Inhabiting the World: Architecture, Urbanism, and the Global Moral-Politics of Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin

by

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Submitted to the Department of Architecture in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture: History and Theory of Architecture at the MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation revises the history of internationalism through a study of the American architects Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin, who practiced in the United States, Australia, and India between 1895 and 1949. Unlike previous studies of internationalism, which have focused exclusively on the transfer of architectural and planning knowledge from the putative ‘West’ to the ‘non-West’, this dissertation uncovers a global formulation of community proposed within the colonial periphery. It does so through a sustained analysis of two objects by Mahony and Griffin: Magic of America, an unpublished memoir and political treatise consisting of correspondence and essays, which Mahony compiled and edited between 1938 and 1949, and Castlecrag, a residential suburb along Sydney’s Middle Harbour, which Mahony and Griffin developed between 1920 and 1935. Delineating the scope and provenance of their theoretical writings on imperialism, democracy, international conflict, and trade, as well as their design of common property at Castlecrag, this study charts the emergence of a non-nationalist alternative to empire. Concomitantly, it argues that the conceptual sources and motivations for this alternative, global community were far removed from instrumental politics, and flowed instead from a moral-philosophical thesis that evaluative meaning existed in our relations with others. Finally, this dissertation examines how Mahony’s and Griffin’s written and built work was shaped by the dialectic of fin-de-siècle utopianism and International Socialism.

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INTRODUCTION

On June 25, 1940, the American architect Marion Mahony addressed the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the Illinois Society of Architects. There were good reasons for the Society to have invited Mahony to be the featured speaker at their Annual Meeting. She was the first woman to be licensed as an architect in the United States. Mahony, along with her late husband and fellow Chicago architect Walter Burley Griffin, had practiced internationally for twenty-five years, opening offices in Australia and India. Fittingly, considerable anticipation surrounded the event. Her inclusion in the Annual Meeting program was announced as an “appearance and talk, after an absence of twenty-five years”.\(^1\) Herman Von Holst, who had briefly collaborated with Mahony some thirty years earlier, attended the Annual Meeting after years of living in retirement in Florida just to hear his former colleague speak.\(^2\) Whatever expectations the Illinois Society of Architects drummed up about Mahony’s talk, their official report on it registered palpable disappointment and bewilderment. An unnamed reporter writing for the Society’s *Monthly Bulletin* noted that although the Annual Meeting’s program had stated that Mahony

would give an address on the subject of ‘Architecture in Australia,’...she changed the subject and only talked momentarily on [her] efforts in Australia. She took her hearers to other parts of the world, particularly India...she stated that town planning and architecture must go hand in hand...With diagrams she then launched into the theory of fundamental forces and aspirations in architecture as explained through anthroposophy, a system of science, art, and philosophy, with religion, founded by the late Rudolf Steiner, where the material and spiritual blend. This reporter feels his incompetence to give a lucid report of anthroposophical philosophy as explained by Mrs. Griffin. She said, however, that occidental materialism had reached a state of collapse, as now demonstrated in the struggles in Europe, and that the Orient had much to give the Occident in thought and belief. She said that the conflicting ideas of material and spirit must come together; the East must meet the West. We must understand that matter is real and spirit is real and if we accomplish this, we will have peace in the world.\(^3\)

\(^{3}\) Ibid, 1–2.
Hoping to learn something about architecture in Australia and its indebtedness to the Chicago school, the unnamed reporter was forced to acknowledge the globality of Mahony's thinking. The disjunction here is between the reporter's implicit confidence that modern architectural knowledge could be internationalized, and Mahony's resolve that architectural and planning practice in different parts of the world should yield a new metaphysical outlook that would dissolve false dichotomies between matter and spirit, East and West—binaries which Mahony diagnosed as the very roots of international conflict.

The Manichean view, which pitted 'East' against 'West' and which Mahony explicitly declined to follow, had in fact sustained the international practice of modern architecture since the late 19th century. More generally, by defining the difference between 'East' and 'West' in terms of certain societies being the exception to the norm, the cheerleaders for modern architecture had confidently claimed modernity as a universal future. We need look no further than the Illinois Society of Architects' *Monthly Bulletin* to find contemporary examples of architects asserting the universal applicability of modern architecture by focusing on how it was the task of the modern architect to overcome the exceptional features of a 'non-Western' society. In another issue of the *Monthly Bulletin* from 1940, the American planner Harry T. Frost shared his impressions on the American contribution to building modern capital cities in the "Orient". At the time, Frost was laying out plans for Quezon City, the new capital for the Philippines Commonwealth (the administrative body responsible for transition from US territorial rule to complete Filipino sovereignty). Much of his article focused on the introduction of zoning and broad sweeping boulevards into Quezon City and the impact these planning technologies would have on the existing capital of Manila. Frost also discussed the ways in which building design

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and site planning could provide Filipinos with relief from their humid climate. And it was in this context that Frost bemoaned the slavishness with which buildings in the Philippines copied American models without sufficiently adapting them to local conditions:

The Filipinos are strongly influenced by the Americans, and so the new private work here is taking on the general character of our better functional architecture, which would function better in Zanesville than in Zamboanga. Since the American occupation, most of the public buildings have grown out of the classic... The new City Hall of Manila might be anywhere—but it is better suited to Minneapolis than to Manila, and the recently completed house for the U.S. High Commissioner would be more livable in Topeka than on a tropical ocean front... the Teutonic Modern which has penetrated from the rock bound east of staid New England to Mittel Amerika will get the Filipinos if they don’t watch out. 5

Frost’s xenophobic comments about the “Teutonic Modern” offer a useful glimpse into the dialectic of universality and particularity that characterized architecture’s disciplinary claim to universal relevance. Despite Frost’s depiction of European Modernism as a creeping menace that would homogenize the world, a far more virulent instantiation of universality can be detected in his own appeal for a contextualist approach to building. For Frost, the lessons of modern architecture and planning were applicable to everyone everywhere as long as they were modified according to the circumstances of a particular place. By this logic, the universal relevance of modern architecture lay not in the international replication of a stylistic pattern, but in the emergence of the architect as an expert capable of managing climatic, cultural, and political differences that set the ‘East’ apart from the ‘West’.

It is likely the Illinois Society of Architects had presumed that Marion Mahony, given her unique experience of working in two disparate zones of the British Empire, would wade into the debate over whether architecture’s modernity lay in the design of homogenizing or contextualizing buildings. Such a presumption would explain the distress with which the Society’s Monthly Bulletin reported that Mahony’s talk descended into a jumble of topics and

5. Ibid, 2.
quasi-religious claims. Despite finding Mahony’s talk baffling, the Monthly Bulletin reporter had conceded that there was a topicality and political salience to her remarks: Mahony saw the possibility for the hostilities of the Second World War to be replaced by a lasting and world-wide peace. What the reporter found more difficult to explain was Mahony’s argument for why such a peace would require more than just amity between ‘East’ and ‘West’; why it required a wholesale re-conceptualization of our cultural understanding of matter and spirit; and why a new cultural understanding of these concepts had to take stock of the political circumstances in which ‘Occident’ and ‘Orient’ had come to signify discrete and seemingly irreconcilable theoretical outlooks on the world.

Put another way, the Monthly Bulletin reporter struggled with the suggestion latent in Mahony’s talk that any analysis of the Second World War had to take into consideration the role of 19th century colonialisms in the formation of certain key concepts of modernity. At issue was less the future of the colonies, the transfer of modern technology from colonizers to the colonized, or the fear that the colonial encounter had produced unsavory instances of mimicry—all concerns expressed by Mahony’s contemporary Harry T. Frost in his Monthly Bulletin article. For Mahony, albeit unbeknownst to her interlocutors at the Illinois Society of Architects, empire was an inescapable moment in the consolidation of a metaphysical outlook according to which the world was exclusively constituted by matter that had no intrinsic meaning. The conceptual reach of this outlook far exceeded the metaphysics of matter: it motivated the comprehensive study of nature (meaning both the ambient world and human nature) in terms of cause and effect, and it gave rise to an ethics and politics that located moral significance in our dispositions rather than in the world itself. It was Mahony’s reasoned impression that this pervasive philosophical attitude had gained strength, conceptually and strategically, with the exploitation of distant lands.
and peoples by Western European states (or mercantile interests with explicit state backing) beginning in the 17th century. It was in this context that 'materialism', the name given to the metaphysical outlook described above, came to be attached to the 'Occident'. And it was in the theater of 19th century colonialisms that the term 'materialism' came to also refer to the allegedly acquisitive tendencies of the 'Occident', while its alter-referent, 'spiritualism', denoted the supposed other-worldliness of the 'Orient'.

In her extensive writings on this subject, Marion Mahony exhibits a lucid awareness that the stereotypes of Occidental acquisitiveness and Oriental other-worldliness were constitutive of relations of power between colonizers and the colonized. She considered the flight from Occident to Orient undertaken by latter-day dissenters seeking to replace mainstream Christianity and the spoils of imperialism with 'Eastern spirituality' to be structurally no different from the rationale of colonialism itself. While she did not doubt the sincerity of those who had 'gone native' in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, she frequently noted that such acts of consolation only reinforced the Manichean worldview that she found so corrosive. Undoubtedly, those Europeans, Americans, and Australians who had found solace in the religious thought and mystical practices of non-European societies had reversed a certain pattern of racial condescension. Yet, their quiet acts of defiance had failed to produce a conception of the world that consistently reconciled the lessons of a detached understanding of the world with the quotidian experience of our engaged relations with one another in the world. Thus, what remained urgent, as the befuddled Monthly Bulletin reporter put it, was to ensure that "conflicting ideas of material and spirit must come together; the East must meet the West...[to] understand that matter is real and spirit is real". Rather than merely oppose 'materialism' by becoming an adherent of 'spiritualism', Mahony sought to notate the physical and cultural

violence fomented over three centuries by those who had claimed that ‘matter’ and ‘spirit’ named two mutually exclusive and incompatible worldviews. Mahony expected that such a perspective on the politics of our concepts would lead to the formation of a new conception of the world—one in which we would recognize meaning as always existing in our relations with others, rather than as something we project on to a blank and meaningless world. According to Mahony, it was the task of architectural and urban design to prompt our capacity to respond to meaning that we came upon in the world.

There are two distinct senses in which Mahony’s thinking can be described as global: historical and theoretical. Historically, Mahony’s argument views the conceptual scaffolding of modernity as inextricably entangled with the formation of globe-girdling empires. Theoretically, her argument proposes that meaning, or at least evaluative meaning that calls forth our ethical and aesthetic judgment, requires us to always be open to the other. It is this attentiveness to the colonial genealogies of modernity, combined with the insistence that meaning is situated in our ceaseless responsiveness to the other, that I have termed global moral-politics. This dissertation reconstructs the conditions of possibility for Mahony’s global moral-politics through an analysis of two objects: Magic of America, an unpublished memoir and political treatise consisting primarily of letters and essays first penned by Mahony in the 1910s and the 1930s, which she subsequently revised between 1938 and 1949; and Castlecrag, a residential suburb on the outskirts of Sydney, which Mahony developed along with her husband Walter Burley Griffin between 1920 and 1935. Reconstructing the circumstances in which these objects were produced, this study challenges histories of internationalism that have exclusively focused on the transfer of architectural and planning knowledge from the ‘West’ to the ‘non-West’. It does so by examining writing and building practices that brought into being a formulation of community
that is best described as global. Insistent that evaluative meaning existed in our relations with others, Mahony and Griffin elaborated a form of community as always open to the other. Their effort, as we shall see, entailed rejecting the binarism of ‘West’ and ‘non-West’, and actively seeking to replace the habits of colonial rule with a new moral and political dispensation.

The remaining sections of this introduction provide the background necessary for grasping how Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin imagined and materialized a global alternative to more parochial formulations of community. The first two sections are an overview of Mahony’s and Griffin’s career, and the critique of disenchantment, which I argue constituted the conceptual background for their global practice. The next two sections locate this dissertation within histories of modern architecture, detailing its intervention in the study of internationalism, as well as in the study of modern architects whose cultural politics and design works were inflected by a turn to the ‘spiritual’. The last two sections describe the historical method employed in this dissertation, and provide a summary of the chapters that follow.

The First Global Practice

Marion Mahony passed away in 1961 at the age of ninety and in relative obscurity. Her death certificate spelled her name as “Marian Griffen”, described her marital status as “never married”, and listed her occupation as “Teacher in a Public School”. In the years following her death, Mahony and Griffin were featured in studies on the former associates of Frank Lloyd Wright, who in the 1960s was widely regarded as the most significant architect from Chicago. Indeed, Mahony and Griffin had worked alongside Wright, first in Chicago’s Steinway Hall and later at

his Oak Park studio. Mahony, who in 1894 was the second woman to graduate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a degree in architecture, had come to Steinway Hall to work with her first cousin and fellow MIT graduate Dwight Perkins. In 1898, Mahony became the first woman in the United States to be licensed as an architect having successfully passed the first licensing exams offered by the State of Illinois. Griffin, who was some five years younger than Mahony, graduated from the University of Illinois in 1899. After a brief period of working independently from Steinway Hall, Griffin began to work for Wright. Around 1906, Griffin established his own residential and landscape design practice, and would once again collaborate with Mahony beginning in 1909 when she effectively took responsibility for Wright's practice (Wright, who was married at the time, moved to Berlin in 1909 with Mamah Cheney, his married client). Neither Mahony nor Griffin worked with Wright after 1909, though a large number of lithographs originally prepared by Mahony appeared in the two-volume Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright published in 1910 by Ernst Wasmuth.

Although the first posthumous assessments of Mahony's and Griffin's work exclusively defined them as former associates of Frank Lloyd Wright, Griffin was applauded for the

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9. Mahony's cousin Dwight Perkins designed Steinway Hall and leased its top floor for himself and other architects. By 1901, Perkins, Webster Tomlinson, the Pond brothers, Griffin, Myron Hunt, Birch Long, and Wright were all working out of Steinway Hall, sharing a common outer office and operating out of adjoining or shared rooms. See H. Allen Brooks, "Steinway Hall, Architects and Dreams," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 22, no. 3 (October 1963): 171-175 for a description of the intellectual environment. Wright moved his rapidly expanding studio to Oak Park in 1902. Barry Byrne's hagiographic account of the workings of Wright's Oak Park studio offers some insight into Griffin's role. See Byrne, "On Frank Lloyd Wright and His Atelier," Journal of Architectural Education 18, no. 1 (June 1963): 3-6.

10. Sophia Hayden was the first woman to graduate from MIT with a degree in architecture. See Jennifer Gray, "Ready for Experiment: Dwight Perkins and Progressive Architectures in Chicago, 1893–1918," PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2011 for a recent study situating Perkins in relation to Progressive Era reforms and Pragmatist sociology. See also Sharon Grimes, "Women in the Studios of Men: Gender, Architectural Practice, and the Careers of Sophia Hayden Bennett and Marion Mahony Griffin, 1870—1960," PhD Dissertation, Saint Louis University, 2007 for details on the subjects Hayden and Mahony studied at MIT, and for references to Barry Byrne's unpublished reminiscences of Mahony's presence in Wright's Oak Park studio.


originality of his split-level sectional compositions, which were contrasted with the horizontality of Wright’s residences. The texts also commended Griffin for inventing an inter-locking concrete construction system prior to Wright’s better-known experiments with concrete blocks. Likewise, Mahony was praised for the quality of her renderings as well as her designs for the Henry Ford Residence and the Mueller Residence (Figures 1.8 and 1.9). Significantly for the purposes of this dissertation, none of the early historical scholarship on Mahony and Griffin discussed the global dimensions of their practice other than to note that soon after their June 1911 marriage, Mahony and Griffin would begin working on their prize-winning entry for an international competition to design the Australian Federal Capital (Figures 1.10 and 1.11).

Yet, Mahony and Griffin are arguably the first architects to have had a global practice in the sense of opening multiple overseas offices with the intention of managing projects simultaneously on different continents (C.A. Doxiadis would have the same ambition some forty years later). Mahony’s and Griffin’s first overseas offices were established in 1913 in Melbourne and Sydney. Their firm, which operated under Griffin’s name, continued to boast a presence in Chicago, where they made their former junior colleague Barry Byrne a local office partner. The arrangement with Byrne broke down within months, and from 1914 to 1917 Mahony and Griffin worked on their US projects from their Australian offices. Under the terms of Griffin’s appointment as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction (a position created within the Australian Federal Government to give him supervisory authority over the implementation of the Mahony-Griffin plan for the Federal Capital of Canberra), Griffin could continue to pursue his private practice. In addition, he was given three months of leave every year to spend in the United States supervising his projects there. Mahony took primary responsibility for Griffin’s private practice, managing his Sydney office while Griffin worked out of the Melbourne office.

13. See footnote 8.
In 1920, while still serving as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction, Griffin launched the Greater Sydney Development Association, a private limited company that he and Mahony would control and use to develop three adjoining suburbs along Sydney's Middle Harbour. For reasons explored in chapter 4, Castlecrag, the first and most extensively developed of these suburbs, became home to an assortment of millenarian socialists, spiritualists, and faith healers beginning in the mid 1920s. It was in the context of meeting and courting this new clientele that Mahony and Griffin first encountered varieties of modern occultism. This was also this context in which Mahony fashioned herself as a public lecturer, speaking on a wide range of political and philosophical subjects in the United States and Australia. In fact, by 1942, her professional calling card listed a dizzying array of possible lectures that Mahony was willing to deliver upon request:

World Economy
The Underlying Causes of Europe's Plight
Totalitarianism Versus What
The Three-Fold Commonwealth
The Technique of Democracy
Correct Concepts will Solve the Social Problem
Peace, An Outcome of Correct Community Organization
Congressional and Parliamentary Government
An Architect's Year in India in connection with Oriental Art
Canberra, Australia's Capital
Education as an Art
Castlecrag, Community Planning
Unsophisticated Drama, the Open Air Theater

Griffin opened what turned out to be his last office in 1935 in the northern Indian city of Lucknow. Initially conceived of as a project office to help him complete construction documents for a library building for the University of Lucknow (Figures 1.6 and 1.7), Griffin’s presence in Lucknow quickly resulted in a number of commissions from the region’s intellectual and feudal

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elite, as well as from the colonial state. Within a year of Griffin's arrival in Lucknow, Mahony would join him there to help supervise the burgeoning office. Griffin died in Lucknow in 1937, having completed construction on some thirty structures, and with several other institutional and residential projects waiting to be built.

Mahony briefly returned to Sydney after Griffin's demise before going back to Chicago where she practiced on her own until 1944. It was in Chicago between 1938 and 1949 that Mahony began preparing her typescript for Magic of America, incorporating edited versions of correspondence she and Griffin had penned during the First World War, as well as essays from the 1930s that she had originated as lectures. In 1949, unable to find a publisher for her sprawling text, Mahony donated two nearly identical copies of the typescript to the Art Institute of Chicago, and a slightly different version of the text to the New-York Historical Society. These gifts were Mahony's last public act. There is no record of her undertaking any professional or intellectual work after 1949.

The Critique of Disenchantment
Opening multiple offices on different continents was only one facet of Mahony's and Griffin's global practice. The more profound sense in which their work can be justifiably called global is their persistent effort to define a non-nationalist alternative to empire. Defining imperialism as a habit of mind, Mahony and Griffin linked the repudiation of empire to the recognition that evaluative meaning emerged within our relations with others. In retrospect, the assertion that meaning is something we always come upon in the world, rather than a subjective fantasy that we project on to the world, can be seen as the most basic element of the critique of disenchantment.
The term ‘disenchantment’ is entirely negatively defined, suggesting a loss of wonder. In its colloquial usage, it connotes dejection or a sense of despair about the world. We can distinguish these meanings from an understanding of disenchantment as a form of detached engagement with the world, including a detached stance towards our relations with others. Such an understanding of disenchantment resonates with Max Weber’s phrase “die Entzauberung der Welt”, or the decline of magic from the world.\footnote{Max Weber, “Wissenschaft als Beruf,” in Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1922), 524 – 555.} Weber’s phrase is more frequently translated as the “disenchantment of the world”, suggesting that up until some point humans were enchanted or enthralled by the world around them.\footnote{Max Weber, “Science as Vocation,” in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, translated, edited, and with an introduction by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 129 – 156.} Such a reading of Weber only partially captures his argument. While it is certainly the case that Weber regarded the shedding of illusions as a constitutive procedural element of modernity, and one that was to be welcomed in his estimation, Weber questioned the moral gains of having over-intellectualized our relations in the world such that we had come to see ourselves as apart from the world. Weber’s skepticism of the philosophical constructions by which humans came to see the world as something to master and control is better captured by the verb Entzauberung, which notates the gradual replacement of magic as an explanatory schema for the phenomena of the world with a rationalist and instrumentalist outlook on the world.

Mahony and Griffin encountered similar critical perspectives on modernity in two distinct intellectual arenas. The first was anti-industrialism, which attributed economic exploitation and imperial expansion to an excessively mechanistic and instrumentalist outlook on the world. The other was modern occultism, which drew on the vocabulary of Christianity as well as other religious traditions to posit the existence of supersensible realms whose existence had been
obscured, or denied, by mainstream Christianity and modern science. The specific anti-industrial and occult science texts that Mahony and Griffin read, the circumstances of these encounters, and their interventions in these contexts are detailed in the chapters that follow. For now, I wish to outline what I mean by the critique of disenchantment, and why I have refrained from treating disenchantment as a sociological fact that led some moderns to retreat into art-making as a compensatory gesture to re-enchant the world. These analytical commitments can be brought into focus through a brief excursus on secularism.

The ubiquitous connotation of secularism is of an attitude that recommends the diminishment of religion, at least within the public realm. Secularism has been more precisely defined as a political doctrine stipulating that the state maintain a stance of neutrality towards or equidistance from religious institutions. Secularization refers to the processes by which the overt signs of religion are removed from or transformed within the realm of the state, as well as the processes by which personal religious commitments are supposed to have waned in the modern period. One difficulty with identifying secularism with the shrinking of religion, and with conflating secularization and modernization, is that such characterizations rely on caricaturing religion as a primordial form of law, politics, and science. A more nuanced and perceptive framing of modern secularity is offered by the philosopher Charles Taylor who asks how it came to be that belief in God went from being uncontested to just one option amongst many and that too a difficult option to embrace. By belief Taylor does not mean adherence to a

particular religious doctrine or even assent to an external proposition, but rather a way of knowing the world. Taylor argues that it is characteristic of modern secularity that we encounter fleeting moments when we sense the existence of meaning beyond our capacity for reason and in excess of our desires for personal safety and satiation. Moreover, it is a sign of our commitment to rationalistic criteria for knowledge that we grasp such moments entirely in subjective terms. Thus, we can easily describe objects and people as ‘beautiful’, ‘inspired’, or ‘saintly’, but it is harder for us to identify these meanings as existing outside our own mental states. That is, we understand them as subjective judgments that we project on to the world rather than as properties of the world itself; we are able to speak of transcendent experiences, but we no longer see the world as having a transcendent character.

Taylor, thus, urges us to see the formation of modern secularity as the transformation of a sensibility, rather than the shrinking of religion or the sloughing off of impediments to the exercise of human reason. Specifically, what changes is our sense of self. Whereas it was once inconceivable for us to imagine ourselves as impervious to the world of spirits (only some of which we would have thought of as malevolent), we now draw sharp distinctions between natural and supernatural, immanent and transcendent. Moreover, as moderns, we seek to rationally explain, and control, the natural in entirely immanent terms—that is without recourse to the supernatural or the transcendental.

Taylor sees the impetus to draw a sharp distinction between the natural and the supernatural as something that was striven for, specifically in Medieval and Early Modern efforts to reform Christianity and cleanse it of superstitions. In contrast, the drive to live within the natural without reference to anything beyond it came about inadvertently. It was the result of, amongst other things, the rise of new disciplinary regimes during the Renaissance that induced
artisans and peasants to conform to new modes of productive, pious, and moral behavior. Notions of civility, politeness, and what it meant to live in a good Christian society came to be understood in immanent rather than transcendent terms. A much later consequence of these attempts at social ordering was that it became possible to devise and embrace a moral order that made no appeal whatsoever to the transcendental.

