm jom'a}, and shah-period restorations).\footnote{See previous footnote.} As noted, earlier in the twentieth century the Yazd mosque was perceived as the representation of the Muslim community in Yazd, and in a dilapidated state, was perceived by the Bahai as an index of the decay of the Muslim faith. With the fall of the Shah, the Yazd mosque emerged antithetical to, rather than representative of the new revolutionary state and the new, revolutionized Muslim society they led.

The identity value attached to a building may arise through multiple subjective maneuvers and multiple social or personal practices of which congregational prayer constitutes just one example. Other instances within the 'lived experience' of a mosque include the diverse casual and institutionalized social activities practiced between prayers. Even a \textit{Mahalle} mosque, well frequented as a social gathering place, might attract identity value for the select community who habituates it. That is, identity value is not reserved for only the architecturally, politically or religiously most 'significant' structures.

\textbf{Scholarly Production of the Historic Monument}

The historical value of a building, from the scholar's vantage, approximates the value of a document: architecture regarded as a repository of historical fact. The historic monument, residue of institutional or social space, laden with inscriptions that 'made direct reference to the beliefs, customs, and traditions of their respective eras' augments otherwise solely textual
data regarding the past. Historical value also participates in identity formation, co-opted by nations or other groups in search for material validation.

The designation of the Yazd mosque as a historic monument constitutes it as an artifact for preservation and study. In the process, a new virtual site is constructed: an accumulated archive of scholarly documentation. Published or archived texts, photographs and drawings allow remote access for study. The texts provide formal description, analysis and ascription of elements to dynastic categories; comparison to other structures; review of available written histories and the clues these provide to the temporal placement and details of patronage and construction; and documentation and translation of inscriptions. Photographs of the Yazd mosque collected by Pope, Siroux and others include no more than the building; since Shah Reza prohibited the export of any photograph depicting, even inadvertently, a scruffy individual, a donkey or stray animal, all photographs of the Yazd mosque were subject to systematic scrutiny, and none of those collected by Pope, Siroux and others include more than the building. Even contemporary published photographs avoid human content, despite the lack of prohibitions.

Although study of the building-as-artifact has neglected the documentation of practices that are not evident in the built form, from this situation another type of spatial practice emerges. The inexorable historical project has lifted the Yazd mosque onto a different conceptual space: a virtual urban plane of categorized monuments, each experienced as a stop in a tour of catalogued periods. Thus, in Golombek and Wilber the Yazd mosque is nestled between the entrance portal at Varzana and the Imamzadeh Abu Ja’far Muhammad (non-extant) of Yazd. Wilber places it between the tomb tower at Berdaa and the tomb of Sayyid Rukn ad-din in Yazd. Similarly, within commentary on the monument itself, others are

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84 Choay, 42.
85 Choay further elaborates this point in depth.
86 In conversation Professor Nasser Rabbat has noted the architect’s Puritanism and the Orientalist’s desire to exoticize: the way these contradictory impulses play out for the scholar of ‘Oriental’ architecture is worthy of study.
87 Golombek and Wilber, 220-222.
88 Wilber, 158-160.
toured: the structure at Pir-i Bakran, the mausoleum of Oljeitu at Sultaniyya, the tomb of Ismail the Samanid. This web of relations provides a new context, a neighborhood of monuments otherwise dispersed in time and/or space. In traversing the literature, isn’t the scholar engaged in a peculiar type of spatial practice, approximating, through itinerary, that of the tourist?

As discussed in the main body of this thesis, discourse as monument, no less than a building, ‘is determined by what may take place there and consequently by what may not take place there’. To evaluate such a monument it is necessary to illuminate the proscribed practices of our discipline, rather than mechanically reproduce the rules of practice prescribed by a discursive tradition. Contemporary practice in anthropology – the so-called ‘new ethnography’ – provides a model. Critics of anthropology, ‘the handmaiden of colonialism’, a field under scrutiny for ‘unself-conscious production of cultural representations’ have motivated or enjoined practitioners to greater reflexivity. Reflexive strategies include ‘integrating the anthropologist as actor within the ethnography itself’, and also autobiography. James Clifford notes that traditional fieldwork in anthropology constitutes a set of spatial practices, many of which are excluded from the discourse of ethnography. Architectural discourse tends to write the scholar's field practice out altogether: the 'being there', the multi-sensory experience, is marginalized or erased. The authority of 'having gone' (I know, I was there) is ensured with the possession of one's own slide collection - I was there, behind the camera.