Taylor is careful not to suggest a linear progression from the drive to reform Christianity to the moment when a modern moral order that made no appeal to the transcendental became widely available. He notates a crucial turning point, located in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the understanding of God’s relation to the world underwent significant transformation. Part of this transformation were four, nested anthropocentric shifts: the first was a change in the understanding of God’s purpose such that providence came to be seen as located in the achievement of human ends, particularly in the formation of a good society; the second shift was the fading importance of grace and a newfound confidence that it was by reason, often itself understood as an endowment from God, that humans could decipher God’s plan; the third, following from the new understanding of God’s providence and human reason outlined above, was that mystery ceased to be an important dimension of Christianity; and the fourth shift was that the prospect of God transforming human beings so that they might partake of the divine was relegated to the afterlife whereas this prospect was once supposed to be within the scope of human destiny.

Aside from these shifts, there was another aspect to the transformation of the Christian understanding of God’s relation to the world which had to do with the ordering of the universe. God came to be seen as the creator of a universe built according to unchanging laws—an understanding of the divine that displaced the older view of the transcendental as an agent in human affairs capable of intervening in human history. Opposition to the view that God intervened in human history was
inflected by new forms of Biblical criticism and scientific inquiry in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, but its driving motivation, Taylor argues, was an aversion for the politics of those who challenged the dominant social order through words and actions putatively inspired by God.

To recap, the purge of allegedly superstitious forms of worship, the emergence of new disciplinary regimes governing bodily functions and social interactions, and the construal of a new moral order as a result of an anthropocentric understanding of God's plan and a hostile interpretive stance towards claims to divine inspiration were, according to Taylor, the necessary preconditions for a humanism that accepted "no final goals beyond human flourishing"—a humanism that he alternately refers to as "self-sufficient" or as an "exclusive humanism". Taylor is cautious not to present exclusive humanism as the apotheosis of modern secularity even though it arose out of transformations in the conditions of belief in God alongside changes of what it meant to live in a good (Christian) society. Nor does Taylor want his reader to think of exclusive humanism as the only alternative to religion. To some extent this is because of the wide availability of exclusive humanism; it has become part of the background for both believers and unbelievers in ways that would have been unthinkable as recently as five centuries ago. More importantly for Taylor is the existence of reactions against an exclusivist culture of human flourishing. As he sees it, there are two distinct strands of opposition to exclusive humanism: a Nietzschean anti-humanism that has a half-life in Derridian and Foulcauldian varieties of criticism; and a romanticism, first found in Romantic poetry of the late 18th century, whose suspicion of instrumental rationality and openness to the transcendental continues to reverberate in ecocentric environmental movements like Deep Ecology.

20. Taylor, Secular Age, 18.
21. Taylor does not develop his remarks about the influence of Nietzschean anti-humanism, or that of romanticism on Deep Ecology, in any sustained way. For a hostile description of late 20th century theory's inheritance from Nietzsche, see Ken Gemes, "Postmodernism's Use and Abuse of Nietzsche," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 62,
As others have observed, and as Taylor himself acknowledges, his is very much a story about Latin Christendom—and a partial one at that. Nevertheless, in presenting a picture of the contentious and variegated ways in which a certain sense of self was shaped, Taylor’s work makes it clear that secularization is not an inexorable and unilinear march forward. It also alerts us to the analytical danger of treating disenchantment as a sociological fact. For when we imagine that there are certain conditions (technological, economic, governmental) that give rise to a secular outlook, we come to assume that every instance of zealous religiosity in contemporary public life is evidence of backwardness or a curtailment of freedom. This is by no means to defend bigotry and oppression that is formulated in a religious idiom. Rather, it is to note the narrowness of our current, dominant understanding of zeal, progress, and freedom.

Taylor’s account of modern secularity is especially helpful for recounting the political contours of changes within Latin Christendom that, over time and largely in unintended ways, prepared

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22. Jonathan Sheehan, “When Was Disenchantment? History and the Secular Age,” in Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age, eds. Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig J. Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010) challenges Taylor’s characterization of “fullness”, or the experience of life and the world as meaningful, as a theologically neutral concept. Sheehan persuasively draws out some of the affinities between Taylor’s account of the many paths to “fullness” pursued by believers as well as unbelievers and the Christian literature of apologetics, which in the 17th and 18th centuries, placed the theological superiority of Christianity within a historical framework that acknowledged different ways of being in the world—including sympathetic accounts of the lives of indigenous peoples in the Americas. In a different vein, Saba Mehmood, “Can Secularism Be Otherwise?,” in Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age accepts Taylor’s claim that his notion of “fullness” is an anthropological one, but faults Taylor for presenting Latin Christendom as a coherent and self-standing entity when in fact Christianity’s self-understanding was historically shaped through the course of missionary and imperial expeditions. On the imbrication of colonization and the formation of modern concepts of religion and culture, see Gauri Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Talal Asad, Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); and Peter van der Veer, Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also Gauri Viswanathan, “Secularism in the Framework of Heterodoxy,” PMLA, 123, no. 2, (March 2008): 466–476 on the omission of modern occultism and alternative spiritualities from genealogies of secularism, including Taylor’s magisterial account. Deemed irreverent, and in some cases heretical, by mainstream religion, modern occultism and alternative spiritualities are all too often incorrectly subsumed within the category of belief by historians of secularism, when in fact these texts should be read as fragmenting the category of belief through their imaginative bricolage of religious motifs. This dissertation builds on Viswanathan’s argument that attending to these suppressed and marginalized narratives opens up the possibility of characterizing secularity beyond the terms of changing conditions of belief, and as more than just the efflorescence of Christianity.
the way for an exclusive humanism that would abjure zealotry, and claim scientific progress and 
an individualistic notion of freedom as amongst its gains. It should also be said that when we 
focus our scholarly attention on abstract indicators that we think ought to predict the mentality of 
a people (like income distribution), we ignore the ways in which practices (including economic 
practices) are enmeshed in ideas; and we lose sight of the ways in which concepts are themselves 
constituted through practices. We unquestioningly accept the exclusivist notion that we were 
always proto-rational, and to be modern is simply to shed our illusions and become fully rational. 
Perhaps the greatest risk in treating secularity as if it were a statistical abstraction is that we 
might diminish, or miss, dissonant chords and countercurrents that could be crucial to 
understanding the historical formation of epistemic stances that we now take for granted.

Given that the word ‘disenchantment’ is negatively defined, and that it misleadingly 
suggests an inexorable shedding of illusions, it might be more fruitful to analyze disenchantment 
as a constellation in a Benjaminian sense. By this I mean that the observation of disenchantment 
is also the production of enchantment (in the way that the withering of aura produces the 
auratic).23 This opens up the possibility of generalizing the structure of a wide variety of texts on 
the subject of disenchantment/enchantment, including the anti-industrial and occult science texts 
from the late 19th and early 20th centuries that Mahony and Griffin encountered. And it is this 
structure of argumentation that is here referred to as the critique of disenchantment. By my 
reading, the critique of disenchantment has two broad structuring features. The first feature is 
performative. It is the act of constituting a sense of the self by narrating a particular experience 
of the world. The second feature of this form of critique is genealogical. It entails notating the

Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media, edited by Michael W. Jennings, 
University Press, 2008).
processes by which the dominant, modern sense of self was formed, and it offers some hint of alternative construals of self, other, and world that have become more remote or that have been strategically excluded through the myriad processes of formation under scrutiny. It is this attention to how the logic of a certain self-understanding mutes other possibilities that qualifies this mode of argumentation as a form of critique.

Historiography of Internationalism in Modern Architecture

Despite its tentative origins, the Museum of Modern Art’s 1932 show *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*, as well as the accompanying catalog by Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson and Alfred Barr, defined the historiography of modern architecture for decades to come. Its impact has included the tentative and mostly regionalist understanding of Mahony’s and Griffin’s practice in the face of considerable evidence of their sustained attempt to theorize the global through their written and built works. In retrospect, we can notate the MoMA exhibition’s promulgation of two distinct, but nonetheless compatible, claims about the internationality of modern architecture, both of which demonstrated remarkable staying power over the next forty years. The first claim had to do with the essentialist nature of modern architecture. The second claim had to do with the historicist ancestor that modern architecture was said to have demolished with the development of the so-called International Style.

The essentialist nature of modern architecture was neatly characterized by Johnson’s press statement on the national and international significance of the exhibition:

There exists in the important countries of the world today a new architecture. The reality of the "International Style" has not yet been brought home to the general public in America. This is partly due to its newness. Also because of its international character, few persons have had the opportunity of gaining a comprehensive view of the style in its entirety.

The International Style is probably the first fundamentally original and widely distributed style since the Gothic. Today the style has passed beyond the experimental stage. In almost every civilized country in the world it is reaching its full stride.²⁵

Johnson’s analogy between the International Style and the Gothic is especially revealing. It declared that the diversity of buildings assembled under the banner of the International Style could be reduced to a definitive essence that had developed simultaneously in “almost every civilized country in the world”—a point echoed in the catalog: “This contemporary style, which exists throughout the world, is unified and inclusive, not fragmentary and contradictory”.²⁶

The exhibition catalog’s second claim, that the International Style had superseded its historicist ancestor, followed from the essentializing claim that the International Style was both “unified and inclusive”. Insisting that “style” was a “frame of potential growth, rather than...a fixed and crushing mould,” Hitchcock and Johnson posited that the International Style had emanated from three “underlying principles”, namely, the “conception of architecture as volume rather than mass”, the invocation of “regularity rather than axial symmetry...as the chief means of ordering design”, and the proscription of “arbitrary applied decoration”.²⁷ In citing the displacement of mass, symmetry, and ornament as the principles of a “unified and inclusive” modern architecture that had broken free from the confusion of 19th century revivalist styles, Hitchcock and Johnson anointed the International Style the successor to Beaux-Arts Classicism. For it was the Beaux-Arts architect—whose works could be found in such far-flung parts of the world as Japan, Argentina, Egypt, Philippines, the United States, and France—who had

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²⁶. Hitchcock and Johnson, International Style, 35.
²⁷. Ibid, 36.
conceived of architecture in terms of mass and symmetry. Moreover, it was the practice of Beaux-Arts architects to apply ornament in order to contextualize their buildings, especially when they built outside the country of their origin.

The conflation of modern architecture with the International Style, to the deliberate exclusion of other strands of modernity which were lumped together and dismissed as “eclecticism”, structured the early reception of Mahony and Griffin.28 As already noted, the first posthumous studies of Mahony and Griffin praised their work as genuinely original examples of the American mid-west’s contribution to the international emergence of modern architecture.29 These studies struggled to explain why the innovative domestic architecture associated with Frank Lloyd Wright and his circle had failed to find expression at the scale of large, public buildings, thus betraying the extent to which, after the enunciation of the International Style, modern architecture came to be measured by the standards of Beaux-Arts Classicism.

If the Hitchcock-Johnson thesis on the International Style was the unacknowledged historiographical frame in these studies, it was openly invoked in a 1973 essay by the architectural critic Reyner Banham, which celebrated Mahony as “the greatest delineator of her generation”, as the “heroine” of the Prairie School for having originated the technique of showing a house in perspective with a section cut through the main room, and as “America’s (and perhaps the world’s) first woman architect who needed no apology in a world of men.”30 Without any hesitation Banham declared that the “Prairie School remains Middle America’s biggest, most humane and still…most characteristic contribution to the recent history of Western Culture.”31 By “characteristic”, Banham meant that the genius of the Prairie School architects had

28. Ibid, 34.
29. See footnote 8.
been to translate the myth of the expansiveness of the untamed American frontier into a formal arrangement of horizontal spaces at the scale of the single-family residence.

As was the case with the first posthumous studies of Mahony and Griffin, Banham measured the historical significance of the Prairie School in terms of its desire to emulate the Beaux-Arts practice of large-scale public building. Banham opined that the only example of Prairie School architecture that came close to qualifying as a “masterpiece” of large-scale public architecture, which Banham called “representational design”, was “Griffin’s prize-winning plan for Canberra, capital city of a nation/continent that many Americans still regard as the last frontier.” Banham’s point was this: by extending the metaphor of the frontier to the scale of “representational design”, Mahony and Griffin had taken up the gauntlet of “visualising...a public architecture”; this proved that they ought to be critically received alongside the “Modern Movement”, which “had persistent difficulties in producing formal, representational buildings without reverting to overt (Adolf Loos) or covert (Le Corbusier) classicism”.

While the US and British architectural press historicized Mahony and Griffin as valiant, if prematurely marginalized, pioneers who exceeded the terms set forth by Frank Lloyd Wright, they were given the status of “prophets” in Australian architectural publications precisely because of their association with Wright. By proposing that Mahony and Griffin had heralded modernism in Australia, this body of scholarship replicated the Hitchcock-Johnson thesis on the International Style

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with a minor difference in emphasis: whereas Hitchcock and Johnson generally described Wright’s innovations in domestic architecture as one amongst several “parallel experiments”, Australian scholars highlighted Wright’s influence on European modernism via his 1910 Wasmuth portfolio.35 Missing across the gamut of early scholarship on Mahony and Griffin is any discussion of their own persistent effort to theorize globality through writing and building practices.

My study addresses this lacuna in the literature on Mahony and Griffin by drawing on recent architectural, art historical, and literary critical studies on the colonial genealogies of modernity. Rather than describe modernization in linear and uni-directional terms, these studies have emphasized the encounter between colonizers and the colonized as itself constitutive of modernity, with some scholars showing how the cultural forms and politics of modernity emerged through acts of translation.36 This dissertation shares in these studies’ refusal to impute authenticity or originality to either colonizers or the colonized. It reveals how Mahony’s and Griffin’s global formulation of community was shaped by their encounter with the racialized and hierarchized vocabularies of imperialism, as well as the nativism of anti-colonial nationalism.

At the same time, this dissertation seeks to supplement the rich body of historical scholarship that exists on the specifically colonial figuration of the architect as an apolitical expert. 37 Chapter 4, in particular, shows Mahony and Griffin relentlessly translated the concept of expertise—including their own specialized training as architects—into an other-directed ethics. Mahony and Griffin feared that expertise, which they defined as an outlook on the world that saw other living creatures merely as resources to satisfy our own material gratification, had led to the under-development of our moral lives—an argument they elaborated in public lectures and essays with increasing frequency after their first-hand experience of the imperial dimensions of the First World War. Living in India between 1935 and 1937 (an intense period of organized anti-colonial nationalist activity) confirmed for them that the objective of anti-imperialism ought to be the formation of moral relations across races, nationalities, species, and genders within local groups that existed in excess of the logic and institutional reach of the modern technocratic state. They, much like M.K. Gandhi whose moral philosophy and political program they followed with keen interest, insisted that the de-racialization of the Indian Civil Service and other institutions of the colonial state in the name of national self-rule would only perpetuate imperialism in another guise. For Mahony and Griffin, replacing an outlook on the world as something to be mastered and controlled with a conception of the world as a place we inhabit with others was an ethical and political project—one shaped by the persistent legacies of 19th century colonialisms.

The project of historicizing Mahony’s and Griffin’s global formulation of community also seeks to supplement emerging scholarship on the imbrication of architecture, city planning, museum exhibition, and empiricist science in the modernist configuration of the cultural artifact as a signifier of universal human value. Although these studies have meticulously excavated the political circumstances in which new systems of material valuation were constructed across heterogeneous discourses, they have largely ignored the antagonistic and complex historical relationship between scientistic and mystical explanations of value. In contrast, this dissertation brings attention to modern occultism’s opposition to a certain scientistic conception of value as a subjective fantasy that humans project onto a blank and meaningless world. We will see how Mahony and Griffin came to identify this scientistic mentality with territorial conquest and the rapacious exploitation of others; and we will see how they configured the neighborhood as the setting in which ordinary people could recognize that evaluative meaning was not a projective fantasy but something that always exists in our relations with others.

At its most basic, this dissertation is a historical redressal. Drawing on new archival material, it presents the first sustained reading of the imperial context and theoretical ambition of Mahony’s and Griffin’s global practice. It also contributes a new perspective on the international reception of American architectural culture between 1895 and 1949. Architectural historians and theorists who have previously worked on this subject have only attended to the production and circulation of myths about American urbanity within Europe. Their studies have principally

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focused on the fascination with, and dread of, mechanization and standardization conveyed through European imagery of American skyscrapers, cities, and suburbs. To these histories of ‘Americanism’, this dissertation adds historical detail on the British, Australian, and Indian reception of Mahony’s and Griffin’s urban designs as a specifically American alternative to the political and moral orthodoxies of industrial society; an alternative that was deemed to be especially conducive for imagining the possibility of reforming the British Empire into a commonwealth of disparate nations.

In bringing this final insight to the fore, this dissertation brings the study of American architectural history into dialogue with postcolonial studies, contributing to a growing literature on early 20th century visions of non-nationalist alternatives to empire.41 Indebted to this strand of postcolonial inquiry, my study aims to show how a moral philosophical argument about the site of meaning that had acquired political salience within the theater of 19th century colonialisms was manifested within architectural writing and building at the dawn on the 20th century.

Historiography of the Spiritual in Architecture

The paradigmatic understanding of modern occultism and alternative spiritualities is of belief systems that run counter to the Enlightenment. This understanding can take the form of a complaint that fascist politics are energized by a turn to the spiritual—an objection dramatized in the Indiana Jones movie franchise, and, somewhat less flamboyantly, in intellectual histories of Nazi raciology.42 Cultural histories of modern occultism have been less sweeping in their

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pronouncements, showing how attitudes towards verifiability and subject-formation were shaped in various segments of European society at the turn of the 20th century by the intellectual rivalry between competing conceptions of the soul advanced by spiritualism, modern occultism, psychoanalysis, and psychical research.43 Although these studies helpfully point to the modernity of modern occultism—such as its peculiarly modern concern for gaining greater psychological command over the self—they often preserve a facile, nominal definition of the Enlightenment as the ‘Age of Reason’. This is especially the case in studies that present modern occultism as an elective embrace of the irrational in reaction to the putatively inexorable rationalization of the world. Inadvertently, these studies overstate the philosophical coherence of a certain rationalist outlook, and in so doing elide the internal tensions and inconsistencies within this outlook even when these tensions were constitutive of the critique of modernity staged by many occult science texts and practices.

A weaker version of this story, which pits modern occultism as an irrational means of mediating modernity, can be detected in some historical studies of architectural modernism. In the weakest instance of this story, modern occultism is presented as a palliative; as a nostalgic attempt at fixing timeless and universal values in the face of rapid technological change.44 This is a muddled assertion. The view of the world as blank and meaningless is a scientistic claim that holds that there is nothing in the world that cannot be apprehended through detached study. It is a

2009 for a recent journalistic account of New Age therapies as a place of refuge for right-wing anti-communists in pre-civil war Yugoslavia and post-war Serbia.

43. Corinna Treitel, A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Alex Owen, The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); David Allen Harvey, Beyond Enlightenment: Occultism and Politics in Modern France (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005); Sofie Lachapelle, Investigating the Supernatural: From Spiritism and Occultism to Psychical Research and Metaphysics in France, 1853 – 1931 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); and Julia Mannherz, Modern Occultism in Late Imperial Russia (DeKalb: NIU Press, 2012). Treitel specifically responds to the historiographical tendency inaugurated by Mosse in “Mystical Origins”, noting instances of Nazi hostility to certain occult practices and movements.

view that is critically interrogated, even mocked, within varieties of modern occultism. It is a fallacy to ascribe scientism to those who rejected it.\textsuperscript{45}

It should be noted that non-teleological studies of the avant-garde have recognized modern occultism as a key site for formulating conceptual links between aesthetics and politics.\textsuperscript{46} Similarly, architectural histories that have resisted interpreting every aspect of post-18\textsuperscript{th} century architecture as a stage in the evolution of an undifferentiated modernism have uncovered the importance of modern occultism as a milieu for the conscious self-fashioning of the architect as a social practitioner.\textsuperscript{47} A few architectural historians have carefully engaged the idiom of the spiritual found in some architectural texts and drawings from the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century in order to dispel the ubiquitous mis-perception that architects only turned to the spiritual in reaction to rationalist and functionalist architecture. For instance, the scholarship of Rosemarie Haag Bletter and Iain Boyd Whyte has revealed that early 20\textsuperscript{th} century architectural experiments in glass by Bruno Taut and others were prompted by fantasies of spiritual transformation at the level of the individual and at the level of the political.\textsuperscript{48} Working in a similar vein, Jonathan Massey has

\textsuperscript{45} Modern occultism's critique of scientism is muted by a different route in Linda Dalrymple Henderson, \textit{The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art} (London; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013). Henderson presents scientific descriptions of luminous ether, non-Euclidian geometry, and relativity as the principal motors for painterly abstraction and modern conceptions of space. That a variety of modernists came to learn of these concepts from occult science texts is a by-product of these concepts having been already absorbed into popular scientific literature, according to Henderson. On this reading, modern occultism is only an odd meditation on theories and facts that are rationally derived and verified within the physical sciences. Not only does Henderson's view diminish the differences in the normative stances of occult science and the physical sciences, her work also presents scientific discoveries as if they emerged in a moral vacuum. For an alternate framing of the inter-relations between modern occultism and technological change, see Stefan Andriopoulos, "Psychic Television," \textit{Critical Inquiry} 31, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 618–637, which argues that spiritualist research was a necessary but insufficient condition for the invention and implementation of the technological medium of television.


shown how the modernist discourse on ornament and structure in the United States was ineluctably shaped by the writings and drawings of Claude Bragdon who believed that the mastery of hyperspace would usher in a new era of universal brotherhood.49 My dissertation is closely aligned with these scholars’ efforts to interrogate architectural writing and building practices that constituted a notion of social and political reform as rooted in a spiritualized transformation of the mentality and ethical practice of ordinary people.

The Lives of Architects: A Methodological Note

This is not a biography.50 It is a historical study of a non-nationalist alternative to empire that emerged in the immediate aftermath of the First World War within written and built works by Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin. Informed by postcolonial scholarship emphasizing the entanglement of metropole and colony in the formation of modern concepts and practices, this study reconstructs the conditions of possibility of a global formulation of community that was structured by, and sought to exceed, the cultural politics of the colonial encounter. It does so by examining how the form and content of Mahony’s and Griffin’s texts defined the context or debate that they sought to intervene in. Specifically, I examine how two objects, Magic of America and Castlecrag, defined their respective contexts. In restricting the unit of analysis to texts by named subjects, and in reading these texts as forming an argument that attempted to shift a debate—in this case on the foundations, structure, and habits of community—this dissertation follows the historiographical method that views philosophical ideas as speech acts.51 At the same

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50. For a comprehensive joint-biography, see Alasdair McGregor, Grand Obsessions: The Life and Work of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin (Camberwell: Penguin), 2009.
time, I examine the form of drawing and building practices that Mahony and Griffin employed to realize their formulation of community as always open to the other, thus following the example of intellectual histories that investigate the constantly changing material aspects of philosophical and scientific inquiry.\textsuperscript{52}

A final note on the selection of objects under consideration is perhaps called for here. Except for a few passing references by way of comparison, this dissertation does not examine Mahony’s and Griffin’s best known project, the Australian Federal Capital City of Canberra (1911 – 1920) in any sustained way. At first glance, this might seem like a strategic exclusion; that discussing the design for a national capital would be to admit defeat for characterizing Mahony and Griffin as the first American architects to have a global practice. Actually, it is quite possible to interpret Canberra in a manner that is entirely consistent with Mahony’s and Griffin’s global formulation of community as openness to the other. Specifically, their recommendations for the massing of the proposed Capitol building (Fig. 1.11) was a remarkably internationalist appeal to the Australian government to claim its legitimacy by seeking to find what might be common across the pre-colonial societies of America and Asia, rather than in copying any formal model from Roman Classical Antiquity. Here is how the text of their entry for the competition to design Australia’s Federal Capital City phrased its plea: “A suggestion of a stepped pinnacle treatment in lieu of the inevitable dome...is an expression of the last word of all the longest lived civilizations...of Egypt, Babylonia, Syria, India, Indo-China, East Indies, Mexico, and Peru”.\textsuperscript{53}

Ultimately, any study is a delineated exercise. In this case, the topic under investigation is an

\textsuperscript{52}See Peter Galison, \textit{Image and Logic}: A Material Culture of Microphysics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). Cf Quentin Skinner, “Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s Buon Governo Frescoes: Two Old Question, Two New Answers,” \textit{Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes} 62 (1999): 1–28, which approaches the iconographic program of Lorenzetti’s frescos as if they were a text to be read without any consideration for their formal or material qualities as wall paintings.

idea about globality, and not the collective minds of Mahony and Griffin. The choice of Magic of America and Castlecrag as the principal objects to focus this study was deliberate. For it is the often maddening qualities of these objects that can be pried open to critically illuminate how the act of viewing the world as always enchanted came to be theorized as inseparable from the task of re-forming territorially based empires into a global dispensation.
Chapters

This dissertation is organized in two parts. Part I, "Global Thinking," delineates the scope and provenance of Marion Mahony’s theoretical writings on imperialism, self-determination, international conflict, trade, migration, finance capital, and international institutions. Part II, "Morality in the Shadow of Empire," examines the materialization of non-nationalist alternatives to empire within the design of privately developed residential subdivisions.

Chapter 1 introduces Marion Mahony’s unpublished memoir and political treatise, Magic of America, situating it in relation to American architectural literature from the first half of the 20th century. Beginning in 1901 with the first installment of Louis Sullivan’s serial essays in *Interstate Architect and Builder*, several architects and architectural historians sought to identify American architecture with democracy. This chapter notates Mahony’s critical stance towards these claims. It locates the conceptual motivations for Mahony’s assertion that any discussion on democracy necessarily had to be situated in a global context within early 20th century philosophical debates on the coverage of the natural sciences, as well as late 19th century theological debates on imagined parallels between the historical Jesus and the historical Buddha. The analysis of Mahony’s engagement with these two debates, via the idiom of Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy, reveals three fundamental features of her theory of the site of evaluative meaning. First, that evaluative meaning was something we come upon in our daily relations with others in the world. Second, that such meaning could not be studied with detachment in the way that natural science purported to study nature. Third, although evaluative meaning existed in excess of individual human subjects, there was no reason to describe such meaning as having a sacred source.

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Chapter 2, “Rewriting the French Revolution from the British Empire,” focuses on lectures and essays originated by Marion Mahony in the United States and Australia between 1932 and 1945. These aphoristic pieces of writing presented an institutional and cognitive framework within which the democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity could be seen as fully compatible with one another on a global scale. Examining Mahony’s prescription for realizing universal employment, her analysis of the globalizing character of finance capital, and her conviction that all modern states were gradually sliding towards totalitarianism, this chapter reveals how Mahony insisted that empire be seen as an inescapable moment in the formation of modern regimes of power.

Part II of the dissertation pursues Mahony’s and Griffin’s global formulation of community in the context of their design of Castlecrag, a privately developed residential suburb on the outskirts of Sydney. Chapter 3, argues that Mahony’s and Griffin’s first-hand experience of the imperial dimensions of the First World War shaped their approach to design and use of shared spaces, like pedestrian pathways, in Castlecrag. The chapter documents how Mahony and Griffin extended the 19th century American landscape design sensibility of the Picturesque, as well as burgeoning legal doctrines restricting the alienation of private residential property to produce common property as the architectural and institutional space within which it was possible for ordinary people to inhabit the perspective of the other. This, they reasoned, was fundamental to recognizing that evaluative meaning existed in our relations with others.

Building on this architectural and historical analysis of Castlecrag, chapter 4, “An Ideal Community,” details its critical reception within the Australian Section of the Theosophical Society. Focusing on the metaphors of flight, escape, and transcendence used to appreciatively describe Castlecrag as a departure from the prevailing orthodoxy of suburban design and living,
this chapter recuperates fin-de-siècle Utopianism as a key discursive site for envisioning alternatives to imperializing notions of community. It was within this discursive field that Mahony and Griffin defined the neighborhood as the form of community within which people of different races and nationalities could form direct moral relations without the mediation or coercion of state institutions.
CHAPTER ONE

The Dialectic of Democracy in Magic of America

In 1949, Marion Mahony donated two versions of a 1,400 page typescript along with 650 accompanying illustrations to the Art Institute in Chicago and the New-York Historical Society. Her gift represented the quiet culmination of an architectural career that had spanned five decades and three continents. Despite being the first licensed woman architect in the United States and perhaps the first American architect to manage a global practice, Mahony had failed to secure a publisher for her sprawling memoir, which she had named Magic of America. Actually, calling it a memoir, as Mahony did, is misleading. Magic of America combines the genres of office monograph, anthology of letters, hagiography, and political tract. Correspondingly, it contains illustrations of prospective and completed projects (Figures 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3), family photographs (Fig. 1.4), drawings of trees from Mahony’s sketchbook (Fig. 1.5) as well as diagrams offering a vision of how different peoples and nations could be globally inter-linked (Figures 2.1 & 2.2). Going by Mahony’s correspondence from the 1940s with the Chicago School architect William Gray Purcell, we might come away with the impression that Mahony compiled Magic of America as a record of her husband Walter Burley Griffin’s architectural work. This too is misleading. It fails to notate that Magic of America includes architectural and urban designs that Mahony originated before her partnership with Griffin as well as after his death. What is more, to read Magic of America simply as a monograph of Griffin’s career would be to omit the substantial body of political commentary by Mahony that she began writing during a two-year period of marital separation.

Part I of this dissertation offers a sustained reading of Magic of America as the elaboration of a theory of globality. The simplest definition of the word 'globe' is a spherical shape. The word also has figurative connotations of a unified body, and it is possible to refer to the planet earth as 'the globe' to indicate a space of difference, opposition and polarity that nonetheless can be encircled. Magic of America contains all three of these meanings. The shape of the globe was invoked as a metaphor for the integration of ethics, politics and aesthetics into a single field of social practice. The globe as a figure represented the imposition of a unifying mode of exchange everywhere. The globe was also used to indicate the synchronicity of disparate, even contending, worlds within our single planet. Magic of America argued that without these gestures of integration, unification, and synchronicity it was impossible to recognize difference. Mahony insisted that by difference she did not mean racial or national or even sexual difference. Instead, difference was the most general condition of being in the world. Removing all connotations of essence and identity from the scope of difference, Mahony articulated her version of humanism as a regard for all forms of life, human and non-human, the model for which was not reciprocal recognition but unconditional responsiveness. In Mahony’s argument our responsiveness is unconditional in two senses: first, in that every human without exception is always responding to meaning that is already in the world; second, the intelligibility of a given response is never guaranteed. Thus, to be in the world is to be constantly responding to the world, without ever being certain that your response is heard.

These abstract propositions about difference are easily overlooked when only mining Magic of America for clues to explain Mahony-Griffin projects. For example, the architectural historian Paul Kruty uses witticisms from Magic of America to stage the reconciliation of tradition and modernity as the fundamental design problem faced by a ‘Westerner’ practicing in
the ‘non-West’, where distinctions of culture and religion apparently matter much more than they
do in the ‘West’:

Griffin had grappled with the issue of an appropriate style in the Lucknow University Library — his first building designed for India but created before he left Australia. Marion reported to her sister that Walter’s design ‘looks and feels quite Indian and yet is the last word in modernism.’ But of what exactly do the two elements — ‘Indian’ and ‘modern’ — consist? 2

Kruty concludes that while the façade composition of this particular building (Fig. 1.6) is dominated by massive pier-pilasters that can be found in Griffin designs in the ‘West’, the base of the true columns supporting the projecting porch are without precedent in the Griffin oeuvre and should be interpreted as the modernization of an “ancient Buddhist column-type”. 3 In other words, Magic of America is used to verify the historian’s conviction that Griffin was an architectural genius who could synthesize alien motifs into his personal style. This tenuous reconstruction of intentionality leaves no room for the possibility that Mahony includes her letter to her sister in Magic of America as part of a larger critique of the architectural discourse of ‘style’ and its reliance on imperial categories of knowledge. Just two sentences following the extract from Magic of America reproduced by Kruty we find Mahony reporting that “When someone asked [Griffin] if he was going to follow the Indian style he laughed and said – ‘I am going to lead it.’ You don’t often get that sort of a remark from Walt but as I said to Mrs. Maddocks...he went at that problem as if the future of all India hung on its proper solution.” 4

It is not just that Kruty ignores the parts of Magic of America where the modernist idea of style is shown to be dependent on a caricature of the ‘non-West’ as locked in timeless tradition; it is also that Kruty ignores the poetics of such passages. Magic of America presents a

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3. Ibid.
certain kind of jest and pomposity as the only adequate rejoinder to the condescension implicit in imagining that India has an immutable style. Furthermore, this presentation is anything but straightforward. The reader encounters it as a set of nested conversations: Griffin’s remark is an answer to a question from an unnamed interlocutor; Mahony quotes the remark and refers to her own discussion of it with a fourth person (Mrs. Maddocks) in a letter to her sister. It is as if Magic of America is drawing its reader into a community that is constituted by such exchanges. Indeed, the circulation of dissimilar views is a recurring trope in Magic of America; one that is used to show how the globe can denote a synchronic rather than essentialist notion of difference.

Another debatable use of Magic of America has been to affirm the democratic credentials of Mahony and Griffin. Here the objective has less to do with recuperating the intention of the architects than it has to do with confirming their filiation. We are told that Mahony and Griffin inherited their commitment to democracy from the American architect Louis Sullivan. In a limited sense this assertion is correct. Magic of America can and should be read as an extension of the Sullivanian project of delineating a canon of modern American architecture. Between 1901, when the first of Sullivan’s fifty-two essays in *Interstate Architect and Builder* appeared, and 1949, when Mahony abandoned work on Magic of America, a slew of autobiographical texts emerged, each claiming an integral link between democracy and modern American architecture and each portraying Sullivan as a father-figure. There was Claude Bragdon’s *Architecture and Democracy* in 1918, Sullivan’s own *The Autobiography of an Idea* which was posthumously printed with a foreword by Bragdon in 1926, Frank Lloyd Wright’s *Disappearing City* in 1932,

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Bragdon’s 1934 edition of Sullivan’s *Kindergarten Chats*, Bragdon’s own 1938 autobiography (published in the US as *More Lives than One* and in the UK as *Secret Springs*), and the various versions of Frank Lloyd Wright’s *An Autobiography* published between 1932 and 1943. In 1947, a new edition of Sullivan’s *Kindergarten Chats* was published shortly after the American Institute for Architects posthumously conferred its Gold Medal on Sullivan and the Institute of Modern Art in Boston held its exhibition *The Genius of Louis Sullivan*, and in 1949 Wright published *Genius and the Mobocracy*. As Bragdon and Wright each staked their descent/dissent from Sullivan, the architectural historians Thomas Tallmadge, Henry Russell-Hitchcock, and Hugh Morrison jockeyed with Sullivan’s legacy in a bid to ensure that American architecture was seen as on par with European modernism. It is as if he (gender specificity intended) who spoke the most authoritatively on Sullivan would have the last word on American architecture.

Magic of America bears the scars of these slinging matches. It echoes Tallmadge’s 1936 assertion that Sullivan’s work had shaped the course of modern architecture internationally and not just in the US. It scorns Wright as a “<<braggadocio...who did little , but talked much.>>”

And Magic of America shares the proselytizing tone of Sullivan’s, Bragdon’s and Wright’s texts, describing changes in attitude as revelations and the figure of the architect as a prophet. Despite these important connections between Magic of America and the Sullivanian texts that were successfully published prior to it, we should not confine Magic of America to the terms set forth in the books that immediately preceded it. Even when confronted with similarities in terminology we should be careful not to assume that Mahony means exactly what Sullivan (or Wright) meant.

The word ‘democracy’ is a pertinent example. Mahony praised certain formal elements of American democracy in Magic of America—notably the congressional system and the lack of a permanent civil service—but at the same time she noted that there was nothing to celebrate in the United State’s belated universalization of the right to vote. Here is how Mahony put it,

The mere fact of universal suffrage does not bring about democracy...Jerome [Mahony’s eldest brother] remarked one day on the frequent statement that women didn’t have enough brains to vote, saying that he went in once and looked up and down a long complicated list on the voting paper given to him and gave up trying to find what to do and never again went to a voting booth, his conclusion being that neither did men have enough intelligence to vote if intelligence was the thing called for. I myself have gone through life the same way. I went to vote once and realizing afterward what a foolish thing I had done never went back again till after I was 70 years of age.11

How was it that Mahony praised a representative system of government but disparaged the mechanism by which representatives were chosen? Actually Mahony’s point was much subtler. She argued that as long as the struggle to animate democracy is limited to elections, training in judgment, imagination and intuition would be displaced by the narrower, quantitative exercise of proving the intelligence of the electorate. Mahony’s sense of what is lost when democracy is only thought of in terms of electoral contests was made vivid in the same essay through an anecdote about her eldest brother Jerome’s career:

He was one of those Americans whose work, if the United States had been democratic instead of imperialistic in those days, would have gone a long way in this last half century toward establishing friendly relations and economic unity in the Americas. Our imperialism means that we are still under the domination of Rome, under the Spirit of Addition, interested only to get and get and never give whereas by now, with all the advantages America has had, we should be well under the influence of the Spirit of Subtraction, the impulse to give and give and never get.  

This essay goes on to report that Jerome had been in Veracruz during the US Navy’s 1914 occupation of the Mexican port city (at the behest of Woodrow Wilson, a democratically elected president), noting that Jerome was thrown in jail following US military atrocities. Recognizing that the episode was a “strain to the nerves”, Mahony insisted that “one could not blame the Mexicans but only deeply appreciate their having finally released him.” Through this story Mahony urged her reader to realize that the “impulse to give and give and never get” must include a refusal to blame or hate those designated as our enemies, even when we do not agree with their actions. But this impulse need not be narrowly construed as an act of individual selflessness or charity. For Mahony, the possibility of forming “friendly relations” between disparate peoples is predicated on our recognition that we inhabit with the world with others, and imagining the world as someone else sees it is a step towards developing this ability.

Mahony’s notion of democracy as responsibility to the other differs significantly from the meaning of democracy in Sullivan. Although Mahony and Sullivan agreed that democracy should not be thought of as “mere political fabric, [or] a form of government”, Sullivan proposed that democracy ought to be conceived of as “the expression of the individual.” Without such self-expression there could be no self-mastery, and the individual would inevitably be sacrificed

13. Ibid.
to the collective.\textsuperscript{15} There is nothing in Sullivan like Mahony's sensitivity to the ways in which our experience of self can be seen as externally constituted. Sullivan can only think of individuality as something that springs forth from our inner depths under the right circumstances. Frank Lloyd Wright's conception of "True individuality...[as] an interior quality of spirit" is no different at all except that Wright, unlike Sullivan, saw "The 'rugged individualism' that now captains our enterprise and becomes 'capitalist' [as] entirely foreign to [the] idea of individuality."\textsuperscript{16} Although there is no evidence that Mahony ever read Bragdon's \textit{Architecture and Democracy} it is worth pointing out that his ideal of brotherhood was predicated on a similarity of purpose whereas Mahony explicitly wanted to explore the formation of fraternal bonds based on difference.\textsuperscript{17}

The disagreement between Mahony and Sullivan (as well as between Mahony, Wright, and Bragdon) is best understood as flowing from their respective descriptions of modern society. Whereas Sullivan, Wright, and Bragdon saw industrialization and the accumulation of industrial capital as defining features of modernity, Mahony defined capitalist accumulation—in its various modes—as well as imperialism as \textit{consequences} of a moral order in which humans saw themselves as apart from the non-human elements of the ambient world. This is not to suggest that Sullivan, Wright, and Bragdon agreed on the valence of industrialization; just that that the respective focal points of each of their autobiographical texts was limited to defining the American architect as a redeemer who would purge industrial society of its ills and allow


\textsuperscript{16} Wright, \textit{Disappearing City}, 16.

\textsuperscript{17} "democracy exists in the secret heart of the people, all the people, but it is a thing so new, so strange, so secret and sacred—the ideal of brotherhood—that it is unmanifest yet in time and space. It is a thing born not with the Declaration of Independence, but only yesterday, with the call to a new crusade. The National Army is its cradle, and it is nurtured wherever communities unite to serve the sacred cause." (Bragdon, \textit{Architecture and Democracy}, 30). On the militarism of Bragdon's notion of democracy, see Massey, \textit{Crystal and Arabesque}, 203–206.
democracy to flourish. In contrast, Mahony asked her reader to think of the democratic ideals articulated during the French Revolution as an inchoate yearning for an alternate conception of the world—one in which the bonds between and amongst humans and the non-human elements of the ambient world would be seen as intrinsically meaningful.

This chapter examines how Mahony came to oppose a certain scientistic notion of value that held that the ambient world was composed of inanimate matter to be exploited for human gratification while meaning was merely a subjective fantasy that we projected on to matter. In place of this scientistic notion, Mahony argued that everything in the cosmos was constituted by supersensible forces that prompted our capacity for moral and aesthetic judgment. That is to say that although these forces could not be empirically apprehended through detached study in the manner that the natural sciences purported to study nature, there was no way to account for our moral and aesthetic judgments without them. At the same time, it was important to Mahony to emphasize that there was nothing supernatural about these forces. To say that evaluative meaning was something that we came upon in the world, rather than project on to the world, was not to ascribe a sacred source to such meaning. Instead, it was to acknowledge that our daily relations with others in the world were thoroughly normative. Once we looked upon our relations in the world this way, we could realize that it was entirely unnecessary to enforce morals through fear, coercion, guilt, and punishment.

Mahony's theoretical writings on evaluative meaning and its bearing on politics were deeply indebted to English translations of German texts by Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925), a philosopher of esoteric Christianity. There is a dearth of historical scholarship on Steiner though his brief forays into architectural design have drawn some critical attention.18 For much of the

18. Dennis Sharp, Modern Architecture and Expressionism (New York: G. Braziller, 1967) was the first to identify Steiner's Goetheneum-II, a cast concrete congregational building from the 1920s, with German Expressionism.
1880s and 1890s, Steiner had been writing on Kantian moral and political philosophy, as well as on Goethe's philosophy of science. The published results of this research program led to Steiner receiving an invitation to speak to a gathering of Theosophists in Germany in 1900. The Theosophical Society had been founded in New York in 1875 to study paranormal phenomena, but quickly grew into an international movement comprising of mostly urbane professionals seeking philosophical and spiritualist alternatives to mainstream religion. In 1902, Steiner became the General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society, but broke with the Theosophists within a decade over the Theosophical Society's attribution of messianic status to a young Indian boy named Jiddu Krishnamurti. In 1912, Steiner launched the Anthroposophical Society, brandishing similar rhetoric as the Theosophical Society with one significant difference: Steiner did not accept that Jesus had simply been a wise teacher in a line of "Grand Initiates" that stretched back to pre-Socratic Greek philosophers and extended forward to Krishnamurti. Instead, Steiner's Anthroposophy held that in the incarnation of Christ there lay the first instance in human history of a self-reflective form of self-consciousness that was predicated on our consciousness of alterity.


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In what follows, we will see how Mahony, amongst other legatees of Steiner, took his interpretation of kenosis and the transfiguration of Christ to mean that nothing could ever be immune from translation, nothing could be held as sacred and inviolable. Even an entity that had been thought of as transcendental (God) could take an immanent form, and thus experience suffering, mortality, and the invariability of variance. Mahony’s striking addition to this line of esoteric thinking was to hold that since there was nothing that could be designated as existing outside of time and space, nothing could be held to be inviolable; and there could be no pure or unscathed essence for any politics, ethics, or aesthetics. This final insight of Mahony’s sets the stage for chapter 2, which analyzes Mahony’s preferred cognitive and institutional framework within which democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity could be seen as fully compatible with one another on a global stage.
2.1122. MILITARY.

The upper reach of the water axis has no commanding terminal short of the blue hills of the Dividing Range, bounding the outlook from the City over the Queanbeyan Plains, where a spacious public park is allotted to one side of the upper lake, and on the other are the grounds of the present Military College, with the steep bald knoll of Pleasant Hill—the highest crest within the City—their most conspicuous feature. This may be crowned either by a future development of the Military College—or, citadel like, given over, together with the adjacent slopes, to the Military Post, with its armories, arsenals, drill-halls, and barracks, commanding the railway lines, overlooking the entire City, and flanking the gap eastward towards the sea.

2.112. MUNICIPAL GROUPS.

Buildings of the Municipality, those public edifices of utility to the people of Canberra as a whole, afford further opportunity for extending the harmonious public grouping of the parallel-set system of the Federal Groups, by establishing a subordinate axis adjoining the Recreation Group, which is most nearly analogous to the general community functions.

Two separate characteristics distinguish these municipal utilities—first, that of the official, clerical, and administrative class; second, that of the material handling, transportation, and merchandising class; and it would tend to congestion to concentrate such conflicting though equally important general functions in one centre. Two centres, therefore, are fixed as the terminals of a municipal axis in the form of an avenue, north of and parallel with the water axis, each terminus connected with the garden and water feature of the latter axis, by short park arms leading from the circular pools. The essentially city functions are not only tributary to all the inhabitants, as is the Recreation Group, but are to serve handily the great Federal enterprises, which are here located in close proximity in three cases, whereas connexion with the great
from the balcony above. These entrances give on either side entrance to a group of four suites of study and bedroom and to one bath and lavatory. The same on both stories. The cloister sweeps around the dome at their internal angle giving entrance to the dining hall and then on down past the other dormitory arm to the recreation rooms in one case and to the laboratories in the other.

The domed dining hall is a most beautiful room in color as well as in form for the various surface patterns formed by this unique construction give opportunity for various color patterns. I suppose strictly speaking this is not a dome. The criss-crossing supporting arches cross so as to form a central lantern at the top and determine the light illumination torches at their bases. These indirect lighting fixtures were beyond the belief of the building committee till the oculist among them found that he could read the finest print on his eye-testing card.

At the level of the second floor is the circle of balconies leading to the various surrounding quarters. The whole gives marvelous opportunity for great as well as small occasions and a happy and proud group are the students and all who are entered here.

Fig. 1.3: Marion Mahony. Illustrated essay on Newman College. From Magic of America Electronic Edition, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/facsim/moa_2_309.html
Fig. 1.4: Marion Mahony, Layout of photograph of Walter Burley Griffin circa 1930 above photograph of “The 3 girl Graduates of 1893, M.I.T.”. From Magic of America Electronic Edition. http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/facsim/moa_4_300.html
Fig. 1.5: Marion Mahony, Sketch of Angora Lanceolata & Grass Tree. From Magic of America Electronic Edition, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/facsim/moa_3_445.html
Fig. 1.6: Marion Mahony, Lucknow University Library, First Version (north elevation). From Magic of America Electronic Edition, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/facsim/moa_1_023.html

Fig. 1.7: Marion Mahony, Lucknow University Library, Second Version (east elevation). Courtesy Avery Fine Arts and Architectural Library, Columbia University
Fig. 1.8: Marion Mahony, Henry Ford Residence (not fully realized), Decatur, IL, 1912
Courtesy: Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University

Fig. 1.9: Mahony and Von Holst, and Walter Burley Griffin (Consulting Landscape Architect), Robert Mueller Residence, Decatur, IL, 1910.
Courtesy: Art Institute of Chicago
Fig. 1.10: Marion Mahony, City and Environs, Federal Capital Competition, 1912 (Plan in ink, watercolor, gouache, and gold oil paint on linen. National Archives of Australia: A710,38)
Fig. 1.11: Marion Mahony, Section B-A · Southerly Side of Water Axis · Government Group, Federal Capital Competition, 1912 (Section and Elevation in ink, watercolor, gouache, and gold oil paint on linen. National Archives of Australia: A710, 43)
Cosmic Laws

One of the many essays in Magic of America on the theme of site planning opens with the following astonishing sentences by Marion Mahony:

Our thoughts to be moral must conform to cosmic laws. We must not think personally where causes are cosmic. All forms in matter or thinking derive from the chemical ether which is the manifesting force as compared with the spiritualizing forces of warmth and light.²⁰

What explains this bizarre re-writing of Kant’s oft-quoted, “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more frequently and persistently one’s meditation deals with them: the starry sky above me and the moral law within me.”?²¹ Here I argue that Mahony, whose undergraduate education at MIT included the study of Kant, appropriated Kant’s script to posit that the ethical could not be separated from the aesthetic. By “ether” Mahony did not mean luminiferous ether, which some physicists in the late 19th century had hypothesized was the medium through which light travels, but rather spiritual forces that permeated the cosmos. An heir to the Deistic conception of the divine as discoverable in the unchanging laws of the universe, the Anthroposophical discourse on the ethers dramatized a complaint against Kantian solutions to metaphysical problems. Specifically, Kantian philosophy was charged with having failed to overturn the mechanistic view of the world that had gradually taken hold with the ascendancy of Newtonian natural science. On the contrary, the wholesale adoption of a mechanistic view of the world by Kantians had led to extensive philosophizing on our practical engagement with the objects of the world, as well as on our subjective judgments. What is more, Kantian philosophy was seen as having unnecessarily erected philosophical Reason as a sovereign category that existed outside time and space.