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91 Exclusions include the 'getting there', the technologies of transport; the capital city and préterrain traversed in order to reach the localized field; 'the university home of the researcher'; 'the relations of translation'. James Clifford, Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century (Cambridge, Mass; London, U.K.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 23.
92 Nichols, 64.
Another study could follow the architectural scholar in the field. In the case of Iran the complicity of architectural history, politics and preservation is particularly marked; the relation between the scholarly and political roles of Donald Wilber, a CIA operative, and Arthur Upham Pope, for instance, merit an independent investigation.\textsuperscript{93}

As Guha-Thakurta observes with regard to archeological practices in India, ‘rendering monuments into sites – photographing them, classifying and conserving them, attaching histories to them, providing them with copious textual descriptions and annotations – amounted to their effective museumisation.’ Such activity ensures ‘their transformation into objects of official custody, specialist knowledge and public display, as they would have been within a museum.’\textsuperscript{94} It is in contradistinction to this all-too-common museumised state that the Yazd mosque, a historic ‘object of official custody, specialist knowledge and public display’, remains a vibrant ‘practiced’ monument, as witnessed by the foreign tourist.

A broad range of sites serve as tourist attractions. Buildings may constitute tourist industry commodities for any one of the values listed by Riegl. For example, religious and otherwise commemorative sites abet or beget pilgrimage tourism; historical monuments are offered as heritage sites; and monuments with art value now figure prominently as attractions – think Bilbao. Entertainment value could also be addressed. Tourism does not render a site monumental, in the sense of inscribing it with a commemorative, documentational, or canonical value. (Could we consider the representations of the site that the tourist industry produces – posters, postcards, snapshots and videos – as commemorative monuments, private


\textsuperscript{94} Guha-Thakurta, 35.
Documentation at the Yazd mosque
Nevertheless, tourist sites are developed from both intentional and unintentional monuments, and may be built intentionally or unintentionally for tourism. Thus the Eiffel tower, built intentionally for tourism, unintentionally becomes a historic monument. The congregational mosque at Yazd, through status as a historic monument, unintentionally becomes a tourist site.

Commodifying Cultural Heritage; The Practice of Tourism

*Masjed-e Jame*: Even if you are all 'mosqued out', have a look at this magnificent building, constructed under the direction of Bibi Fatema Khatoun, the redoubtable wife of a former governor of Yazd, Amir Chakhmagh. This well preserved 14th-century mosque was built on the site of a 12th-century building (which was converted from an earlier fire-temple, no doubt without the Zoroastrians' permission).

This mosque dominates the old city, with its remarkably high, tiled entrance portal, flanked with two magnificent minarets and adorned with an inscription from the 15th century. The beautiful mosaics on the dome and on the mehmar are also superb. The interior of the mosque is cleverly ventilated and well lit. In the courtyard of the mosque there is a narrow stairwell leading down to a disused ghanat. If you slip the caretaker about 1000 rials (like other Iranians do), he will allow you to climb the stairs above the entrance for great views of the old city. Otherwise, entrance is free. From The Lonely Planet Guide to Iran. (1998)

The Yazd mosque is listed as Iranian National Monument #206. Its poster-printed image hangs throughout Iran. The governing body of historic monuments is the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization, known in Persian as *Miras Farhangi*, 'Cultural Heritage', and also by the English acronym ICHO. This organization is responsible for the documenting, cataloging and preservation of historic monuments in Iran. They also maintain certain museums. The governing body of tourism is the Iran Touring Organization. A proposal currently under consideration to merge the two organizations illustrates the conflation of

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95 Choay posits that the photograph 'is a form of monument adopted to the individualism of our era', 'the monument of private society'. Choay, 10.
heritage and tourism. So too, does the administration of certain historic mosques as museums for tourist consumption.

Most if not all tourists who visit the city, visit the m-i-j Yazd; a minority of tourists come from foreign countries, the majority hail from other parts of Iran. Although the ICHO, concerned with the mosque as artifact, provides funds and expertise for preservation, a mosque committee of some 50 members manages the mosque income (from vaqf buildings and donations), oversees maintenance, and it is the prerogative of this committee to decide whether or not to institute tourist ticketing at the gate.6 Although tourists are not normally ticketed, for a two-week period over the new-year (spring) 2001, a period of increased domestic tourist volume, the committee introduced ticketing for access to the roof, a minaret and the two qanats. After complaints from neighboring residents whose privacy was threatened, ICHO had the practice terminated. Currently, the roof remains off-limits for all men and for foreign women.7 The qanats may be visited with permission and accompaniment of a caretaker. The gallery levels of the mosque are inaccessible, although women have access to the eastern gallery on Fridays, en route to the minaret. The remainder of the mosque is open for all, at all times of the day.

When asked, Mr. Askarizade explained to me that they did not want to close the mosque with ticketing because 'Yazd is a small city and the mosque must be available for the whole family'. Thus the mosque hosts the diverse casual activities expected of a mosque as community center and as place of worship, augmented by activities peculiar to tourism. The mosque is surrounded by houses, a neighborhood with a largely immigrant population from Iraq and Afghanistan. The multiple portals render the mosque a type of thoroughfare; children roam in and out. On a summer day, buses bring tours and smaller groups, couples or individuals walk in, usually with guidebook in hand. University students (predominantly men)

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6 This information was provided by the Vice President of the mosque committee, Muhammad Mehdi Askarizade, in an interview with the author.
7 Except, of course, for those of us men and foreign women who are 'in' with the caretakers!
- These days tourists come here. What do you think? Is it good?

- They come here from foreign countries. It makes it historical.

- How about ordinary people who come here, like us Yazdis?
sit in groups studying or taking a break from their studies at the Vaziri library next door; they
tell me they are there to find tourists with whom to practice their English. Other students and
unemployed youth, unable to speak English, watch and make fun. The two caretakers and
their helper socialize with the congregated young men while attending to their duties. One
young man who comes every day with a briefcase is a professional tour guide ever-hopeful of
finding clients; at the call to prayer he rises from his perch in the iwan to perform ablutions
and join worshippers. During prayer, foreign tourists retreat from the iwan into the courtyard
and watch. The prayer becomes a type of performance, the tourist an uninvited spectator of a
religio-cultural ritual.

A comment by Ali of Yazd Internet Café reveals the sense of propriety and an
imperative held by some to modify mosque occupation for the benefit of foreign tourists. He
complained about the men who sleep in the mosque during the hot afternoon. I asked ‘why,
because it is the house of God?’ To which he responded, ‘no, it’s bad for the tourists.’ Ali
alone has permission to hang his large advertising banner on the front fence of the mosque.

‘Yazd Internet Café.
Send an E-mail from the heart of the Iranian Desert. We have fully updated
software. tea. coffee. Located east of the Friday Mosque in Gamea Mosque Street.’

A comparative analysis of other congregational mosques in Iran serves to
contextualize the operation of the Yazd mosque as both mosque and tourist commodity: the
Mullâ Ismail Mosque in Yazd, the congregational mosque of Isfahan, and the congregational
mosque of Ardestan:

As already noted, the Mullâ Ismail mosque is the current location for Friday prayers in
Yazd. Built in the nineteenth century by Mullâ Muhammad Ismail Aqlâi, it is included on the
ICHO list of historical monuments. Although it is thus nominated as a place of historic
interest and a cultural heritage site, it does not constitute a tourist destination. Foreigners are
not permitted here. Guards monitor the doors at prayer hours.98

98 This security and exclusion may have possibly resulted from Saduqi’s assassination on the premises. I am unable to verify this hypothesis.
The congregational mosque of Ardestan.
Isfahan, as one of the most visited cities in Iran and a UNESCO designated world heritage site has been especially selected for museification. All the elements of the celebrated meydan-i-Imam require admission for entry, including the masjid-i Imam. The congregational mosque of Isfahan performs profitably as a tourist attraction; a gatekeeper on duty charges admission for both foreigners and Iranians. Community functions of the mosque are suspended; only a handful of young men working as 'tourist-catchers' for carpet stores may wander in and out as they please. Above the main entrance, mere steps from the admission booth, an inscription quotes sura II:108:

> 'And who does greater evil than he who bars God’s places of worship, so that His Name Be not rehearsed in them, and strives to destroy them?'

During the hours of prayer, the side doors are opened, allowing the faithful to ‘rehearse His Name’. Certainly, this inscription would acquire an ironic inflection if the mosque were also shut during prayers.