In Goethe, Rudolf Steiner and his acolytes, including Mahony, found a post-Kantian alternative to the orthodoxy of Newtonian natural science and the various aesthetic and moral philosophies that they saw as complicit with the fallacies of a scientistic view of the world. Looking primarily at Goethe’s color theory, Steiner et al argued against the categorization of the properties of the world into ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’, positing instead the verifiable existence of supersensible properties that called forth our capacity for evaluative judgment in the course of our daily relations with others in the world. As we shall see, Mahony’s Magic of America adopted this conception of the world, upholding it as the morally correct alternative to the metaphysical outlook of natural science which viewed matter as having no intrinsic value.

Take, for example, a letter reproduced in Magic of America which Mahony and Griffin received from Ula Maddocks, a resident in the Mahony-Griffin planned suburb of Castlecrag:

I told Deirdre what you said about the battle between the light and the dark making all the colors. She loves it. At sunset time in the excitement of so much color she waves her arms vigorously saying ‘plash, plash’ and does twice around the lawn to give bodily expression to the thrill...You have stressed this early period for the training of all the senses giving wide experience to all of them. I have been lightly directing her attention to scents and she has responded readily, our own scented gum, the leaves of the scented angophora by the Johnston’s gate, the big leaved wattle on the lawn, a verbena and just now jasmine. All these she knows and others too like freshly out paw-paw, pineapples and lately we had strawberries. I said, ‘We’ll wait till Edgar comes before eating them.’ She said, ‘But may I smell them till Edgar comes?’ which meant I hadn’t the heart to refuse and if a few did disappear it was hardly by conscious decision on her part but a nose-hand-mouth reaction that went off on its own accord. One can’t wallop a kid for that.22

The Maddocks letter indicates the senses need to be ‘lightly directed’ to produce embodied delight and ethical behavior. There is also a vague suggestion that the perception of color and the utterance of sound are connected as possibly are the perception of smell and motor functions of

the hand and mouth. It is in Mahony’s reply to Maddocks that the reader of Magic of America finds an elaboration of the integrated relationship between aesthetics and ethics:

how marvelously you are opening up the paths to her:- that delight in conflict ...(and she is opening the eyes of her mother isn’t she) she knows that an essential of creation is polarity, conflict if you are not afraid of that word. We were thrilled at her response to the knowledge of the battle between the great Angels of Light and of Darkness, and what a picture of her you painted in our hearts with her joy in the plash, plash by which they were filling the world with color. For four years still to come her education should be that of the senses...the sense of smell is the first in the order of development. It, interestingly enough, is the fighting sense. It rouses man to a knowledge of his battle with the external world.23

At the most general level Mahony is urging her reader to consider that color, sound and smell are more than just what Locke called “secondary qualities”, which can only exist as ideas in the mind of the observer and are entirely dependent on properties of objects that exist independent of any observer (which Locke calls “primary qualities”).24 For Locke color, sound and smell might affect an observer, but the idea of these qualities changes nothing about the primary qualities of the object being observed, such as its size, shape, motion or solidity. Although Mahony never explicitly cites Locke, the coherence of his empiricist distinction between primary and secondary qualities had been scrutinized and rejected in Rudolf Steiner’s commentary on Goethe.25 Following Steiner’s opposition to a theory of knowledge which

conceives of light, color, sound and warmth as merely subjective states of the human organism while still insisting that there is a world of objective processes that exist outside this organism. Mahony’s reply to Ula Maddocks proposes an alternate, anti-metaphysical metaphysics of perception. Color is said to be created by the conflict between light and darkness; smell “rouses man to a knowledge of his battle with the external world. It warns him of danger and awakens his consciousness to the things that he can enjoy without fear.” In these phrases Mahony is urging her reader to think of color and smell as evidence of a moral order that is not entirely of human making. Accordingly, ethical decisions do not require the internalization of pain, and it remains always possible to learn by example without coercion (this last point is conveyed in Ula Maddocks’s refusal to ‘wallop’ Deidre into promising not to eat Edgars’ strawberries, and in Mahony’s reply that Deidre’s behavior was not only commendable but an example for others to live by).

The imagery of color created by the conflict between light and darkness, found in both the Maddocks letter and in Mahony’s reply, was taken from Goethe via Rudolf Steiner. Steiner summarized Goethe’s opposition to Newton’s notions that darkness is the absence of light and that light already contains the properties of the full spectrum of colors in the following way: First, that the prism used by Newton at a fixed distance only served to slide light and darkness over each other


27. Rudolf Steiner worked as an editor for Joseph Kürschner’s Deutsche National-Litteratur series, preparing thirteen volumes of Goethe’s scientific writing, along with introductory essays and footnotes, which were published between 1883 and 1897 as Goethes Naturwissenschaftliche Schriften. Subsequently, Steiner wrote Goethes Weltanschauung (first German edition published in 1897, and first translated into English as Goethe’s Conception of the World in 1928), which contains Steiner’s essay on Goethe’s phenomenology of color. Goethe’s own observations on color had been published as Zur Farbenlehre in 1810, which the English painter and writer Charles Lock Eastlake abridged and translated as _Theory of Colours_ in 1840. Although Magic of America does not cite any specific Steiner essay on Goethe, it does include mention of Mahony attending a talk by Lute Drummond, the General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society of Australia on Goethe’s scientific thought. See “23 March, ’36 M.M.G. to W.B.G.,” MoA, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_1_130.html. Drummond’s March 29, 1936 talk was actually titled “Goethe’s World Conception as Embodied in ‘Faust’” (Amusements, _Sydney Morning Herald_, March 28, 1936).
Second, that Newtonian physics proceeds from the assumption that the outer world only consists of motion that is quantifiable and lacks the properties of light and color; all that is qualitative about our experience of the world, according to Newtonian physics, is only an effect of the quantifiable upon organisms that are endowed with sensory and mental faculties. Steiner’s Goethe objects to this assumption stating that if it were true that color were only the effect of movement and if we interpret optical experiments to mean that the corporeal world is constituted by constant motion, then it is conceivable that the minute vibrations within the body are also endowed with color. This in turn implies that all the inner workings of the organism should also be understood by the same mathematical and mechanical abstractions used to explain the outer world. Yet, at least according to Steiner’s Goethe, it cannot logically follow that a quality like color only exists within an organism as an effect of external processes unless we also decided that there is nothing in the outer world. By insisting that the outer world had to be understood mathematically and mechanically, modern physics had rendered the world beyond the human body meaningless.

In place of a metaphysics that reduced color, sound and smell to affects of the subject, Steiner proposed a conception of the world (Weltanschauung) constituted by polarized forces he called ethers. In this conception of the world both aesthetic and ethical judgment are understood to be the result of the interplay of these forces rather than the product of a self-standing perceptual psychology or detached moral reasoning. Mahony adopted Steiner’s rhetoric of a universe suffused with meaning constituted by the constant formation and mutation of different ethers, as well as its tacit rejection of the Newtonian orthodoxy of matter. In a passage in Magic

29. “daß in der Außenwelt nur Quantitatives, licht- und farblose Bewegungsvorgänge vorhanden seien, und daß alles Qualitative erst als Wirkung des Quantitativen auf den sinn- und geistbegabten Organismus entstehe.” (Steiner, Goethes Weltanschauung 162).
30. Ibid, 163.
of America on the Blue Mountains of New South Wales Australia, Mahony even attempted to reconcile this conception of the world with the discovery of radioactivity as well as ancient Greek theories of elements:

The Blue Mountains is a misnomer - they are the blue valleys, with a blueness I fancy to be found nowhere else. Australia is not to be understood unless you understand Greek science with its classification of earthly things into 4 elements instead of the 19th century’s science with its 90 or more, which theory the 20th century has broken down with the discovery of radioactivity which has already transformed some 60 elements into each other.

This blueness is not at all like a mist. No one knows how to explain it. You can come close to it. It seems as if you could touch it, but you cannot feel it as you can the air. It is very beautiful. In seeing it you are seeing something not material as you are when you see a rainbow.

Now the Greeks recognized 4 conditions of matter back of which, creating them, are the 4 creative elements or spiritual forces by means of which material things are brought into existence and shaped. These are -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warmth Ether</th>
<th>creating</th>
<th>Fire</th>
<th>red</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light ether</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound ether</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetism &lt;&lt; Life ether &gt;&gt;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Solidity</td>
<td>Lilac</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This schema, in which specific colors are linked to classical elements of matter that are themselves said to be “brought into existence and shaped” by a dominant ether, was derived from a 1932 text The Etheric Formative Forces in Cosmos, Earth and Man, which is an English translation of Steiner acolyte Guenther Wachsmuth’s 1924 German text Die ätherischen Bildekräfte in Kosmos, Erde und Mensch. The corresponding text in Wachsmuth lacked a column listing the classical elements that were supposedly created by specific ethers, instead illustrating the relationship between ether, element, and color through examples:

32. Guenther Wachsmuth, The Etheric Formative Forces in Cosmos, Earth and Man: A Path of Investigation into the World of the Living Vol. 1, trans. by Olin D. Wannamaker (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1932); Die ätherischen Bildekräfte in Kosmos, Erde und Mensch. Ein Weg zur Erforschung des Lebendigen (Stuttgart: Der kommende Tag, 1924). References to the 1932 English translation of Wachsmuth in Magic of America can be found in “29 October, ’35 - Castlecrag - M.M.G. to W.B.G.” (http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_1_038.html); and “THINKING” (http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_4_171.html). Mahony also closely followed Wachsmuth’s study of Goethe’s notions of metamorphosis and archetype, reproducing his depictions of the four ethers in Magic of America, as well as in her ornamental scheme for the Pyrmont Incinerator (1934 – 1936).
Through the action of the etheric formative forces in the earth organism, arise the different variations in the world of colour, in the following fashion:

When there is predominantly active in the illuminated world of substance of the earth organism

- Warmth ether, then appears the colour red;
- Light ether, then appears the colour yellow;
- Chemical ether, then appears the colour blue;
- Life ether, then appears the colour violet.

Therefore the sea, for example, whose watery element is dominated chiefly by chemical ether...appears to us blue, whereas a shining flame, which is controlled chiefly by warmth ether, appears red.  

Similar in most other respects, the only other way in which Mahony’s table and Wachsmuth’s, text differ from each other is that Mahony lists “Magnetism” as co-terminus with “Life ether” and designates lilac as the color most associated with the “Life ether” whereas Wachsmuth had cited violet for the same ether.

Having introduced the scope and provenance of Mahony’s engagement with the Anthroposophical discourse on the ethers, let us now turn to the conceptual and political stakes of this enchanted worldview.

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Consciousness pole, mineralizing tendency.

Rhythm-producing tendency.

Metabolic pole, centre of the processes of combustion.

Life ether, Pole of the "cold flame."

Light ether and Chemical ether in rhythmical alternation.

Warmth ether, Pole of the "warm flame."

Fig. 1.11: Guenther Wachsmuth, “Physical Body and Basic Structure of the Ether Body of Man”. From Etheric Formative Forces in Cosmos, Earth and Man: A Path of Investigation into the World of the Living Vol. 1, trans. by Olin D. Wannamaker (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1932), 197.
Nature, Not As Natural Science Would Have It

In a recent essay building on the work of Charles Taylor's *Secular Age*, which I referenced in my introduction, the philosopher Akeel Bilgrami argues that value is a property of the world rather than a property of the mind. Agreeing with Taylor's assessment that modern secularity cannot be accounted for as "a mere process of subtraction of 'transcendental' elements from a previous conceptual framework in order to produce an intellectual commitment to 'immanence,'", Bilgrami questions the coherence of the "philosophical construction of a new set of interconnected ideas about the nature of the human subject and agency and a new ethical order within which human happiness is to be conceived." Bilgrami holds that there can be no logical view of agency that conceives of value as residing exclusively in human desires "rather than as external callings that make demands on us, to which our desires and moral sentiments are responses." For Bilgrami, disenchantment understood as "the exclusion of all external callings...produces alienation in the quite strict sense of an absence of an absence of agency, reducing us to mere receptacles for our desires and their satisfaction."

Bilgrami proposes that "the most abstract metaphysical condition for the possibility of an unalienated life" is the ability to simultaneously experience the world and ourselves from both a first person point of view and a third person point of view. Using the example of water, he states that it should possible to both perceive water from a first person, agential point of view as something that we find desirable, for example because it can quench our thirst, and from a detached, third person point of view as H₂O, which has certain fixed chemical attributes. In this

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35. Ibid, 145.
36. Ibid, 153.
37. Ibid, 155.
38. Ibid, 165.
picture, the world is suffused with value and these value properties are not to be viewed with detachment as objects of scientific study but rather are perceived subjectively and engage human agency. Declaring himself an atheist, Bilgrami asserts that there is no reason to rule out the possibility that “external callings” or the “value properties” that prompt human agency have a sacred source. To say so is not to be unscientific because value properties are not the subject of detached, scientific investigation. However, Bilgrami does not want a religious conception of value properties to serve as an alibi for addressing scientific questions with unscientific responses, as in the case with creationism which promotes an unscientific response to a scientific question about the origins of the universe.

Mahony’s notion of “etheric forces” violates a fundamental requirement of Bilgrami’s argument: that a religious or supernatural conception of ‘external callings’ should not address scientific questions. After all, Mahony proposes that without a robust understanding of ‘etheric forces’ it is not possible to explain how plant life is distinguished from minerals. Nevertheless, if we hold on to Bilgrami’s terminology of ‘external callings’, we can recuperate Mahony’s construction of a moral order that insists on a transcendental rather than an exclusively human-centric view of nature and yet perceives the transcendental in entirely immanent rather than sacred terms. To put the contrast between Bilgrami and Mahony schematically: whereas Bilgrami presents a minimal version of transcendence as the recognition that human agency is always responding to “external callings” that may or may not have a sacred source, Mahony posits that everything that can be—including nature, humans themselves, and whatever humans may call God—is constituted by “etheric forces” that are constantly in flux. Mahony’s argument makes it impossible to designate anything as outside this schema; nothing is left unscathed by the logic of the “etheric forces”. In a word, nothing is sacred.
In order to grasp these points, we need to return to Guenther Wachsmuth's text and note how it delineates the proper coverage of the natural sciences. Wachsmuth snakes through the epistemological and metaphysical implications of various antique, early modern and modern theories of matter, light, color and sound, examining, for example, the physicist Max Planck's assertion that ways of conceiving the world recently articulated in physics would lead not only to the discovery of new phenomena in nature, but also to new insights into the theory of knowledge and possibly to the revitalization of ancient conceptions of the world that had been previously discarded.39 In language borrowed from Rudolf Steiner's autobiography, Wachsmuth responded to Planck's hypothesis on epistemology by insisting that the "habits of thought" that had produced a theory of knowledge in which certainty could only be established by sensory evidence could only yield a "mechanistic interpretation of the world".40 These habits, therefore, had to be jettisoned rather than extended to the perception, verification and understanding of "higher spheres" as Max Planck, amongst others, seemed to welcome.41

At the same time, Wachsmuth did not want the narrowing of natural science's epistemological claims, which he sought, to serve as a signal to decamp to the 'East' in search of ancient/non-Western methods of retrieving occult facts—a thinly veiled attack by Wachsmuth on the Theosophical Society and other seekers of spiritual and mystical knowledge who had in fact 'gone East'. I do not wish to dwell any further on the dispute between Theosophists and Anthroposophists over the arrival of an Eastern Messiah in the form of Jiddu Krishnamurti. And I am no more inclined to confine my analysis of Wachsmuth's text by describing it solely as a reaction to theories and experiments conducted by the physicists Philipp Lenard, Max Planck, and Albert Einstein. What I do wish to examine is the philosophical construction of an immanent

40. Ibid.
41. Ibid, 9.
form of transcendence that is implied by Wachsmuth’s text and that was undoubtedly shaped by Rudolf Steiner’s 1912 split with the Theosophical Society as well as by Wachsmuth’s own engagement with debates within theoretical physics from the same decade.

Consider, first, Wachsmuth’s frontal assault on the Newtonian orthodoxy of matter and the yearning for transcendence contained within it:

The Newtonian preformation theory of light and colour is the image of a mechanistic, unreal, dead Nature void of the spiritual... The quantitative-mechanistic research into the world has brought us to a conception of the cosmic system as a corpse in which, nevertheless, we are alive.  Wachsmuth’s imagery depicts humans as trapped within a domineering cognitive frame. Yet, it is this very image that expresses the slightest flicker of hope: that in feeling trapped humans can nevertheless recognize the possibility of another cognitive frame; one in which their own sense of being alive is necessarily linked to recognizing the cosmos as being alive rather than filled with “inanimate brute matter” as the exponent of Newtonian physics Richard Bentley put it his Boyle Lecture of 1692.  So really Wachsmuth’s opposition to Newtonian physics contains within it a yearning for two distinct but nonetheless related notions of transcendence. The first is a notion of transcendence as escape, akin to Kant’s exit from nonage except that here the condition being escaped from is not political immaturity but a metaphysical and epistemological orthodoxy enshrined in the outlook of the natural sciences. The second notion of transcendence is as a crossing both in the sense of crossing out the categorization of ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ and in the sense of properties that exist across distinctions between and amongst human and non-human elements of the universe. The notions of transcendence as escape and transcendence as

42. Ibid, 142.
These overlapping meanings of transcendence can be glimpsed in Wachsmuth’s elaborate discussion of speech. To begin with, Wachsmuth posits that an audible tone neither originates in the ear nor in the brain as had been previously postulated by natural scientists, but rather “in the moment and at the point at which the conflict begins between chemical ether and light ether over [the] substance [of the air].” Having made this assertion, Wachsmuth notes that one of the most profound distinctions within nature is “between living creatures which can produce tone from their inner being and those which cannot”—a characteristic which separates mineral and plant life from warm-blooded animals. But even amongst creatures capable of producing tone from their “inner being”, humans are to be further distinguished for being capable of speech which enables us to form concepts and a relatively evolved consciousness. Finally Wachsmuth declares,

> Something real vibrates mutually in the ether body of a fellow man when we speak to him, and this acts upon him throughout his ether body and therefore also in his physical organism! It is not always merely the abstract ‘content’ of words spoken to us which injures us or vitalizes us.

A word—that is, a certain combination of vowels, consonants, and tones—which streams out from our organs of speech does not merely impress our ear as a sensation of sound, or our thought-world according to its content; but, since in the organism of the one speaking it owes its genesis to a certain combination of etheric formative forces which shape the sounding air to certain air-forms, therefore it calls forth in the ether body of the hearer a real effect, which may be, according to the nature of the spoken word, either transient or lasting, sound or unsound, warming or chilling, injuring or vitalizing, upbuilding or destroying. Since the word-sound through the air is made up of spiritual-soul element (sense-content), etheric element (formative force), and physical element (air), therefore its effect upon a fellow man is also threefold, and it reaches not merely the sense organ, the ear, but by means of the ether body also the whole organism of the man. In the spoken word the united action of the spiritual-real, the etheric formative forces, and substance is complete.

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45. Ibid., 205 (emphasis in original).
46. Ibid., 206 (emphasis in original).
There are three features of Wachsmuth's discussion that deserve our attention, no matter how off-putting we might find his metaphors. First, no origin is assigned to the various ethers. Second, the ethers are described as pervading the universe, though there is variance in the specific etheric composition of different minerals, plants, animals and humans. Third, the existence of etheric formative forces makes it possible to explain the existence of what Bilgrami calls “value properties” or the normative elements of the world, including our relations with one another, which are constantly making demands on our practical agency. In other words, we need no special metaphysics of morals. If we perceive the etheric formative forces, we can recognize that our emotional responses, our aesthetic judgments, and our moral reasoning are all products of the interplay of polarized forces—an idea that is captured in multiple, sexualized drawings included in the 1932 English translation of Wachsmuth (Fig. 1.11). We can therefore have a conception of the world that is deeply integrated and integrating, rather than disenchanted and profoundly alienating.

Wachsmuth comes close to admitting that this is his argument when he states that the “four etheric formative forces have evolved phylogenetically one out of another.” 47 By this logic it would be impossible to claim separate metaphysical bases for ethical and aesthetic judgment. The conception of the ethers evolving phylogenetically out of one another also addresses a quite different sense of the word ‘transcendental’ than the yearning for transcendence that Wachsmuth’s text identifies as already contained within the disenchanted view of the world (the one in which the “cosmic system” is reduced to “a corpse in which, nevertheless, we are alive.”). Put briefly, if the four ethers cannot be traced back to a singular point of origin, then it becomes difficult to carve out something or someone as ‘transcendental’ in the sense of a sovereign being that stands outside the logic of the etheric formative forces. Likewise, it is becomes difficult, if not implausible, to describe anything in the universe as having a ‘sacred source’.

An Immanent Form of Transcendence

Wachsmuth’s text seems to be aware of the meaning of ‘transcendental’ as set apart from the human and the natural, and reformulates it in a way that is stunningly consistent with the rest of his argument. And it is this reformulated notion of the ‘transcendental’ that Marion Mahony thoroughly brings over into Magic of America.

In a chapter in his *Etheric Formative Forces* titled “A World Reflection”, Wachsmuth constructs a gendered account of the historical formation of different types of knowledge: in the earliest human societies everything resembling what we might now call ‘knowledge’ was received as ‘revelation’, adding that “when this knowledge came to man, he was passive, ‘feminine’; he merely ‘received’; the spiritual world ‘gave.’”

Knowledge as that which is received was embodied in rituals, ceremonies, and folk myths—what would become the content of religion. This earliest moment of human knowledge would come to be eclipsed by a moment in which humans felt dissatisfied with being “merely passive in the act of knowing; merely the object of the activity of a spiritual outside of himself.”

In seeing himself as object rather than active subject, man (sic) sought to

actively, as ‘masculine,’ share in creation and in performance—in the act of knowledge; he would lead himself in this, master himself, freely and self-sufficiently unite to his knowledge that which he desired and when he desired it. He strove to be free from ‘grace’ and independent in the content and in the time of his knowing...It set up the human will as postulate in place of grace; it replaced revelation with observation and experiment; it laid down its knowledge, no longer in cult and symbols, but in books and scrolls. To-day this stream calls itself natural science.

The difficulty with the empiricization of knowledge, according to Wachsmuth, was that it entailed forgetting that knowledge amongst the first humans had been received as a form of grace. And as such this received knowledge was constitutive of a way of knowing the world, of a

48. Ibid, 236.
49. Ibid, 237.
50. Ibid.
level of consciousness that included self-knowledge enough that humans were capable of desiring an active place in the world.

A consequence of repressing the content and form of what the first human societies had accumulated as ‘received knowledge’ was the ossification of religion. Instead of looking at rituals and ceremonies as embodied ways of knowing the world that had produced a relatively sophisticated form of self-knowledge, their content was re-formatted as ‘faith’ and “preserved as religion”.

With the advent of natural science, for which Wachsmuth provides no specific date or century, “The physical element of man and the physical world in which this lives came over into the realm of natural science and its research; the soul and its faith belonged to religion.”

Even more worrisomely for Wachsmuth this “arbitrary human act” of dividing the material from the spiritual had hemispherically divided the earth into “Orient” and “Occident”, with the former exclusively concerned with knowledge of the spiritual while the latter laid claim to discovering the mechanical laws that governed the properties of matter everywhere.

So far-reaching was the conceptual reach of mechanistic-natural scientific thinking of the Occident that it had come to be accepted by thinkers in the Orient who continued to developing knowledge of “spiritual worlds” at the expense of addressing moral problems arising out of the mentalities forged by natural science and the “mastery of matter.” The mutual exclusivity of these two cognitive frames—mechanistic natural science, and intellectual inquiry into spiritual worlds—posed a grave danger.

As Wachsmuth put it,

The Orient lives in a thought-world so utterly opposed to that of the Occident that a great conflict between these two mighty human groups in the near future is scarcely to be prevented. Every day we feel the first waves of a great struggle in which the Oriental and

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51. Ibid.
52. Ibid, 238.
53. Ibid, 240.
54. Ibid.
Occidental people will battle against one another, not only physically, but most of all mentally.55

Perhaps because Wachsmuth understood this future conflict to be chiefly characterized by cognitive incompatibility between ‘East’ and ‘West’/‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’, he sought an alternate cognitive frame that would not bifurcate the physical and the spiritual. It would not do for one mindset to simply conquer new territory, hence Wachsmuth’s opposition to extending the reach of natural science to provide mechanistic explanations of the supersensible à la Max Planck as well as his opposition to ‘going East’ à la the Theosophical Society. To counter both these impulses and the bifurcation of matter and spirit that underlay them, Wachsmuth rejected Kantian arguments concerning the truth of a priori knowledge claims.

To briefly summarize Kant’s own formulation of the problem and its solution, a claim is a priori if it is not established on the basis of either sensory observation or past experience and if the claim is necessary and universal. While other philosophers (such as Hume) argued that something like an a priori knowledge claim could only be true because of the relations among the ideas that we use to express such a claim, Kant noted that this could not explain how certain claims were useful in predicting events in the world beyond our ideas. Kant concluded that in order for certain metaphysical claims to be universally and necessarily true, those claims had to reflect the ways in which our minds worked, and that the objects about which we could form knowledge had to conform to our cognition.

Wachsmuth found the moral-philosophical consequences of such reasoning entirely unsatisfactory. It meant that “In order to leave to man a view of something superhuman, there is set up beside the ‘understanding’ ascribed to man also an abstract ‘reason’ which is supposed to

55. Ibid.
be something existing purely spiritually, objectively, and *a priori.*" But Wachsmuth considered this particular notion of the spiritual to be "a truly lamentable combination of the still-born abstractions of an unproductive human understanding, bloodless shells of concepts, the only sort which can arise in the minds of men who are willing to believe their souls dependent upon the physical organism even in their highest activities." At best such a conception of the world could only produce "systematic schemata of an abstract 'ethics'" located in some far-removed, putatively sacred or spiritual source. In place of such a philosophy Wachsmuth, following Rudolf Steiner, proffered a conception of the world that defined the spiritual as "supersensible but not supernatural; that is, we can establish no union with it by means of our organs of sense as we can enter into a union with our physical environment, but it is a part of 'Nature' in which we participate by means of our psychic and spiritual selves and also, in the most comprehensive sense, our bodily selves." According to Wachsmuth, Christ was a reflection of the world conceived in this way. Wachsmuth is careful to distinguish this way of thinking of Christ from the portrait of Christ as a historical figure whose life-story offers useful lessons. Or, as Wachsmuth himself colorfully put it, this way of thinking of Christ is different from so-called liberal theological treatises, [that] denude Christ, by its banal interpretations of the Gospels, of his cosmic and earthly mission, and to lower his dignity to that of 'a good man from Nazareth,' in order thus to render him as similar as possible to its own dear philistine personality of the twentieth century...at most there is allowed to remain in this theology beside 'the good man from Nazareth' an abstract conception of God, of whom men form either a fantastic anthropomorphic mental image or one nebulous and vague, or none at all.

Yet, even in criticizing 20th century theology for genuflecting to the mechanistic conception of the world, Wachsmuth never proposed a return to some previous doctrinal approach to Christ.

57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
60. Ibid, 241.
Instead, following Rudolf Steiner, he transforms the proposition that Christ was the son of God, as well as the belief that Christ was resurrected, into a way of conceiving the world as suffused with divinity.

Wachsmuth’s signifier for this way of knowing Christ is the ‘Mystery of Golgotha’—a phrase that refers to Christ’s resurrection after his crucifixion at Golgotha, and that Wachsmuth almost certainly took from Rudolf Steiner’s 1902 text Das christentum als mystische tatsache (Christianity as Mystical Fact). Steiner’s stated objective for this book was threefold: first, to demonstrate how Christianity presupposes the mysticism found in pre-Christian times; second, to show that it is an error to interpret Christianity as a continuation of pre-Christian mysticism; and, third, to make the preceding two arguments by emphasizing the peculiarity of the essence of Christianity rather than by extinguishing it. In setting up these objectives Steiner took aim at a wide array of late 19th century texts—encompassing esoteric literature and comparative theology—that investigated and commented upon parallels between the life of Jesus and other prophetic figures.

The historian Tomoko Masuzawa has argued that the various forms of comparative study of religion that emerged in the latter half of the 19th century re-scripted the terms by which many Christians asserted the superiority and universality of Christianity, thus raising a productive angle of doubt about the idiom of pluralism that was, and is, used to question the assumptions of monotheism. For example, Masuzawa re-traces the enterprise of comparative philology showing how it created new possibilities for the ways in which Europe could construct its

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61. According to Steiner’s Preface to the Second Edition, this text was originated as a series of lecture that were published in 1902 and then re-published in 1910. See Steiner, “Vorwort zur zweiten Auflage,” in Das christentum als mystische tatsache und die mysterien des altertums (Leipzig: Verlag von Max Altmann, 1910), iii.
62. Steiner, Das christentum als mystische tatsache, vi.
ancestry and imagine Christianity as Aryan and Hellenic while designating Islamic as Semitic and thus the parochial religion of Arabs even though Europeans were well aware that the vast majority of Muslims were not Arab. More insightful for interpreting Steiner is Masuzawa’s genealogy of Buddhism as a ‘world religion’, which uncovers the contentious debate between theologians, historians and esotericists over imagined parallels between Buddhism and Christianity and over whether Buddha was a precursor to Christ or if Christ could possibly have been a reincarnation of Buddha. Steiner’s *Das christentum als mystische tatsache* intervenes in this debate, finding fault with texts that extinguish the mystical essence of Christianity by reducing Christ to a historical figure. So while Steiner praises the theologian Rudolf Seydel’s *Buddha und Christus* (1884) as well as the Theosophist and colonialist Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden’s *Jesus ein Buddhist* (1890) for successfully documenting the ‘irrefutable’ parallels between the Buddha and Christ, Steiner is not content with resting with ‘historical’ comparison. It is insufficient according to Steiner to simply note the parallel between Buddha’s body glowing from within as he began to die and the glistening white color of Christ’s shroud. These two ‘facts’ must be interpreted mystically. That is, they should both be viewed as the results of the mystical essence of Christianity—a lesson that can only be drawn from Christianity. We should note that Steiner’s argument smuggles in Christian monotheism’s insistence on exclusivity under the cloak of comparativism and historical inquiry.

But how does Steiner validate his claim that Buddhism, which he acknowledges is sequentially prior to Christianity, is a product of the mystical essence of Christianity? Steiner’s answer is the “Mystery of Golgotha”, by which he means the following. Whereas the luminescence of the Buddha’s dying body represented the transformation of matter into spirit, the radiance of Christ’s corpse was evidence of the spirit that had been poured into flesh turning

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64. Steiner, *Das christentum als mystische tatsache*, 110.
back into spirit. It is only through the transfiguration of Christ that the earthly lives of Buddha and other pre-Christian mystics can be explained. It was for this reason that Steiner insisted that Christ should not be seen as a continuation or a sophistication (*Fortbildung*) of pre-Christian mysticism—a bone of increasingly bitter contention between Steiner and the Theosophists he collaborated with in the first years of the 20th century.65 Whereas many Theosophists anticipated the coming of a messianic figure they referred to as Maitreya or the World Teacher, Steiner maintained that integral to the “Mystery of Golgotha” was the pouring out of the same mysticism on to all people who entered into communion with Christ that had been previously only been poured out in secret on to pre-Christian mystics.

In Wachsmuth’s usage of the phrase the “Mystery of Golgotha” there is much less emphasis on entering into communion with Christ. If anything, Wachsmuth is quite concerned that ‘faith’ has come to be configured as part of the superstitious pre-history of empirical knowledge, whereas Steiner defined faith in Christ as unconsciously enjoining Christians in union with the mystical essence of Christianity. Consequently, Wachsmuth’s emphasis is on knowledge itself, and he identifies the “Mystery of Golgotha” as probably the last ‘revelation’ or instance when knowledge was understood to be a form of grace. And herein lies the modernity, or at least the modern relevance, of the “Mystery of Golgotha”:

The descent of Christ upon the earth signifies...a cosmic event, [it] sets the evolution of the world-organism comprised within God the Father upon an entirely new course; gives a new sense to it; Modern knowledge of the world speaks of ‘primal nebula’ and ‘heat death’ of the world organism, of the beginning and the end of the world. It forgets the middle of the world, which was fixed by the event of the Mystery of Golgotha, through the appearance of Christ

65. Eduardo Schuré, the author of *Les Grands Initiés* (1889), which is perhaps the best known text of esoteric literature to claim that the founders of various religions and philosophical traditions had been initiated into the search for occult knowledge, translated and introduced Steiner’s *Das christentum als mystische tatsache*, but redacted almost all of Steiner’s discussion of the ‘Mystery of Golgotha’. See Steiner, *Le Mystère Chrétien Et Les Mystères Antiques*, translated and introduced by Eduardo Schuré (Paris: Perrin et cie, 1908).
in the terrestrial world. Only the Christ-permeated knowledge of coming ages will be able to understand the world.

In other words, it was gratuitous to seek a natural scientific explanation for the origins of the universe (à la the nebular hypothesis proposed by both Kant and Laplace in the 18th century) just as it was unnecessary to offer a theory of the ultimate fate of the universe (the idea of heat death as elaborated by von Helmholtz amongst others in the 19th century). Equally unwarranted was a mathematical proof for the existence of God. The stories of kenosis and transfiguration contained within the “Mystery of Golgotha” in which God becomes human, suffers, and dies only to be resurrected once again as spirit offer a conception of the world in which nothing can be seen as immune from change.

It is in this last point of Wachsmuth’s argument that we can locate the conceptual link between his notion of an immanent form of ‘the transcendental’ and the yearning for ‘transcendence’ that he argues is contained within the natural scientific view of the world. Briefly, Wachsmuth’s conceptual bridge looks something like this. The “Mystery of Golgotha” gives us a “new sense” of God. That sense (or significance) is one that ought to encourage us to develop our capability to perceive the supersensible (or what Wachsmuth calls “Christ-permeated knowledge”). In this way we will no longer find ourselves trapped in a universe made up of dead matter, which is the picture we produce when we study the evolution of nature from the mechanistic perspective of natural science.

In the next section we will see how it was from this aspect of Wachsmuth’s idea of “Christ-permeated knowledge”, the formation of a cognitive frame that refuses to separate matter and spirit, that Marion Mahony launched her argument for global conception of democracy.

America the Empire

The very first essay in Magic of America sets up an intricate dialectic: democracy will always be incomplete unless democracy is available equally across humanity everywhere. At the same time, making democracy possible everywhere requires all of us to fundamentally re-think the genealogy and definition of democracy. These are the relevant lines form the essay:

Democracy is as important as the smashing of the atom. Unless democracy is applied to humanity as a whole the power released in the atom will become demonic and destroy humanity. Only in America has it been experienced. In democracy the Spirit of the human is released as in Atom smashing the Spirit of Matter is released.

In this physical experiment the 20th century has fulfilled its basic task with the dual law - that of up and down, inside and outside, force and form - where you can’t have one without the other. The reality of matter is form and nothing else. The smashing of the atom releases forces, no substances are to be found when form is smashed. The smashing of the atomic form frees the spiritual forces of matter. They are not things that can be weighed and measured except in terms of force.

Thus do the Orient and the Occident meet, through America.67

The vehicle for conveying the steps in this dialectic is the “smashing the atom”. At first, the trope of “smashing the atom” is used as a simile. The constitutional politics of elected representation is likened to the more recent discoveries of sub-atomic charged particles. A few sentences later, the harnessing of atomic energy is cited as an urgent reason for giving global fullness to the ideal of democracy. Unless democracy can spell an equal fullness of liberty, equality and fraternity everywhere, atomic power would be put to demonic use. In other words, the metaphor ceases to be a distant referent and is made vivid as a dystopian image. This rhetorical shift itself becomes a conceptual framework for Mahony’s argument: what is special about modern politics is also capable of horrific destruction, unless everything that seems distant and only metaphorical is also regarded as vivid even when it cannot be palpably measured or

seen. This last point is underscored by the very character of atomic science where the object of study is said to exceed existing evidentiary norms, “The smashing of the atomic form frees the spiritual forces of matter. They are not things that can be weighed and measured except in terms of force.” And it is the breakdown of an older metaphysical orthodoxy that misunderstood the world to be composed of inanimate matter that lacked intrinsic meaning, as distinct from a cosmos formed by forces that relentlessly call forth our capacity for evaluative judgment, that Mahony celebrates when she writes, “Thus do the Orient and Occident meet, through America.”—a clear counterpoint to Wachsmuth’s call, “We must reconcile East and West”.

The essay continues,

The reason why America won the war and will win the peace is because the strength and power of the individual is recognized and given full play. The first step was to escape from the rest of the world – the ancient eastern world <Eur-Asia> - to establish a community organization in which no individual nor group had power over another, a community whose basic principle is Equity. 68

In Anglophone jurisdiction, equity is a branch of civil law. Equity allowed the sovereign, historically represented by the chancellor or chancery court, to provide a subject with injunctive relief from a harsh or iniquitous verdict that would emanate were common law to have been applied in the case of a dispute between two persons. There are two contexts in which Mahony learnt about the principle of equity, though she never cited either as the source for this extremely important component of her political and moral philosophy. The first context was personal. In the mid-1920s, Walter Burley Griffin was either the plaintiff or defendant in three separate legal disputes that were adjudicated by equity courts in New South Wales, Australia. The second context was critical. In 1932, a British philosopher and Rudolf Steiner acolyte named Owen Barfield, who would later qualify as a solicitor, published an essay on the legal history and

68. Ibid (text in angled brackets "<< >>" inserted by hand).
philosophical aspects of equity in an Anthroposophical periodical. 69 Although she never acknowledged reading the essay, Barfield’s analysis of equity is clearly important to Mahony’s absorption and deployment of this juridical concept. Before examining Barfield, there is one other aspect of Mahony’s understanding of equity that is noteworthy. In this and subsequent essays in Magic of America, Mahony identifies the principle of equity as a foundational precept of US constitutionalism, and attributes this fact to the thinking of Thomas Jefferson—a remarkable claim given that Jefferson’s Equity Commonplace Book, the place where Jefferson as a law student noted theoretical and historical issues in equity jurisdiction, was not published or widely discussed during Mahony’s lifetime. 70

Returning to Barfield, we find two analytical claims that were more figuratively than logically linked to one another. The first claim was that the economic is a field of relations between persons. Barfield suggested that this point seemed so obvious that it was often overlooked. But were we to interrogate it carefully, we would notate the variety of relations entailed within the economic, and consider the mechanisms that preserve the normative aspect of each of these relations. To elaborate this point, Barfield presented the following illustration: Person B is unable to alienate a piece of land, but can appoint Person A as a trustee to hold the land for the benefit of B. Although not the owner, Person A is still able to exercise considerable control over the land and could under common law derive benefit from the land for himself rather than for B. However, equity jurisdiction, unlike common law, would prevent this by preserving A’s conscience. For in being appointed trustee, A was bound to B in conscience.

Barfield’s second analytical claim was that ‘conscience’ was “philologically merely a variant form, the word conscience originally [meaning] ‘knowing with.’ It implies a state of knowledge either shared with or at any rate considered in relation to another being.”71 At the very least, “‘knowing with’” implies an acknowledgement of alterity, and in that admission, Barfield claimed lay the “basis for self-consciousness”.72 To sum up, it was the special province of equity jurisdiction to save a person from damaging her own conscience. It could do so because unlike other branches of law, it was exclusively concerned with the relations between persons (as distinct from relations between things, or persons and things, or between a person and a group to which she belongs).

Barfield then claimed a figurative link between equity jurisdiction and the Christian church, noting that Christianity was the only “religion that has ever taught that God is to be sought in the Ego of another man...Christ is to be found, and only to be found, where two or three are gathered together. He can only make his home in a ‘relation between two persons.”’73

Not only did Mahony claim equity, so understood, as a basic constitutional value of the United States, we will see in the next chapter how she explicitly modeled a spare version of the sovereign powers of the state on Barfield’s illustration of equity jurisdiction acting to preserve the conscience of a person who was bound by duty to another.

72. Ibid.
73. Ibid, 145.
CHAPTER TWO
Rewriting the French Revolution from the British Empire

In 1935, an American pedagogue and social critic named William F. Russell published an article titled "So Conceived and So Dedicated," in the Atlantic Monthly. Russell began his article with a lengthy excerpt from a recent statement by former US President Herbert Hoover denouncing Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal for imperiling American liberalism, and then proceeded to quote from a socialist publication condemning the New Deal for destroying the American commitment to egalitarianism. Russell neither attempted to adjudicate these rival claims, nor did he decide on the validity of New Deal legislation. Instead, he asked how it was that two opposing political camps, each vehement in its criticism of the regulatory reform and relief works programs instituted by the Roosevelt administration under the aegis of the New Deal beginning in 1933, could appeal to the same imagery of American heritage when making their respective arguments. Russell’s conclusion was that while liberty and equality historically emerged more or less simultaneously, the two ideals had been in conflict ever since that emergence. What made the United States exceptional, by Russell’s reckoning, was that it had consistently sought to bring about a compromise between the two ideals.

The idea that any sort of compromise was required for the ideals of liberty and equality to coexist was abhorrent to Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin. An essay in Mahony’s unpublished memoir and political treatise Magic of America offered a rebuttal to Russell’s article in the Atlantic Monthly. Challenging Russell’s historical claim that freedom of worship

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2. Marion Mahony, "Liberty and Equity. W.B.G.," Magic of America Electronic Edition (hereafter MoA), http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_4_274.html (accessed October 18, 2012). Despite the essay’s title including the initial W.B.G, suggesting that when Marion Mahony was compiling and editing Magic of America she identified this essay as having been originated by Walter Burley Griffin, the authorship of this piece has been a matter of minor controversy. Dustin H. Griffin, Walter Burley Griffin’s grandnephew and anthologist excluded this essay from his anthology, The Writings of Walter Burley Griffin, on the grounds that the essay’s content could not be
and the removal of superstition were pivotal moments in the formation of liberty as an ideal to be cherished by rational men (the gender specificity is Russell’s), the essay in Magic of America suggests that an excessive confidence in scientific rationality and the sorts of technological advancements in the practices of agriculture, economy and industry that Russell faithfully championed might actually obscure the angle of vision necessary to realize democracy in its fullest and most abstract sense. The essay also noted that while Russell had cited “diverse early authorities” to suggest that the Enlightenment values of liberty and equality were incompatible with one another, Russell had not considered the work of the German-language occult theorist Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925) who had succeeded, through extending the sources of data beyond obvious physical laws, in showing that although these conditions [liberty and equality] are mutually exclusive, it does not follow that we must choose the one and do without the other, nor compromise by subtracting one from another to obtain the insignificant remnant of opposing force...

There need be no greater conflict between Liberty, Equality and Fraternity in the genus humanity than there is between them as willing, feeling and thinking in the species individual man himself. The difficulty arises out of incapacity to recognize authority except as a unity whereas it can be conceived of as a trinity.3

This statement should be not confused with some cliché about the separation of powers. It is more correctly read as announcing a refusal to sequester the universe of ethical, political, and aesthetic decisions within the realm of the nation-state. Something of this is conveyed by the call to make liberty, equality and fraternity fully and equally valid for all of humanity. Beyond this the passage asked the reader to consider the possibility of formulating a global politics on the fact that the individual human was capable of responding to the world in distinct but nonetheless compatible ways. An individual was capable of having intending states (“willing”), without this

reliably attributed to Walter Burley Griffin. Dustin Griffin’s reasoning is strange given that Walter Burley Griffin made much the same argument in a slightly older lecture, “Interest and Single Tax”, which Dustin Griffin does reproduce in Writings of Walter Burley Griffin, ed. Dustin Griffin (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp. 274 – 281.

mental state crowding out the possibility for the same individual to have an emotional response (“feeling”) to something she had come upon in the world, or deliberate her way out of a latent conflict between rival claims (“thinking”). This is a very different conception of human rationality than the one Russell brandished so uncritically. The Magic of America essay refused to claim reason as a form of executive functioning that if freed from superstition and other forms of mental slavery could inject new vitality into commerce and government.

Especially when compared to Russell’s original *Atlantic Monthly* piece, the Magic of America essay seems anti-historicist in its posture; it neither provides a historically grounded explanation for how liberty and equality have come to be in tension with one another nor does it posit an originary theoretical moment from which an incompatibility between the two ideals might have arisen. Instead, the essay asks its reader to change her conceptual outlook on the relationship between ethics, politics and aesthetics. Crucially, this change is itself not embedded in historical time; it is not contingent on a sequence of tasks or even prior assent to some particular belief. The change occurs through a searching for language that registers the ways in which human will, emotion, and reason are separate but nonetheless compatible forms of responding to the meaningfulness of the world.

Put differently, Magic of America argues that meaning is always already in the world and not a subjective projection on to a blank and meaningless world. Equally, it is an argument against a view of reason as the highest form of cognitive functioning that is meant to reconcile competing drives and moral commitments. It follows that the aesthetic, in Magic of America, is neither a realm of refuge from the theoretical tyranny of rationalism nor is it offered as a palliative in a bleak world.
This chapter investigates Marion Mahony’s effort to rearticulate the French Revolution slogan of ‘liberty, equality and fraternity’ such that all three of these ideals could be understood as fully compatible with one another on a global stage. This entailed re-conceptualizing the sovereign powers of the state, as well as steadfastly rejected the liberal claim that all humans were equal in some abstract or essentialist way. Thus, the political institutions of the nation-state ought, in Mahony’s view, to be restricted to the enforcement of equity—a juridico-political goal that as we saw in the last chapter Mahony imported into democratic theory from civil law in Anglophone countries. Put briefly, the principles of equity allowed the sovereign, historically represented by the chancellor or chancery court, to provide a subject with injunctive relief from a harsh or iniquitous verdict that emanated out of the common law. Using a set of principles to mitigate or prevent harsh and iniquitous consequences of more formal rules was the only the practice that Mahony thought worth formalizing through mechanisms such as universal enfranchisement, majority opinion, and centralized surveillance.