In contrast Ardestan attracts few tourists; a small town without hotel or inn, two hours drive from Isfahan. Those who come do so to see the congregational mosque, of architectural interest. Similar to the Yazd mosque, the numerous portals are always open during the day and diverse casual activities take place there: a young boy rode his bicycle in the courtyard attempting to ‘catch’ each photograph I framed; men young and old slept and chatted. Yet unlike Yazd, when a tourist appears in this friendly backwater place, someone retreats to a room at the west of the sanctuary and returns with a book of the standard official tickets.

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99 As in all museums and sites obligating ticket purchase, admission for Iranians is currently a tenth of that required of foreign tourists. Foreign students pay reduced admission, half the price of the tourist ticket. The requirement of an Iranian ticket refutes the hypothesis that the door is barred only to non-believers.


102 Na’in, a slightly larger town conveniently located between Isfahan and Yazd, provides another comparison. A high-end hotel housed in a renovated caravanserai corrals tour groups, thus providing more regular visitors for the Na’in congregational mosque than are seen in Ardestan. This mosque too is of architectural significance. At this site, the young
Fridays at the not-congregational mosque

As noted, the 'history' of a monument is never simply a chronology of its physical evolution, but also a series of perpetuated and displaced spatial practices. Just as the built form of the Yazd mosque has undergone alteration, addition and renovations, so too can we see the social practice of the mosque as a diachronic process. With the removal of the original 'intended' function as site for Friday congregation, other practices have been substituted. Currently, Fridays are distinguished at the Yazd mosque by an absence of a congregation and the increased presence of women at the site. The Lonely Planet Guide to Iran notes as a sight to behold the superstitious practice of certain women who climb the southern minaret, hoping to attract good luck (bakht) and a husband for themselves or an unmarried daughter. From their high perch, resisting vertigo and enjoying privileged views of the labyrinthine old mud city multifariously punctuated with vertical badgirs and the high-polish dots of tiled domes, these women secure nuts within a knot of their chador, circumambulate the head of the minaret shaft, and pray for a male. Another Friday practice has also arisen: in early afternoon the caretakers of the mosque position two very heavy industrial air conditioners on either side of the mihrab, hang a string between them, and upon this throw sheets. In the privacy afforded by the sheet, women sit in the mihrab area to 'rehearse His Name'.

These ritual Friday practices of the women, the fluctuating presence of tourists, and the summer activities of English language students constitute some of the new practices that along with the practices maintained over centuries, make the space of the mosque function 'in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.' The mosque establishes

son of the khadem requested I pay admission, taking a pad of standard official tickets from the drawer of a desk. At Na'in, unlike at Ardestan, a university student was officially present to act as tour guide. Although I didn't ask whether he was paid to be there, or whether he was there of his own volition, his presence is clearly a sign and effect of the tourist industry.

On other days or other times women may be found in identical attitude; I was not informed why the sheets are specifically a Friday event. On Wednesdays even larger numbers of women congregate at the tomb of Shah Rukhn, twenty meters up Congregational Mosque Road. This domed tomb dated 1325, itself a historic monument, is otherwise closed to visits except through the aid of the very helpful Cultural Heritage office, or of the elusive Khādem. It is therefore not visited by tourists.
an order; women, men, tourists, children each have their ‘proper’ place and figures of authority oversee all practice. Nevertheless, the space is activated through transgressions that undermine the rules of propriety and the figures who enforce them. A uniformed soldier naps in the women’s area; women pray at the mihrab while children play in the same space. Men attempt to access the roof while women in the courtyard houses below struggle to protect their privacy. Muslims pray while tourists shoot photos. Monumental space is ‘determined by what may take place there and by what may not take place there’: activities including the fund of minor practices listed above that ‘have not been privileged by history’.  

A ‘monument’ arises not only from history, however, but from the *synchronic competition of monumentalising intentions and practices*. Thus to designate a monument historic might compete with the practice of religious remembrance. Or the practice of religious remembrance might, as is illustrated by the Mulla Ismail mosque, impede the practice of tourism. The architectural historian or preservation authority, no less than a dynastic ruler, imam or tourist, inescapably privileges certain values. Scholarship is a form of spatial practice and virtual reconstruction laden with values to which scholars are often blind. Architectural historians must account for the diverse monumental values competing within and for the identity of a monument: only thus can they surface, as they add to an archive or plan a restoration, what is privileged and what, in the course of their influence, is inevitably lost.