This chapter also examines the wide variety of horizontal, social relationships that Magic of America delineated outside the purview of the nation-state. Notably, Mahony imagines education, which she calls “life-long learning”, and the economic activities of production and consumption as requiring no intervention by nation-states. Here too Mahony resists dominant interpretations of liberal political theory, refusing to define liberty as freedom from interference and instead describing it as the pursuit of “ability” or life-long learning from exemplars. Likewise, Mahony refrains from joining with contemporary internationalists who sought the creation of a world government that would guarantee human rights for everyone everywhere. The only form of worldwide organization that Mahony recommends is a “World Economic
Organization" that could affirm fraternal relations between different peoples, which she preferred to call “mutuality”.

In so recommending, Mahony’s text drew on a well-established line of thinking that sought to re-constitute, and thereby preserve, Europe’s imperial holdings through international institutions—notably the League of Nations and later the United Nations. 4 Mahony unambiguously wishes to see the end of European empires, but seems to recommend the formation of a US-led global dispensation. In part, this advocacy takes the form of welcoming the formation of the UN as a forum to preserve the peace won by the US military at the end of the Second World War. But there is another dimension to Mahony’s rhetoric, one that attributes the US’s military success to its lack of a permanent civil service. In fact Mahony views the UN as an opportunity for a decolonizing country like India to disband its colonially-derived civil service and allow for the unrestricted circulation of labor and capital. In Mahony’s telling of world history, trade and immigration barriers had historically served as instruments to expand the sovereignty of the national-state, which in turn led to trade and military rivalries between nations. The only way to destroy this creeping tendency towards empire was to do away with the desire for immortality enshrined in the institution of a permanent civil service. In other words, if the UN was to show any regard for all human life, it would have to recognize the variability and mortality of life itself. Global peace, therefore, could not depend on claims to save human life from its inevitable destruction through the declaration of a universal right to life, but by allowing the formerly colonized to participate more fully and equitably as economic agents within a world economy they had historically contributed to as colonized subjects.

Equity-Ability-Mutuality

Magic of America’s dissent from the framing of liberty as the advance of reason begs the question: what conceptual and institutional framework did it recommend for liberty such that it would not be in tension with equality? To describe how the “intuitive cry of the French Revolution” (liberty, equality, fraternity) could be writ large, which is to say such that the ideals were not in tension with one another, Magic of America most frequently used the term the ‘Threefold Commonwealth’. Before describing the details of the Threefold Commonwealth it will be helpful to provide some lineage for the term.

In 1919, the German-language occult thinker Rudolf Steiner published a pamphlet recommending a new arrangement of social and economic institutions for war-ravaged Europe. Steiner called this particular arrangement “Dreigliederung des sozialen Organismus” or the Triarticulation of the Social Organism. In 1922, the authorized English translation of Steiner’s pamphlet referred to the same construct as a Threefold Commonwealth. The English rendition echoes a phrase in Calvin, “twofold government in man”, which is found in his chapter on Christian Liberty in the Institutes of the Christian Religion. Did Steiner’s translator wittingly appeal to Calvin’s sense that man was under the authority of God in the spiritual realm but under the laws of man when it concerned his duties to humanity and the wider citizenry? If anything, the Latinate “threelfold” empties Dreigliederung of its metaphorical association with the body

5. Ibid.
(glied in German is used to denote limb or member). It should also be noted that Steiner’s argument was less that there are multiple sources of authority within society that are somehow complicit or folded into each other, and more that the limbs of society are dissimilar but nonetheless joined in quite specific ways.

Marion Mahony certainly first encountered the term ‘Threefold Commonwealth’ in the authorized English translation of Steiner. Mahony and Griffin had, since 1926, been participants in events organized by the Australian branch of the Theosophical Society—an association that would eventually lead to their study of Steiner’s writing. The Theosophical Society was founded in New York in 1875 to study paranormal phenomena, but quickly grew into an international movement comprising of mostly urbane professionals seeking philosophical and spiritualist alternatives to mainstream religion. By 1929, Mahony’s and Griffin’s planned.

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9. The German equivalent for threefold is more typically dreifach, a word not found in Steiner’s 1919 Die Kernpunkte der sozialen Frage.
10. “Advance! Australia Club,” Advance! Australia 1, no. 4 (October 1926): 185 is the earliest documentation of Marion Mahony’s and Walter Burley Griffin’s presence at a Theosophical Society event. Mahony and Griffin were guests of George Sydney Arundale, General-Secretary of Theosophical Society in Australia, at a vegetarian dinner for “practical idealists” held in Sydney on August 25, 1926. Subsequent references to Theosophical Society events that included Mahony and Griffin are “Pavlova’s Protégé,” 1, no. 4 (October 1926): 191, which listed Mahony as one of the speakers invited to the give a lecture in a series inaugurated by the Russian ballerina Ana Pavlova; I. Anson, “Building for the Future,” Advance! Australia 3, no. 3 (September 1927): 116–188, which offered a glowing review of a field trip by Theosophists to the Mahony-Griffin planned suburb of Castlecrag; Walter Burley Griffin, “The Outdoor Arts of Australia,” Advance! Australia 4, no. 5 (May 1928): 207–211, which was originally delivered as an address at the Theosophical Society’s 1928 Easter Convention in Sydney; and Broadcasting, Sydney Morning Herald, July 8, 1933, which reported that Walter Burley Griffin would deliver a talk, “Architecture and the Economic Impasse”, over the Theosophical Broadcasting station 2GB. Griffin had published an article with the same title in a Theosophical Society periodical the previous year. See Walter Burley Griffin, “Architecture and the Economic Impasse,” The Theosophist 54 (November 1932): 186–190. Besides “Outdoor Arts of Australia” and “Architecture and the Economic Impasse”, Griffin wrote one other article for the Theosophical Society: Walter Burley Griffin, “Building for Nature,” Advance! Australia 4, no. 3 (March 1928): 123–126. Ch 4 of this dissertation historicizes the consolidation of an ethical tradition, which emphasizes exemplary conduct over a coercive morality, through an archive of transnational utopian settlement experiments, specifically examining the Theosophical Society’s appropriation and transformation of Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City concept through such texts as Advance! Australia. 11. Jill Roe Beyond Belief: Theosophy in Australia, 1879–1939 (Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1986) documents the arrival and early uptake of Theosophy in Australia. Gauri Viswanathan, more than any other scholar, has offered considerable insight into the poetics and moral-politics of Theosophists, including Annie Besant, James Cousins, and Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. See “Conversion, Theosophy, Race Theory,” in Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998): 177–207; “Ireland, India and the Poetics of Internationalism,” Journal of World History 15, no. 1 (March 2004): 7–30; and “Have Animals Souls?: Theosophy and the Suffering Body,” PMLA 126, no. 2, (March 2011): 440–447.

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suburb along Sydney’s Middle Harbour had burgeoned into a community of artists and spiritualists, so much so that a spiritual healing organization calling itself the New Renascence Society appointed Griffin to its Committee and proposed to build a sanatorium in the Castlecove section of Middle Harbour. It was also around 1929 that Edith Williams, the General Secretary of the Australian Branch of Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophical Society, came to Middle Harbour along with her husband, probably also drawn to the community by the publicity it had received in occultist and spiritualist periodicals.

Marion Mahony’s first public use of the term ‘Threefold Commonwealth’ can be traced back to a talk she delivered on 28th November 1932 to the Henry George Club in Sydney, Australia. Henry George was an American 19th century politician and economic thinker who advocated the taxing of land values to curb speculation and the monopolistic holding of land; George also opposed tariffs and argued for free trade though he espoused restrictive immigration. In the years following George’s death, professionals in North America, England and Australia formed small clubs that would meet as often as once a week to read Georgist literature, hear from visiting speakers, and discuss public policy. Many of these groups were


13. The only source of information on Edith Williams’s arrival in Castlecrag is Mahony’s own subsequent recollection in Magic of America (http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_4_188.html).


15. Charles Albro Barker, Henry George (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955) offers a detailed account of Henry George’s political career showing how George’s rhetoric was derived from a religious idiom of brotherhood in Christ. Barker also provides some description of the remarkably international and enduring legacy of Henry George. Jeffrey P. Sklansky, The Soul’s Economy: Market Society and Selfhood in American Thought, 1820-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) identifies Henry George as a moment in a shift in the characterization of society from an arena where individuals pursued their rational self-interest, the portrait painted by political economy, to a realm of inter-dependence—a picture furnished by the emergent social sciences.

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advocates of a single, land-value tax in place of all other forms of taxation, and consequently were known as Single Tax clubs. Opposition to protectionism was often part of the platform of Georgist groups, but most did not oppose the transnational migration of workers. Periodicals and lectures offered Georgist groups an opportunity to learn about each other's activities as well as to engage with themes such as utopian residential communities, anti-colonial revolts, and the scriptural sources of economic reform. It was in the context of these thematic discussions that Marion Mahony became a frequently invited speaker on the Georgist lecture circuit.\footnote{Reports of Marion Mahony’s talks to Georgist groups can be found in “Single Tax Club of Chicago,” \textit{Land and Freedom} XXXII, no. 5 (Sep. – Oct. 1932): 161; \textit{The Standard}, No. 326 (Jan. 15, 1933): 3; and \textit{The Standard}, No. 349 (Dec. 15, 1934): 3.}

Mahony’s 28th November 1932 lecture to the Henry George Club in Sydney introduced the Threefold Commonwealth as an arrangement of economic, political and cultural organizations that would not allow for any form of coercion within the realm of horizontal relations between and amongst people. This necessarily implied that the Threefold Commonwealth included coercive institutions of state that could maintain equity, specifically in the economic relations between people. Yet, Mahony cautioned, the enforcement of equity should not serve as an alibi for governmental control of production and consumption. From this point of securing equity through political processes, Mahony went on to argue that liberty should be pursued within the realm of culture. Organizationally, this would entail keeping educational institutions out of the control of government and business. Finally, Mahony asserted that the feeling of brotherhood or fraternity was only possible when natural resources were considered to belong to all humanity—a possibility that could only be guaranteed by the enforcement of equity in the political domain and the pursuit of liberty in the cultural domain.

In subsequent elaborations of the Threefold Commonwealth, Mahony searched for language to describe liberty, equality and fraternity such that they were fully compatible with
one another and understood to be constitutive of a new outlook on human relations in nature. Thus, Magic of America insists that the only responsibility of political institutions is to maintain equity and not equality. What might the text mean by this distinction? There are two, related, senses of ‘equality’ that Magic of America is expressly opposing: the notion that people are equal in an abstract sense, and, flowing from this notion that people on average or in the abstract are equal, that different people are equal in the eyes of the state. Magic of America argues for the replacement of these notions of equality as equivalence with a juridical conception of equity, where the state would be capable of ensuring that no person’s actions could harm another. But the text does not rest here. Magic of America makes clear that the sort of harm that it is asking the state to redress is in the economic sphere. Specifically, it makes it the responsibility of the state to ensure that no individual or entity captures the means of production in such a way that would confer an unfair advantage over other individuals and entities.

This is a re-arrangement of the normative prescription of social contract theory, where it is deemed perfectly fair that one party should capture available resources at the expense of others provided that this act of appropriation will leave everyone better off than they would have been in the state of nature. Magic of America is unambiguous that this normative arrangement, which it calls welfare, or the provision of a safety net for those who lack property within a regime of private accumulation, has dire consequences: it leads to the creation of state-owned and state-sanctioned monopolies and eventually to war. As a counter-illustration to this normative picture of welfare within a political economy of private accumulation, Magic of America describes the

18. The likely, though unacknowledged, source for this stance towards equality was Owen Barfield’s “Equity” essay, which described “equity as enabling us to feel how equality, not the abstract uniformity of the bureaucratic foot-rule, not ‘standardisation’ but equality in a most inward and truly human sense, is at the very heart of the life of rights.” (Barfield, “Equity” Anthroposophy: A Quarterly Review of Spiritual Science 7, no. 2 (Midsummer 1932): 147).
institutional and cognitive requirements to achieve “universal employment”, and in so doing elaborates an alternate vocabulary for thinking about liberty and fraternity.

Magic of America lists the two conditions for universal employment, in the most general of terms, as “HUMAN ABILITIES” and “ACCESS TO NATURE”. The former could only be guaranteed through “local groups – somewhat of the nature of parent and teacher organizations – and inter-organized to meet various wider needs than only the control of education”, which otherwise tended to focus on making either “warriors [or] serfs out of the mass of [people].” Accordingly, the primary goal of these inter-organized, or networked to use more recent jargon, groups was to develop the capabilities of individuals “throughout their lives.” This would have the instrumental benefit of ensuring that workers would not lose their jobs because of changes in patterns of employment or the invention of new machinery.

Elsewhere in Magic of America this program of lifelong learning is explicitly linked to the redefinition of liberty. Arguing that liberty should neither be circumscribed by a notion of equality as equivalence nor by a coercive majoritarianism, Magic of America asserts that liberty could not be guaranteed by political institutions:

By what means can we attain Liberty in addition to Equity? Obviously by establishing a social organization whose function is to maintain Liberty. Such an organization would have to include all the citizenry as the Equity organization does. But could it function through the decisions of a majority? Obviously not, but only through an instrument which makes it possible for each individual to determine and use his own abilities in his own way...Men cannot be equal in their abilities – no two men’s abilities are alike. So the nature of this organization will be the polar opposite of that of the Political organ.

Instead, “Imagination and inspiration can flourish and become effective only through an Abilities Organ which would assure its free play and see to it that every individual has full opportunity to

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21. Ibid (emphasis in original).
develop his abilities throughout his life."23 ‘Ability’, in other words, is a conception of liberty as the flourishing of an individual within a group setting; it is not the demarcation of an arena where an individual is left to act without interference from anyone else.24 Life in the local group is the "free play of imagination and inspiration", meaning that it is entirely plausible for an individual to be dependent on someone else’s instruction and in this sense that individual would not be free. Besides this, the delineation of interference, in Magic of America, is specifically conceived of as supra-local and limited to the enforcement of equity. ‘Ability’ has no connotation of freedom from dependence or of freedom from interference, and should be read as a dissent from individualistic formulations of liberty that dominated liberal political theory.

Magic of America contrasts the normative prescriptive element of social contract theory—that capturing resources at the expense of others is fair if it leaves those without property better off than they would be in the state of nature—with the goal of universal employment. And it is in this context that we encounter a characterization of liberty as ‘ability’, or the flourishing of the individual in the context of a ‘local group’. We shall now look at Mahony’s re-scripting of the democratic ideal of fraternity into otherness as such.

Recall that Mahony’s second condition for universal employment was “ACCESS TO NATURE”. This implies that part of the challenge of universal employment is extracting natural resources without depleting them, to again use more recent jargon. At first this may seem like a narrow ecological concern. In fact, Mahony raises the problem in terms of human relations by asking, “What form of SOCIAL ORGANIZATION most facilitates the maximum employment

23. Ibid (emphasis in original).
24. The distinction between two conceptions of liberty, one as a form of self-flourishing and the other as the freedom from interference was first articulated in Isaiah Berlin, Two Concepts of Liberty, an inaugural lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 31 October 1958 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958). Quentin Skinner, “A Third Concept of Liberty,” Proceedings of the British Academy 117 (2002): 237–268 responds to Berlin by showing that, historically, there were two rival and incommensurable theories of negative liberty, only one of which concerned the absence of interference.
without menace to future humanity, menace such as the devastation of the wilds of the United States during the past.” 25 Another way of phrasing Mahony’s rhetorical question is what kind of social relations are adequate to recognizing the other, not just the prosaically dissimilar, but the “wholly other”. 26 Otherness is signified in two ways in the sentence I just quoted: as a future that necessarily cannot be known, and as the practice of judging the past by criteria that could not have been known by those who lived in the past. Mahony’s response to her own rhetorical question is that only human relations in the economic realm are adequate to recognizing the wholly other because “with no intrusion of morals, Altruism has established itself for in [the economic] system each one produces for someone else. Humanity becomes an inter-dependent Unity.” 27

It seems absurd to claim that economic relations should be rooted in altruism, more so when the ‘economic system’ is characterized, as it is in Magic of America, as the “DIVISION OF LABOR which gives the maximum and cheapest production.” 28 After all, have we not become accustomed to thinking that the virtuousness of capitalism is that it converts private vice into public virtue, self-interest into public good? The absurdity seems to be further compounded by the claim that altruism in the ‘economic system’ is not anchored in any socially enforced moral code. Since Magic of America does not develop this idea beyond this fragment, it is necessary for me to analyze this formulation and show why it may not be absurd to insist on a conceptual link between altruism and the ‘economic system’ by way of a lineage of the term ‘altruism’.

The term ‘altruism’ is of relatively recent vintage, its introduction attributed to mid-19th century tracts by Auguste Comte. Comte contrasted altruisme with egoisme, drawing on the Old

26. The phrase “wholly other” is inherited from Jacques Derrida’s reading of Carl Schmitt’s argument that the friend-enemy distinction is the condition of all politics. See Jacques Derrida, Politics of Friendship, trans. George Collins (London; New York: Verso, 1997).
28. Ibid (emphasis in original).
French root of autrui, meaning ‘of or to others’, to signify a doctrine by which a person might act out of regard for others. Herbert Spencer, who is widely credited with the diffusion of the term into English and who is quite possibly the author from whom Mahony first learned of altruism, insisted that egoism would always be logically prior to altruism (Spencer’s precise phrasing was that egoism enjoyed “permanent supremacy” over altruism).\(^{29}\) Spencer’s point, primarily, is that if a person acted not out of self-preservation but in a way that resulted in his death, and that if such a principle were universalized, then no one would survive and there would be, consequently, be no one left to care for. Egoism, in Spencer, is not only a necessary condition for caring for others, as a parent might for a child, but a moral imperative whose universal validity is questioned at the peril of human survival itself. Yet, it is the desire for species-survival that makes egoism, according to Spencer, “secondarily” dependent upon altruism; without an altruism that is logically dependent on egoism it is not possible to explain “the acts by which offspring are preserved and the species maintained.”\(^{30}\) In either case, all actions are imagined to arise out of a self-standing disposition that is more or less innate in all humans, and that the satisfaction of these dispositions is more or less socially sanctioned—a point that Spencer makes unambiguously when he states that any altruistic actions that might be deemed as intrinsically just or as promoting justice must depend on “egoistic satisfactions”.\(^{31}\)

Spencer is operating entirely within the moral tradition of David Hume, which holds that human disposition is the site for all normativity, and that the social utility of moral principles,

\(^{29}\) Herbert Spencer, *Data of Ethics* (New York: Hurst, 1879): 216. Both Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin make repeated references to having read Spencer as teenagers. Though they are never quite specific about which Spencer texts they read, it is noteworthy that they wish to register not just their familiarity with Spencer but also that they distance themselves from his work by emphasizing that Spencer was only a passing and youthful preoccupation. See for example, Mahony, “Marion Mahony and Echo Simmons,” MoA, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_4_171.html (accessed December 14, 2012); and Walter Burley Griffin, “Architecture in 50 Years,” in *The Writings of Walter Burley Griffin* ed. Dustin Griffin (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 395.

\(^{30}\) Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, 232.

\(^{31}\) Ibid, 240.
like justice, flow from sentiments of “approbation” and “disapprobation” that humans feel. It is this tradition that Mahony repudiates when she argues that equity is an example of a “moral standard” (a phrase repeated throughout Magic of America) that must be enforced. In Mahony, the normativity of a “moral standard” exists in the relations between humans rather than in something called human nature. In fact, Mahony insisted on normativity residing in a range of relations, not just between humans but also between humans and the ambient world around them. The simplest way to describe her notion of ethics would be to say that an ethical stance was an exemplary response to meaning that already exists in our relations in the world. So when Mahony writes of altruism having been established with no “intrusion of morals”, in part, she is rejecting the very idea that morality is based on sentiments of “approbation” and “disapprobation”, as well as the more specific idea that some combination of these feelings should lead to altruism being logically dependent on egoism.

Thus far I have shown that Spencer’s view of altruism as a self-driven constraint upon selfish actions is no morality that Mahony would recognize as such. Let us now turn to Mahony’s description of the ‘economic system’. When describing the ‘economic system’, Mahony is careful not to suggest that it is outside of time, noting instead that the division of labor is a historically specific development and the “only up to date element” in society. Mahony’s attention to the contingency of the division of labor embeds the ‘economic system’ within chronology, meaning the logic that time is experienced as a sequence of moments in which every moment called ‘now’ passes as soon as it is constituted. In an immediate sense this suggests that it is easier to reconstruct the history of the ‘economic system’ than it is to imagine what might replace it. To live within the ‘economic system’ is to live for others (vivre pour autrui

being Comte’s phrase), not just because we produce for someone else but because we acknowledge
our existence within a structure of time that includes a future that we can never fully predict—a
future that is only recognizable as other.

Altruism without the intrusion of morals in the economic realm is, thus, not only
etymologically ‘to and for others’, but is radically other in that the rootedness of ‘economic
system’ provides a structure within which the chronology of life itself can be recognized. If my
reading of Mahony’s usage of altruism is correct, then her assertion that ‘Humanity becomes an
inter-dependent Unity’ through economic-relations ought to be understood as a transformation of
the standard definition of fraternity. Consider that if economic relations are the only possible
form of responsibility to the other, then it cannot follow that by humanity Mahony means some
abstract notion of that which is essentially human. Quite the opposite. Fraternity is not based on
claims that ‘we must be brothers’, but on the condition that ‘we must be different’. Mahony calls
this form of fraternity ‘Mutuality’, an awkward term that does little more than telegraphically
communicate the statement, “I sell to you because it is to my advantage. You buy because it your
advantage to have it. The advantage is MUTUAL.”34 The reciprocity suggested by this passage
creates the unnecessary and misleading sense that Mahony’s primary point was that the
economic realm is associative.35 Read rhetorically, however, the same passage can convey the

link/moa_2_240.html (emphasis in original; accessed October 25, 2012).
35. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, especially in his 1865 text De la capacité politique des classes ouvrières, used the term
‘la mutualité’ to describe cooperative economic association based on exchange. Mahony never cited Proudhon or
his anarcho-syndicalist interpreters as a point of reference for her usage of ‘Mutuality’. However, Magic of America
does distinguish the Threefold Commonwealth from the anarcho-syndicalist’s rejection of the state in favor of
federative economic groups in the following remark: “Community functions which became so broad in their nature
in Castlecrag were already begun in Pholiota [Mahony’s and Griffin’s home outside Melbourne in the early 1920s].
Every Sunday became meeting day for a group who individually had concluded decisions must be made as to a
proper basis for human communities. That meant we were radicals all, weren’t satisfied unless we got to the roots.
So wild times were had but in the end even the extreme anarchists agreed that a community must take upon itself the
task of maintaining Equity and only that. Only in Castlecrag in the later years did we learn that communities require
two other organizations, each limited in its functions, one for Mutuality and one for Liberty, which naturally would
radical otherness that I have been stressing throughout my reading of Mahony’s notion of altruism. Specifically, the seller is portrayed as selling out of advantage to herself. But the buyer is not said to buying for the same reason. Here the passage invokes the difference between ‘self’ and ‘same’, ‘auto’ and ‘homo’. The careful reader will also notice that no specific reason is attributed to the buyer; the buyer may buy to possess or consume—those being two of the meanings of ‘to have’.

It says a lot about the ambition of Mahony’s Threefold Commonwealth that the chief illustration for a new formulation of liberty and fraternity, as fully compatible with each other and with equality, is a program for universal employment. The legal and financial challenges of implementing an inalienable right to employment are often cited as evidence of the tension between liberty and equality within social democracies, and this was a significant part of the anxiety surrounding Roosevelt’s New Deal, which I had earlier called the immediate context of Mahony’s and Griffin’s early observations on the ideals of democracy. The sections on universal employment in Magic of America were written during the Second World War with a sense of optimism for the emergence of distinct realms in which equity could be enforced, ability pursued, and mutuality affirmed. Each of these realms consisted of what Marion Mahony called the “total citizenry”, but their precise organizational structure and hierarchy differed. Thus, the citizenry organized into units of nation-states would, through universal franchise, elect political representatives who would enforce equity by majority rule.

At the same time, the citizenry of several nations would be arranged into “inter-organized” units or local groups in which ability would be pursued. These would not be voting

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societies in two senses. First, membership in local groups was hierarchical. There would be no institution like universal suffrage that would create an equivalence between voters, and that would confer the possibility of removing an elected representative from office. Second, local groups were not responsible for enforcing any standards, and therefore did not require the legitimacy of being organized through an electoral process. Instead, leaders in local groups were meant to lead exemplary lives and thus offer examples that others could follow.

Finally, the total citizenry was already implicated in the affirmation of mutuality by the fact that everyone participated in the economy as a producer and a consumer. Noting that the nation is a prominent example of how a variety of differences can serve as the condition of mutual relations, Mahony suggests that the best possibility would be for all economic relations to be contained within a single borderless world (her phrase is, “where things are made and sold within one and the same boundary”). But this did not mean that decisions in the “World Economic Organ” would be made through an electoral process. Instead, representatives from every variety of economic firm would create an international body that would draw on a diversity of experience to ensure the functioning of an equitably inter-dependent “world economy”, including the existence of a single, international currency.

Mahony invoked the imagery of a circle to depict how these various realms were situated with respect to one another, insisting that each realm was distinct while also part of a unit in the way that the center, radius and circumference were distinct but necessary properties of a circle. The diagrammatic quality of Mahony’s Threefold Commonwealth can be glimpsed in Figure 2.1 where the three realms are shown as concentric circles, the radius of each hinting at the relative

36. Ibid.
37. Mahony makes this particular illusion twice in Magic of America, in “Political and Administrative Problem” (http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_4_449.html) and in “Totalitarianism versus What” (http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_4_219.html)
scales of the three realms. It would seem from this drawing that the Threefold Commonwealth emerges through the co-existence of three different kinds of sociabilities, which are labeled “National”, “Beyond Boundaries”, and “National-Inter-National”. Furthermore, the figure of a circle, in appearing as a path that returns to where it began from, suggests that the template for all sociability is reciprocal recognition, meaning that the other is only recognizable in terms of the self. Yet, closer inspection of the text of Magic of America reveals that Mahony’s argument was against self-enclosure. We will first examine how this argument is elaborated through Magic of America’s reflections on the site of meaningfulness in the world and on the relationship between ethical and aesthetic judgment. We will also see how the figurative circle of the Threefold Commonwealth becomes “un-closed”, rather than enclosed, in Mahony’s chronological discussion of “world economy” and the reformation of the British Empire into the US-led United Nations.38

38. Leonard Lawlor is, as best I know, the first philosopher to use the term “un-closed” to describe Jacques Derrida’s consistent effort to open up the “sphericity” of thought as much as possible to every single other. See Lawlor, “Jacques Derrida”, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward N. Zalta, (originally published 2006; revised 2011), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/derrida/ (accessed December 10, 2012). Victor Li, “Elliptical Interruptions, Or Why Derrida Prefers Mondialisation to Globalization”, CR: The New Centennial Review 7, no. 2 (2007): 141-154 also notates the recurring gesture in Derrida to not be encircled by the presumed “autofinality” of concept-metaphors like ‘sovereignty’ and ‘globalization’. Li ends with an interruption of his own by asking if it is not the case that by waiting for “the event” “to arrive” the unpredictability of the future is itself made less unpredictable. Noting that we may not know in advance the specific details of the future, the structure of “the event”, as that which always escapes predictability and ontologization, might be rendered predictable and knowable by a certain deconstructive procedure.
“A certain monumental beauty but could only be a dead or dying thing”

Marion Mahony was careful not to limit her description of the Threefold Commonwealth to a concatenation of political, cultural and economic institutions. The text also contains descriptions of modes of perception that are necessary for the realms of the Threefold Commonwealth to come into existence. Thus, we find Mahony likening the realm in which equity is enforced to a policeman directing traffic—suggesting a centralized figure of authority capable of seeing all across a nation-state and thereby enabled to dispense justice.39 At no point does Magic of America suggest that enforcement of equity is a sufficient condition for the pursuit of ability and the affirmation of mutuality, even though it is a necessary condition. What is more, the form of highly centralized seeing that constitutes the enforcement of equity is itself spherically integrated with the pursuit of ability in such a way that it would be impossible to say that the enforcement of equity is a ‘sequential precondition’ to the pursuit of ability. Something of the inter-relation between equity and ability can be glimpsed in a passage in Magic of America that takes the form of a letter that that Marion Mahony wrote to her high school-bound niece:

I am glad you have had a chance to hear both your Uncle Jerome’s point of view and mine. There are always two points of view – one right. It is of vital importance that one should familiarize oneself with both and take upon himself the responsibility of deciding which is right.40

In other words, before a moral standard like equity can be enforced, and even before a person can know what is “right”, it is crucial that a person consider rival points of view. This is not an endorsement of relativism; Mahony is explicit that in any battle between opposing views only

39. See, for example, “Economics,” MoA, (http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_3_433.html) where Mahony writes, “Just as the traffic policeman does not have to work out the problems of motor car construction and sale, nor of trucks, nor does he have to equalize speed and power of the various types of transportation in order to maintain equity but has only to stand and see to it that all forms of transportation, whatever their power, vehicular or pedestrian, have equal opportunity to cross the streets, even if one of them be a cripple and so exceptionally slow. So with its task understood government could maintain equity without undertaking or managing business.” (emphasis added; accessed December 29, 2012).
one is right. But Mahony is asking that when we do make an ethical choice, we do not demand that everyone make the same choice even if we think of this choice to be right. The politics of a moral standard like equity, thus, flow from examples of ethical conduct that people decide to follow.

Bear in mind that Mahony’s notion of ability is neither a freedom from interference nor freedom from dependence on others, but a form of self-flourishing that is made possible by lifelong learning from instructors and exemplars. Mahony’s letter to her high school-bound niece is suffused with just such rhetoric of self-flourishing. Besides advising her niece to “take manual training even if [she is] the only girl in the class”, Mahony commends the example of “the Quakers [who] have often proved, in the most surprising circumstances, [the] absolute efficiency” of the principle of “human brotherhood”. Actions that are seen as attractive and relevant are to be emulated even if, in the first instance, these actions were performed by a nominally narrow community (boys in the case of “manual training”, Quakers in the case of “human brotherhood”).

This raises the question: how would a person judge if an action were attractive and relevant? There are two aspects to Mahony’s response to this hypothetical question. First, when a person decides to follow an example, she is choosing between fundamentally opposing possibilities. Her decision is not the result of deeply interiorized or cloistered off contemplation. The worldliness of ethical judgment is partly conveyed by the metaphor of “inter-organized local groups”, the organizational form within which ability is pursued, and by the diagram of

41. There is an interesting historical parallel to this idea in M.K. Gandhi’s moral philosophy, at least as interpreted by Akeel Bilgrami. In “Gandhi, the Philosopher,” Economic and Political Weekly 38, no. 39 (Sep. 27 – Oct. 3, 2003): 4159-4165, Bilgrami examines how Gandhi severs the assumed connection between moral judgment and moral criticism and makes it possible for an act of conscience to have universal relevance without generating an imperative that everyone must follow. Gandhi’s moral politics, his economic philosophy and the integration of these two fields in his prescription for village communities was of considerable interest to Walter Burley Griffin, who wrote admiringly on these subjects in an article for the Lucknow-based Pioneer newspaper as well as in letters from Lucknow addressed to Marion Mahony and Ula Maddocks, all of which were reproduced in Magic of America. Griffin, like Gandhi, was also deeply familiar with a strand of Victorian utopianism that produced small settlements as the site for experiments in exemplary moral and economic conduct.

Threefold Commonwealth as three concentric circles (Fig. 2.1) where the “Abilities Organ” is noted as existing “Beyond Boundaries”. The suggestion is that the pursuit of ability entails a horizontal form of perceiving beyond what is immediate and parochial. The second aspect of deciding if an action were attractive and relevant has to do with the site of meaningfulness in the world. Rather than see meaning as exclusively inhering either in the subject or in the object, Mahony argues for a definition of meaning as existing in the relations between and amongst humans and non-human elements of the world. Accordingly, when we evaluate the desirability of something it is not from detached observation but in our responsiveness itself.

This last point is made repeatedly through the elaboration of ‘land planning’, a term used in several Griffin lectures and essays that were reproduced in Magic of America, including in the following description of the Mahony-Griffin designed community along Sydney’s Middle Harbour,

Castlecrag is an effort toward Land Planning in the fundamental sense of arranging for that use to which the terrain is most suitable. Land in this sense is accorded the respect due to a highly developed and perfected living organism not to be exterminated nor treated as dead material, nor as a mere section of the map.43

The objection, here, is to the conceptual outlook fostered by a detached or disenchanted view of the world. Thus, when land comes to be exclusively perceived as a cartographic abstraction—that is as an object to be studied and manipulated from a detached point of view—it allows for judgments of beauty that are made as if meaning were entirely of a subject’s own making as opposed to understanding human subjectivity as responsiveness to meaning. Mahony underscores this point about when she writes,

City planning, as founded by Mr. Griffin, was not a mechanical drafting board affair later to be imposed upon the earth destroying whatever got in the way of this abstraction which might

produce a certain monumental beauty but could only be a dead or dying thing doing its share, not toward keeping the Earth alive but toward killing it entirely.\(^{44}\)

Before proceeding to explicate Mahony’s critique of beauty as an immanent form of judgment that tends to be expressed in terms that transcend immanence itself, I need to clarify that references to ‘Land’ and ‘Earth’ in the passages quoted above do not amount to a concern to sustain or conserve natural resources. If anything, these passages, and there are many like it in Magic of America, excoriate the conception of nature as natural resources—that is as objects that must be viewed with detachment and manipulated as instruments to satisfy human needs. Likewise, the reverential attitude towards ‘Land’ and ‘Earth’ that can be discerned in these passages should not be interpreted as a call to escape modern life and retreat into nature. For Mahony and Griffin to view nature either as resource or as escape was to make the self the only point of reference for all meaning in the world.

We can find evidence that Mahony and Griffin rejected the *politics* of such self-enclosure in the following passage from Magic of America about how humans value plants:

> Without doubt all plants have their particular significance to men and the real objectiveness of their qualities has been borne out in the quite independent appeal of certain types of plants to certain classes of people...so important to the Briton is the functioning of his will that his appreciation of nature finds its greatest scope in gardens, even to ‘Garden’ cities.\(^{45}\)

It is not just subjective judgments masquerade as objective, but that this very structure of judgment is contingent on the subject belonging to a form of society in which class is explanatory variable. The quip about the Garden City movement is equally astute. Noting that the word ‘garden’ is produced as the name of a politics where self-representation is paramount, it expresses a deep suspicion of the instrumentalizing of nature to affirm an individualistic notion


of will (as opposed to a notion of will as responsiveness). As we will see in the chapter 3, Mahony and Griffin identify site planning as a key strategy to counter the self-standing conception of nature that undergirds the contemporary practice of British Town Planning and the Garden City Movement. For now, I only wish to register that Mahony and Griffin are against the politics of construing ‘nature’ to narrowly mean the objects of the ambient world, and instead want to develop an understanding of ‘nature’ as existing in the relations between and amongst humans as well as non-human elements of the ambient world.

With this clarification in place, let us return to the passage in which the Magic of America reader is informed that city planning was not a “mechanical drafting board affair” for Griffin. We might say that Mahony’s rhetoric that “a certain monumental beauty could only be a dead or dying thing”, is not just a contrast between a cold, stony urbanism and warm, fuzzy one. Read rhetorically, the contrast is between the time of life and the desire for timelessness. By ‘time of life’ I mean that life is embedded in a structure of time in which the present is always vanishing and the future is always yet to arrive. It is the basic condition of life that makes it possible to be responsible to the other (Mahony’s notion of ‘Mutuality’). By desiring timelessness, in the form of ‘a certain monumental beauty’, a person denies the alterity of the future and forecloses the possibility of responsibility to the other. For Mahony this self-enclosure is destructive, a point she makes when she writes that “killing [the Earth] entirely...seems to be the only way in which the Egos of our people can express themselves at the present time.”

It is important to be clear that Magic of America is not inveighing against desire or intentionality in some general way. The text quite openly describes seeking to preserve the earth as a positive desire, but is scrupulous in recognizing that outcomes always exceed intentions. In the next

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section we will encounter this scruple again in the figuration of “economic planning” for the
“world economy”, where a distinction is drawn between the essential mortality of life and the
desire for immortality.

But first, why beauty? Or, to draw out the question, how is it that the judgment of beauty
should come to be the cipher for a critique of a moral philosophy (that of Hume), which produces
human dispositions as the only site of normativity? The turn to the aesthetic as exemplary, as the
template for lifelong learning and therefore of exemplary conduct itself, is part of the
indispensable legacy of Schiller for Mahony.47 The historical and theoretical fallout of Schiller’s
reading of Kant’s Critique of Judgment has been scrutinized with philosophical rigor.48 Still, a
quick jog through this terrain will be helpful in articulating where Mahony departs from
Schiller’s aesthetic (as) programming.

For Kant, the aesthetic is neither of the sensuous nor of the moral, in that the beautiful is
neither the agreeable nor the morally good. The aesthetic is also not of the theoretical: it is not “a
logical universality [according to] concepts”, by which Kant means that although judgments of
taste are pronounced as if universally valid, they do not have the same explanatory power as

47. The historical connections between Marion Mahony and Friedrich Schiller (1788–1805) are vivid. For one, as
argued in Arindam Dutta, The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of its Global Reproducibility (New York:
Routledge, 2007), Kantian and post-Kantian aesthetic philosophy were crucial ideological forbearers of 19th century
design pedagogy. It should therefore come as no surprise that Mahony’s university education at MIT included
several semesters of coursework in history and anthropology, and that Magic of America includes several references
to Mahony having read Kant, Goethe, Schiller and Nietzsche. Mahony would have also encountered Kant, Fichte,
Goethe and Schiller, as named authors, in the philosophical writings of Rudolf Steiner. Steiner’s notion that the role
of education was to develop capacities for reason and feeling, an idea that Mahony embraced, bears the
unmistakable imprint of Schiller’s Aesthetic Education of Man.

48. Notably, Paul de Man, Aesthetic Ideology; edited with an introduction by Andrzej Warminsksi (Minneapolis:
University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Introduction,” in An Aesthetic Education in the
Era of Globalization (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Peter Bürger, Theory of the Avant-Garde;
trans. Michael Shaw; foreword by Jochen Schulte-Sasse (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984),
especially pp. 43 - 45; Jean-Marie Schaeffer, Art of the Modern Age: Philosophy of Art from Kant to Heidegger;

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concepts that allow us to theoretically cognize universally true principles \textit{a priori}.\footnote{Immanuel Kant, \textit{Critique of Judgment}; translated with an introduction by Werner S. Pluhar; foreword by Mary Gregor (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 144 (translation modified).} Yet, in Kant, the “gulf” between the sensible and the supersensible can only be bridged by aesthetic judgment.\footnote{Ibid, 14.} Kant calls the principle of judgment that bridges this gulf, between what can be cognized theoretically and what cannot but must be cognized theoretically, the “purposiveness of nature”, by which he means the ability to cognize the general from the particular. It is only by assuming a “systematic unity among merely empirical laws” that nature can be engaged as an object by our practical reason.\footnote{Ibid, 24.} Later in the \textit{Critique of Judgment} when describing “purposiveness” in general, Kant introduces the possibility of “purposiveness without purpose” by stating that there are some “objects, states of mind and acts” that can only be grasped and explained by assuming that they are based on some causality even though there is no presentation of purpose in these objects, mentalities and acts.\footnote{Third Critique, 65.} Beauty is an example of this possibility in that purposiveness is perceived in an object without the presentation of purpose. In Schiller, it is the apartness of the aesthetic from the theoretical and the moral that is taken to imply that it is only in beauty, because it is not tied to any immediate ends, that man can find the “consummation of his humanity”.\footnote{Schiller Letter XV}

It is against this notion of beauty, as man’s “consummation of his humanity”, that Magic of America raises three sort of objections: First, even as Mahony completely accepts the aesthetic as fundamental, even foundational, for learning by example, she refuses to characterize aesthetic judgment as human in an exclusivist or inherent way. For Mahony, and Griffin, detached observation is theoretically impossible. All observation, including of phenomena

50. Ibid, 14.
52. Third Critique, 65.
53. Schiller Letter XV
studied by the natural sciences, is value-laden. It was not lost on Mahony that Kant had inquired into the structure of reason that made it possible to theoretically cognize the sensible. In a response that Kant would probably have found too empiricist to explain the structure of reason itself, Mahony criticizes Kant for turning reason into a “god” and emphatically states that “The only basis for knowledge is perception, checkable perception.”

The second challenge Magic of America implicitly poses to Schiller is in refusing to see, as Schiller does, either reason or emotion as dominant ways of apprehending the world. Mahony therefore, finds it utterly unnecessary for to see beauty as a way of reconciling the antagonism between intuition and speculation, emotion and reason.

Finally, Magic of America challenges the idea that there need be something essentially human about humanity. In Schiller, the essence of what it is to be human is hemispherically divided into baser and more refined elements by the emergence of empirical knowledge, and that instead of developing the “harmony of his being, and instead of putting the stamp of humanity upon his own nature, [man] becomes nothing more than an imprint of his occupation or specialized knowledge.” Notoriously, Schiller described the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution as one of the more recent and pernicious effects of the division of labor. By contrast in Mahony, the division of labor is understood as a necessary condition for recognizing and responding to the other. It is for this reason that Mahony characterizes the condition of humanity as “inter-dependence” rather than as a union of divided halves, which is what Schiller’s Latinate “consummation” (Konsummation) implies.

56. “Among the lower and more numerous classes we are confronted with crude, lawless instincts, unleashed with the loosening of the bonds of civil order, and hastening with ungovernable fury to their animal satisfactions... The cultivated classes, on the other hand, offer the even more repugnant spectacle of lethargy, and of a depravation of character which offends the more because culture itself is its source” (Aesthetic Education, 25 – 26).
Another way of stating the difference between Mahony and Schiller is to say that the aesthetic in Mahony is the site for perceiving the meaningfulness of the world. There can be no conception of freedom or morality, which she prefers to call ability and moral standard, unless it was the case that all our actions were responses to norms that we perceived. In Schiller, governance—meaning both self-governance as well as the governance of the populace—is damaged by the antagonism between the mental faculties of intuition and speculation. The aesthetic is only domain in which a balancing between antagonistic faculties and drives is possible, though there will always be an oscillation between different mentalities. Schiller’s philosophy of history is Biblical in that history is set into motion by the acquisition of a certain kind of knowledge, which has the effect of permanently bifurcating human thought. We can never re-enter Eden, but once we understand our ‘fall from grace’ we can program society to be a lot nicer. By contrast, Magic of America does not contain any rhetoric of an atemporal paradise. Even when it describes equity as a foundational principle of US constitutionalism, it posits this as the result of tense internal political struggle that followed a war of independence. The suggestion is that there is always something before a moment of birth.
"World economy is already here."

In the preceding sections we have seen how Marion Mahony presents small, inter-connected local groups as the organizational setting for learning from exemplars and for forming the habits of judgment that are necessary for her conception of democracy as responsibility to the other. Moreover, we have found that Magic of America warns that the reverential attitude towards ‘Land’ and ‘Earth’ that is constitutive of the physical environment in these small communities should not serve as an alibi for self-enclosure. It is also noteworthy that Magic of America does not recommend that economic activity be confined to these small communities, which is often the implication of a mutualist economic regime. On the contrary, the organizational setting for fraternal/economic relations that Mahony recommends is a “World Economic Organ”. At the outset it would appear that Mahony viewed an international economic organization as the only forum capable of containing international conflict. She repeatedly insisted that the ideal of world government was an undesirable one from the standpoint of building a lasting peace, and urged its advocates to focus on forming an economic union rather than as political federation.57 But these pacifist goals only partially account why Mahony argued that all economic activity should be subsumed under a World Economic Organ. For Mahony, “World economy [was] already here”.

57. Responding favorably to the journalist and politician Frank Knox’s suggestion in a November 1939 University of Chicago Round Table radio discussion that “the eventual guarantee of peace...[lies] in three major units of world organization” each of which would be based on a customs union rather political unification, Marion Mahony described “The concept of a United States of Europe or of the world [as] fantastic since different groups of people do not have the same moral standards...Though we must have different political units, at least until the peoples of the world are better acquainted with each other than they are at present, when it comes to the economic organization we can, without confusion, have different units as was suggested - Europe, the Orient, the Americas - or a world Economic Organization” (Knox, Laves and Spencer, “After the Next Armistice—What?” University of Chicago Round Table 87, November 12, 1939; Mahony, “FROM A NATIONAL TO A WORLD ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION, AND PEACE,” MoA, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_3_417.html; accessed December 30, 2012). Another example of Mahony cautioning against pinning pacifist hopes on international political unification can be found in her reply to the Campaign for World Government’s 1942 invitation to talk to its members on her experience working in India: “I wish you’d call your work - Campaign for World Organization instead of World Government. Perhaps you would consider my giving your group a talk on World Organization someday.” (Marion Mahony Griffin to William Bross Lloyd, Jr., 22 October 1942, Campaign for World Government, Records of the Chicago Office, Box 13, MssCol 461, New York Public Library).
by which she meant that the accumulation of capital was necessarily international even when political institutions created an economic rigidities (like customs barriers) that exacerbated trade and military rivalries. The task of the World Economic Organ, therefore, was to draw on the experience of imperialism and international conflict in order to chart the course towards a less uneven world economy.

To develop this reading it is necessary to expand the analysis already presented on the structure of time in Mahony’s argument by contrasting Mahony’s formulation of the Threefold Commonwealth with the construct by the same name found in the authorized translation of Rudolf Steiner. From the vantage of this distinction it will be possible to grasp how Mahony links her conception of the future as always deferred to an idea of the essential mortality of life.

In the articulation of equity-ability-mutuality, we encounter Mahony’s appropriation of the French Revolution’s slogan of liberty, equality, fraternity, as well as a commitment to seeing these ideals as synchronous and fully compatible, rather than temporized and incompatible. There is no equivalent gesture in Rudolf Steiner to re-name the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, and Steiner does not use the figure of the circle to diagrammatically explain threefolding, or, to be more faithful to the German, tri-articulation. However, there are instructive structural and tonal differences between Steiner and Mahony that help elucidate the importance of Mahony’s implicitly anti-historicist approach to re-articulating the ideals of the French Revolution.

59. Marion Mahony never claimed to have read Die Kernpunkte der sozialen Frage in the German, and probably only knew its authorized English translation. By contrast, in “THE WEAVING OF FAIRY AND SPIDER,” Mahony reports that she translated a Steiner lecture on prayer from German (http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_4_261.html).
In terms of the structure of argument, Steiner does not begin from an intellectual history of the tension between liberty and equality. This is not to say that Steiner does not notate the historiography of this tension, just that it does not provide anything like a foundation in his argument. In Steiner, the articulation of the French Revolution ideals and the commentary on their incompatibility belong to two historically distinct moments:

At the end of the eighteenth century, under very different circumstances from those in which we are living to-day, there went up a cry from the hidden depths of human nature for a reformation of human social relations... in the course of the nineteenth century there were keen thinkers who were at pains to point out the impossibility of realizing the three ideals of brotherhood, equality and freedom in any homogenous and uniform order of society.60

In Magic of America, historicism is the principal point of departure, meaning that the text produces historicist studies as its starting point, and that Magic of America sets itself apart from such studies. Remember that the opening lines of the “Liberty and Equity” essay in Magic of America distance the text from studies that have sought to excavate the intellectual origins of the French Revolution, or try to historicize the conflict between the Revolution’s two most grandly articulated ideals (liberty and equality).

It would be incorrect, however, to suggest that temporality is absent from Magic of America. It would be more correct to say that chronology, for Mahony, is the only way to grasp that we can never be fully present, and that to live, is to live for others. The distinction between the historicist depiction of the social found in Steiner and this more abstract sense of chronology in Magic of America can be caught in the tonal differences in the two texts. Steiner’s account of the First World War is full of recrimination, and the text is palpably tinged with bitterness that

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Germany was not successfully re-made as a result of the war. Tri-articulation is presented as the only possible salvation from the destroyed hopes of the German Empire. It is only through the building up of three conjoined limbs, the reader is informed, that brotherhood, equality and freedom (Brüderlichkeit, Gleichheit, Freiheit) can emerge.