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104 De Certeau, 48.
Appendix 2. Between Prayers

The edited video footage that constitutes a part of this study engages literally Lefebvre's definition of monument as 'determined by what may take place there and consequently by what may not take place there'. This does not claim that proscribed activities do not take place, simply that they are transgressive; the potential of the activity to take place is necessary in order that it be proscribed. While shooting and editing I privileged moments of authority and transgression; work and play. The caretakers, as regulators of the space, constitute almost archetypal figures of authority as they articulate that which is allowed, and that which is not. Children and young men constitute figures of transgression, animating the mosque with proscribed activities.
Neither the figures of authority nor transgression are stable. I had requested that the caretaker Ali Yarmir use the camera to record his favorite places of the mosque, yet he unexpectedly turned the lens upon his friend in imitation of my own interviews. Ali, operating a small Hi-8 video camera is ridiculed for his 'play': “you’re very busy?” taunts his friend, “you’re shooting film!” His ‘play’ is in fact the ‘work’ of the scholar.
The children, although proscribed from playing in the mosque — "they have to play in the lane" — are exposed playing carefree in multiple spaces of the mosque including the mihrab (two girls run between their mothers as they pray). ‘Capturing’ such behavior prescribes it — the children are validated by the camera; the camera also discourages the caretakers from admonishment. Focusing study on the ‘obscene’ by definition renders it a ‘scene’.
The edited video, attempting to record the prescribed and proscribed of the monument, also operates on a meta-level, highlighting precisely that which is conventionally proscribed from our archival practices. Instead of constructing a 'scene' that focuses on the monument as a built artifact, the video by highlighting the lived occupation of the mosque presents scenes that would conventionally be relegated to outside the camera’s frame, or edited out of the final product. As such, the figures of authority (the caretakers) and the figures of transgression (the children) stand in for the unstable identity of the scholar herself.
Although I ostensibly present the edited footage in an academic context, as a 'document' of study, the highlighted instability of authority and transgression implies the instability of the status of my work. Incorporation of footage shot by the mosque's regular inhabitants – participant cinema considered more 'authoritative' – problematizes my 'play' as an outsider. Yet the disparate quality of our images and the respective size of our cameras evidence my own apparent 'authority' in relation to these local 'authorities', and to the work. Within the video my work is explicitly thrown into the discourse of the prescribed and proscribed activities of the mosque when a discussion between a few young men and the head caretaker, Haji Abbas, is overheard:

- What? What school? She wants to study but she comes here?
- Don't you care about the sanctity of the mosque?
- Is it a mosque or is it a cinema?
Mohammad Reza: She’s here to take pictures for her study, is there anything wrong with that?
Haji Abbas: Yes there’s something wrong with that!
Ali Reza: What? What’s wrong?
Haji Abbas: Don’t you care about the sanctity of the mosque? Is it a mosque or is it a cinema? Is it a mosque or is it an exhibition hall? Is it a mosque... or is it a school?"

The sanctity of the mosque might stand in for the ‘sanctity’ of scholarship that dictates propriety in representational practice, admitting certain mediums and excluding others. The moving image as form of knowledge production is typically marginalized within the ‘discourses of sobriety’ for which they serve; this experiment, situated within the domain of architectural history and theory, constitutes a similarly transgressive ‘play’. 105

The Lefebvre quote included as an epigraph in *Effluvia 1: Living Bodies, Spatial Practice* structures the edited footage. The final sentence of this quote concludes the work: ‘Of that experience [the people who use the space] the tourist, the passive spectator, can grasp but a pale shadow.’ Although the scholar, clearly an outsider, is conflated with the tourist, she is incorporated within the body of the video and actively participates in grasping shadows (digital encodings). Potentially the edited video offers both a critique of how we conventionally think about architecture and represent it, effacing the practices of the occupants, and offers an alternative, albeit imperfect, and one of many possible.
Caretakers
Ali Yarmir
Haji Abbas

Also featuring
The congregation at the congregational mosque of Yazd

Camera
Mohammad Reza Alvansaz
C. Hadimi
Ali Yarmir
Hassan Yazdi

Editing
C. Hadimi

Translation and interviews in Yazd
Mehdi Saeed Shirazi
Mozaffar Davudi

Translation in Boston
Mehdi Yahyanejad
Works consulted


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