By contrast, Magic of America, without accusation or any apportionment of blame and without seeking to understand international politics through the lens of folk identities, confronts the events collectively referred to as the First World War from the colonized world where conscription, international debt and the drain of gold were integral to the imperial war effort. For example, an essay called “The Cause of Confusion in Europe Now” focuses on the political consequences of the draconian effort to introduce conscription in Australia during the First World War. Weaving together two incidents—first, the machinations to prop up the Australian federal government after it lost a referendum to introduce conscription, and, second, the Royal Commission inquiring into the conduct of the Home Ministry during the planning and initial construction of the Griffin-designed Australian Federal Capital City of Canberra—this essay contends that bureaucratic control of Australia by London suppressed popular sentiment and impeded the decentralization needed to make democracy vivid. The essay ends by citing a third incident, probably from 1920, when London secretly instructed New Zealand to send a contingent of soldiers to quash striking Indian laborers in Fiji.

61. See especially Steiner’s account of the origins of the militarism of the German Empire, its relation to the Empire’s social welfare programs, and to the strategic calculations of the “English-speaking regions” in Threefold Commonwealth, pp. 195–205. For a précis of Steiner’s wartime lectures see Peter Staudenmaier, “Rudolf Steiner’s Threefold Commonwealth and Alternative Economic Thought”, http://www.social-ecology.org/2009/01/rudolf-steiner%E2%80%99s-threefold-commonwealth-and-alternative-economic-thought/ (accessed December 18, 2012). The larger canvas of movements that claimed that the First World War contained opportunities to re-make the social can be reconstructed from Bruno Taut’s writing and work between 1914 and 1919. See Iain Boyd Whyte, Bruno Taut and the Architecture of Activism (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982) especially pp. 44 – 51.
This format of verifying characterizing features of imperialism by stitching together dislocated events with the cord of a personal anecdote is repeated in another Magic of America essay, “Glimpsing Imperialism During the 1st World War.” Here, the threads woven together are of international finance capital, habits of personal economy, and the plight of ordinary Australians during the Boer War in Southern Africa:

We were there. Gold was common currency, was in everyone’s pockets. Suddenly nobody was carrying gold, only paper. The gold had all been sent to England to buy Argentine wheat, etc. Result, in Australia there is a technically named ‘depression,’ which lasted for years.

This was a characteristic use of a colony (and a dominion is no more than that), adopting the policy of forcing her to limit her enterprise to primary products, then when convenient refuse her shipping to carry wheat and trick her through the banks (London controlled) into supplying the gold to buy the wheat of her greatest rival. The Boer War had similarly been financed by stripping Australia of the gold of her early discoveries, free loans to everybody — on short terms — then suddenly foreclosing. The gold had gone to England. 64

This is a special form of witnessing. The force of abstraction that is international finance capital is witnessed as a sudden disappearance. The geo-strategic logic of international politics, with its vocabulary of ‘rivalries’, is rendered meaningless by the geo-financial logic of international capital. The observation that paper replaced gold in “everyone’s pockets” notates that it is the significance of the prefix ‘geo’ that has undergone the most profound and wrenching change. By ‘geo-strategic’ I mean the carving up of the earth into alliances and rivalries. ‘Geo-financial’, on the other hand, refers to the immateriality of gold as a metal in the pricing of money. The prefix ‘geo’ in ‘geo-strategic’ conveys the sense of the earth inscribed into polarities, where possession of territory (terra) is a literal objective. The ‘geo’ of ‘geo-financial’ is much more ironic. Here, money has a referential relationship to a commodity, such as gold, yet the price of money is not entirely determined by the material or earthly essence of gold but by the coercive and expansive reach of metropolitan banking institutions. Why do I call Mahony’s pithy analysis of the links

between international conflict, imperialism and finance capital a "special form of witnessing", and not just witnessing in the colloquial sense of personal presence? Witnessing, such as it is enacted in the passage I quoted above, insists, by way of personal anecdote, that the violence of an event be recognized within a continuum that extends beyond the temporal and geographic boundaries of the startling event.

This extended analysis of the differences between Steiner and Mahony allows to distinguish chronology in Magic of America from historicism. In place of the immutability of culturalist interpretations of the past and in place of the air of inevitability in the telling of such interpretations (two characteristics of historicism that permeate Steiner's text), we find in Magic of America that chronology, the very condition of being open to other, rips the seam of official history and insists that the interpretation of an event remain open to experiences that might seem discontinuous. The distinction between chronology and historicism is not just a matter of methodological nicety. It is a value-laden notion of futurity. Instead of conceiving of time as having a finite origin and a pre-disclosed end, Magic of America consistently holds that whereas the past may be interpretable, the future is unknowable. The constant deferral of the future is emphasized by the spherical and synchronous, as opposed to sequential, integration of a variety of cognitive arrangements that constitute the Threefold Commonwealth, and, in a tenacious instance of auto-critique, the form of the future is shown to be ambiguous rather than (dis)closed.

65. Joan W. Scott, "'Experience',' in Feminists Theorize the Political eds. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, (New York: Routledge, 1992) remains a formidable critique of the category of "experience", noting how history writing that seeks to "render historical what has hitherto been hidden from history" might rely on a foundationalist conception of experience (23). Scott's call is for disciplinary history writing to "grant to 'the literary' an integral, even irreducible, status of its own" so as to "open new possibilities for analyzing discursive productions of social and political reality as complex, contradictory processes" (34). Although Marion Mahony was neither committed to disciplinary history writing nor to interdisciplinarity as such, I am deliberately calling the interruptions she posits 'experiences' because they are, to use Scott's terms, "at once always already an interpretation and [are] in need of interpretation" (37, emphasis in original).
Likewise, Magic of America indicates that there is always something still to come even with the formation of a “World Economic Organ”, and it is to this aspect of Mahony’s argument that I now turn. In fact let me return. That is let me confront again the figuration of the Threefold Commonwealth as concentric circles and, with it, the metaphor of ‘turning’ itself. At the close of the first section of this chapter, I reported that Mahony invoked the circle as an analogy, stating that the realms in which equity was enforced, ability pursued and mutuality affirmed were as distinct yet inter-related as the center, radius and circumference of circle. I even reported that the diagram accompanying this analogy (Fig. 2.1) suggests scalar relationships between the realms of the Threefold Commonwealth. But this interpretation might be misleading. It requires that all three rings of the concentric circle share a single center. Do they?

Note that the “Economic Organ”—the name given to the outermost ring in the diagram—is to be formed by turning empire into a “World Organization”. The number of statements to this effect in Magic of America are too numerous even to list. A single example will have to suffice. Writing during the Second World War, Mahony recalled that she

had not been in Australia long before the burden of my song became – ‘You will find your problems solved when you have transformed the British Empire into a Federation. You can’t expect England to do that. It is the task of the Dominions’...With this federation accomplished the menace of Britain would be gone – the British federation could carry out its natural function of breaking down boundaries and Germany and the rest of the world would no longer need to resort to violence in joining that world movement – a World Economic Organization.66

However, as Magic of America consistently notes, empire is not one thing. It is not just that US imperialism, for example, differs from British imperialism, but that empire is itself constituted by discontinuities. There is even one paragraph in Magic of America in which both these points are

made. It appears in the form of a letter from Walter Burley Griffin to Marion Mahony, in which he notes that

The American contributors to the Europeanizing of India would be interested to know how much their activities have redounded to the success of British Investors and commercial interests who seem to be acknowledged as the rightful monopolists. One thing that may eventually undermine the British control is a thing that is being depended on to sustain it—a corrupt and irresponsible police force with whom terrorism is an accepted necessity. To hear from a Minister of the Crown the recital of cases of abduction of young women of all grades by this service is enough to stimulate such disparaging comment on imperialism as above indulged in. 67

Imperialism in India is not just the British monopoly over production, and it is not just the colonial state’s monopoly over violence. Griffin’s letter urges a setting aside of intentionality so that the complicity between missionary impulse, multinational investment, language of governance, and policing tactic can be brought to light. 68

Abandoning a monolithic conception of imperialism precludes envisioning the turning of empire into a “World Organization” as a seamless transition with a single point of origin and a definitive end. Without a finite beginning and a finite end, the trajectory of this turning cannot encircle; it cannot claim either inevitability or totality. Rather, the turning, if that can even be the metaphor for the transformation of empire, invites predictions without guarantees:

Is there no one now among these men of deeds who will take the initiative in building up an Economic Organization? To do that one should not look for assistance from the political organ. It needs no new legislation nor need we bother our heads about old legislation. We cannot expect the political organ to diminish its own powers. But entirely outside of politics we can build up a complete Economic Organ which when established will stand on an equal footing with the political institution and, consisting as it must of the total citizenry, will quietly attend to its own affairs, that of buying and selling, leaving to the government only the task of maintaining Equity. Our efficiency would be enormously increased thereby and the further step of making it a world-wide organization would come of itself.

My prophesy would be that India would be the first to follow suit, India which has savvy enough to realize that Dominion status is no good. Mexico next I think and China and also Ireland who has refused dominion status. And the dominions would begin to wake up and Canada and South Africa would follow and even Australia and New Zealand. And then the more perfected totalitarian states would begin to lose their charm because there is a concomitant to this movement which would be an eye-opener to even the most perfected of these States, to even the cleverest of them.69

It is in the putative enclosing of the Threefold Commonwealth that the reader finds a suggestion of non-identity, of incompleteness. The economic and the political can never be identical, and, equally, they can never be pried apart. The political and the economic are incomplete with and without each other. It is the very hope of geo-completion ("World Organization") that generates doubt about the geometric precision and form of the Threefold Commonwealth.

In a second diagram of the Threefold Commonwealth (Fig. 2.2), this one probably prepared in 1945 just after the Second World War had ended, the three concentric rings have been replaced by a triangle inscribed inside a circle. The center of the circle is visible, but its relationship to the inscribed triangle is ambiguous. Also unclear is the inclusion of cartoonish geometric figures depicting a heart, a Möbius strip, and a five point star at each vertex of the triangle. Each of these icons also appears towards the top of the sheet and is associated with a particular politico-geographic entity. The heart with the United States, the Möbius strip with Asia, and the star with Europe. These place names and figures organize the sheet into three columns filled with words. It is not immediately clear that any of the words describe the place names, but almost half of the words listed are associated with the characteristics and functions of each of the organizational realms of the Threefold Commonwealth. For example, the phrases "Division of Labor" and "Control of Money" are listed in the column for Asia but under the subsection on economic organization. The sheer jumble of typed and handwritten letters and lines on

this sheet suggests both an inevitability and futility to presupposing the shape and trajectory of the future.

It might be that these words and figures do not stand for anything as much as they stand in for the turning of empire into a “World Organization”. Perhaps we might say that each of the words and icons in Figure 2.2 is an example of metalepsis, signifying nothing in itself but creating a passage from one place to another. Accordingly, it might be that the mobius strip does not represent some essence of Asia but that it might indicate the position of Asia as it exits the orbit of European imperialism and enters the orbit of the US-dominated United Nations.

What I am stressing is that, despite its nomenclature and depiction in Figure 2.1, a worldwide “Economic Organ” is not the final frontier. Realizing it does not bring an end to time. Its constitution can only defer the future. I have already suggested that the Political Organ, the realm in which Equity is enforced, is constituted by a highly centralized form of seeing embodied in the figure of a traffic policeman, whereas the Cultural Organ, the realm in which Ability is pursued, is constituted by horizontal and vertical acts of perception. The Economic Organ, the realm in which Mutuality is affirmed, is constituted by the particular temporal logic and interpretive habit called experience. I have pointed out in the first section that Mahony considered that the Economic Organ would always consist of the “total citizenry”, since every person is an economic agent either as a consumer or as producer, but that decision-making in the Economic Organ would not be subject to popular will or majority vote, resting instead with representatives chosen from every type of firm. For this reason, at first, it might seem that by experience all Mahony means is expertise—that the economy is best entrusted to those who have worked outside government. Though it is true that Magic of America praises New Deal agencies for drawing on private sector acumen, and that Marion Mahony’s brother, Gerald Mahony,
worked in a private firm before working for Franklin Roosevelt’s Board of Economic Warfare, the notion of expertise is too superficial a sense of experience for it to do all the work that Mahony wants from a worldwide Economic Organ. We should also note that Marion Mahony does not want political institutions to have any oversight or control over the economy. It would therefore be incorrect to describe her idea of a worldwide Economic Organ as if it were a clone of some New Deal agency. Likewise, the work history of someone elected within the political realm to enforce equity is irrelevant to Mahony’s vision of a worldwide and extra-political Economic Organ.

The temporal and interpretive dimensions of Mahony’s more profound sense of experience are elaborated through a contrast that Mahony invokes between the essential mortality of life and the desire for immortality. First, let us consider how Mahony defines the desire for immortality as it lurks in the bureaucracy:

so long as a bureaucracy exists at all it has the character of immortality. A permanent officialdom never dies. It acts as a unit and any temporary loss it proceeds to make up for. It does not need to accomplish its results in a life time nor in a generation nor during a particular period of office, nor in face of a roused group during a particular period of office, nor in face of a roused group of individuals who have been stung into activity, nor in a decade nor in a century. The episode of the revolt in the 18th century of the Americans has no look of permanence to the bureaucracy from which it broke away, and bit by bit they prepare the way to remove the influence threatening their organization. 70

The desire for immortality crowds out all other desires; once sought, immortality becomes the only driving force. The passage of time, marked constantly by the violence of death, is of little consequence to the entity that desires immortality. It might admit to something like a setback, but such an admission is only a thinly disguised re-assertion of the desire for immortality itself.

The essential mortality of life, on the other hand, is not articulated as a lack of immortality.

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Rather, it is articulated as the constancy of change. Every moment of life is understood to pass and can only be retained as memory that might be effaced by a future that is yet to arrive. Experience is the using of memory, and as such is an always risky enterprise that cannot lay claim to the future even as it is an interpretation of the past, whereas expertise that claims to shape future outcomes can be instrumentally useful to an entity that desires immortality.

The distinction between experience and expertise, between the essential mortality of life and the desire for immortality is repeatedly played out in Magic of America through an illustration of railroad development. Speculative development, or the construction of railroads in uninhabited areas, is praised as having been a catalyst for integrating the disparate regions and identities of the Americas into a single economic zone. Those who undertook such speculative development could not have expected to instrumentally control the outcome of their investments, but they well may have made ongoing or additional investments based on what they had previously learned. The speculative process, which Mahony holds may have led to the unification of a fragmented railroad system, was disrupted by the enactment of anti-trust legislation, which she describes as the “easy way, [or] the lazy way” of ensuring fairness.\footnote{Mahony, “Economics”, MoA, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_3_433.html (accessed December 12, 2012).} We need not quibble with the historical accuracy of Mahony’s account. What should interest us instead is that Mahony faults government not for inefficiencies and waste \textit{per se}, which she only considers to be the effects of governmental intervention, but for assuming that it could instrumentally control outcomes through its intervention whereas the speculative investor has no such expectation. According to Mahony, it is the desire for immortality that drives bureaucratic institutions to seek instrumental control over the future. It is this desire that drives governments to create and dismantle
monopolies, and when these interventions result in inefficiencies, governments argue that they have even greater cause to intervene and so levy additional taxes and so forth.

It is easy to see how this illustration fits with Mahony’s argument for a juridical conception of equity as the basis of political institutions. If political institutions are not organized such that they can maintain equitable labor relations and prevent the private ownership of land, two specific policy goals listed in the Threefold Commonwealth diagrams (Figs. 2.1 & 2.2), then governments, acting in the name of the populace, will intervene ‘lazily’ in the economic realm. Indeed, Mahony expresses considerable concern that social democracies will grow totalitarian and desire immortality as they intervene in the economic realm in an effort to provide safety nets and price guarantees to the worst off in a political economy based on private accumulation.

At the end of Second World War, and with the gradual decolonization of Asia, Mahony advocated for India and America to cooperate in the economic sphere and work towards “a planned economy not bureaucratically controlled”—a phrase found in the caption meant to accompany Figure 2.2. Was this a softening of Mahony’s criticism of social democratic political economy? And is it even possible to plan an economy without bureaucratic control? If we situate this phrase within the context of Mahony’s commentary on Soviet Russia, then we find that it is neither a dilution of her argument against social democracy nor a ludicrous contradiction. Specifically, Magic of America creates the impression that while Mahony and Griffin initially viewed the Bolshevik Revolution as an opportunity for Russians to dismantle the Czarist imperial bureaucracy, they later came around to seeing Soviet central planning as the most naked version of a bureaucracy’s desire for immortality. So when Mahony calls for India and America to cooperate in the economic realm to create “a planned economy not

bureaucratically controlled”, she is urging India not to replace the imperial civil service with a Soviet-style bureaucratic government and is expressing hope that fairness, in both India and America, is maintained through political processes rather than governmental intervention in economic relations. Her usage of ‘planned economy’ neither signifies state intervention in the context of a social democracy nor does it signify a centrally prepared set of output targets. It only refers to the imagination of a supra-national marketplace.

In an essay on totalitarianism that originated as a 1934 lecture to the Henry George Club of Sydney, Mahony begins to work out how the “control of money” could be the principal technology for imagining a supra-national marketplace:

We can have that which is not possible in a Totalitarian State, democracy and a planned community for the latter is a function not of the Political but of the Economic Organ and can be either national or international. With the control of money in this latter and so constituted that it will grow old like the commodities it measures, it will become a true medium of exchange and it will be possible to establish true prices, for money in this realm cannot be played with for it will not be based on abstract numbers as it is at present but expressed in terms of tangible values, as so many pounds of wheat, etc., which will take the curse out of it. 73

We have already encountered some of Mahony’s thinking on money as a form of wealth-holding in her essay “Glimpsing Imperialism During the 1st World War”. There it was, correctly, diagnosed that even though the British Pound was pegged to gold, the price of the pound was determined more by the institutional reach of the Bank of England than it was by the demand and supply of gold. Mahony’s prescription for the “control of money” goes much further. To make it impossible for money to become a form of wealth-holding, for it to exclusively remain a “true medium of exchange”, the political economy of restricted trade between nations, each with its own national currency, would have to be replaced by a global trade regime that would, in effect, use a single international currency. Here is how Mahony put it in a different essay from 1944:

There are only two possible kinds of economics. And there is only one way in which the conflict can be completely solved. In the one the manufacturer sells without his boundaries, in the other within. There is a whole world of difference. If one sells one’s products beyond the boundaries he has no interest in his employees except to get the articles made at the cheapest price so his whole effort is bent on keeping hours long and wages and standard of living as low as possible.

If a man wants to get rich and cannot sell except within the boundaries he (and the whole manufacturing group) must see to it that the employees, which for the most part constitute the purchasing element, must have an increasingly higher standard of living, must be able to purchase everything that is manufactured in the community and must have time enough to use them.

Does this require the isolation policy so fashionable today? By no means. You see our feelings lead us astray. We must have correct concepts. The great mistake of President Wilson was his advocacy of the self-determination policy. The need of today is for all sorts of people to find a way to live together. If Austria had solved that problem for the many peoples within her domain before the war she would have cured the world of its sickness and herself would not be in the pitiable plight she is in now.

It requires the diametric opposite of isolation, for to attain this latter form of economy the Economic Organization should be not national but world wide, should not be concerned with national boundaries but entirely independent of them. With the whole world united in its economic affairs in one organization, with the National government connected with it in no way except to maintain equity within its own boundaries, with an end put to the interfering of the governments in economic affairs, it will be possible for economic life to be carried on in accordance with its own nature, that of mutual advantage. National economy, the concept ‘for the benefit of the citizens’ cannot but result in war. With World Economy established the way will be open for the maximum differentiation not of races or peoples but of individuals which humanity is ripe for now.74

This might be all too hasty, and grammatically vexing, a statement to convey the complexity of a worldwide Economic Organ that is constituted experientially rather than through any form of privileged seeing into the future. By advocating the dismantling of boundaries that make workers into price-takers and that fuel nationalistic sentiment as well as the scramble for the captive reserves of labor and natural resources—all conditions that allow one currency, such as the British Pound, to coercively acquire and maintain the status as the leading currency of the world—Mahony firmly rejects the anti-colonial nationalist’s claim that sovereignty over the

national economy afforded the only path to reversing the under-development of imperialism. In other words, a text that overtly addresses isolationists in industrialized societies can also address someone like the Indian nationalist seeking to reverse the de-industrialization of colonialism. Attractive as this form of simultaneous address may seem, it raises an unsettling question about the definitions of equivalence and translation in Mahony’s theoretical argument.

Let us review the excerpt from Mahony’s totalitarianism essay and consider the following contradiction: how can money “become a true medium of exchange...expressed in terms of tangible values, as so many pounds of wheat, etc.” and “grow old like the commodities it measures”? The first proposition can only be true if the price of money is determined by the labor-value embodied in money as a commodity. Yet, the second proposition can only be true if the value of money strictly emerges through exchange. Note that Mahony does not posit that commodities die or become extinct, just that they “grow old”. This suggests that commodities change through the process of exchange. But can this be true of money? Is money valorized through (ex)change? If by “true medium of exchange” Mahony means something similar to the Marxist notion of money as a “universal equivalent” then it cannot be that money is socially constituted like every other commodity. It is true that by the Marxist script any commodity could acquire the form of a universal equivalent, but it is only through the gradual exclusion of one commodity from “the ranks of all other commodities” that it comes to acquire the social validity of money. At the very least this contradiction in Mahony’s text, where money is claimed to be both apart and alike all other commodities, suggests theoretical confusion over the concept of equivalence. I am more inclined to think that the contradiction indicates that, for
Mahony, it is necessary for everything to be deemed translatable in order for a certain view of the world to become visible.

To articulate more precisely what is unsettling about this definition of translation let us also review Mahony’s 1944 essay on the economics of a boundaryless world. In this essay, the depression of worker wages and the impoverishment of work conditions are only inferentially linked to the existence of distant reserves of laborers—to again borrow from a Marxist idiom. What I mean is that it is only by way of a thought experiment of a boundaryless world that Mahony’s argument can register the function of political barriers in making workers price-takers. But what are the stakes of constructing a thought experiment where it is a drive to acquire property that is being re-arranged? Does Mahony imagine that the worker, who apparently does nothing politically to acquire ever improving standards of living, to be possessed by the same drive to acquire property as the entrepreneur who is constantly seeking markets?

Mahony’s own partial response to these hypothetical questions is that political action is best restricted to living by a moral standard and not expressing any kind of clannish (she calls it folk) sentiment. Thus, in a boundaryless world, the borders of states would only delimit a national moral standard and not a national identity or a national marketplace. Workers would be free to migrate to a state where the moral standard enforced is closer to their own moral outlook. Since economic activity in a boundaryless world is not organized according to rigidities and restrictions imposed by political institutions, political migration ought not to be viewed as imposing an economic burden on a host country or as somehow disturbing the ‘equilibrium’ of demand and supply.78 The lynchpin of owing one’s allegiance to a moral standard, rather than a particular locality or nation, and of recognizing all humans as your own, no matter how remotely

78. There is nothing in Mahony’s description of the imagined boundaryless world that asserts that this is a political economy of full employment, just that there is a fullness of employment with the division of labor producing recognition for humanity as an inter-dependent unit.
located or different-seeming they may be, is Mahony’s notion of Ability as the constant flourishing of the self within the context of small inter-connected groups.\textsuperscript{79} The idea that moral action should be exemplary rather than coercive is emphasized in Mahony’s definition of decentralization as the disassociation of communitarian living and education from national politics and international economics. It is in this intricate delineation of the political that Mahony contends that the drive to acquire property is a propensity \textit{against} the tendency to nationalize education, culture and the economy.

There is more to Mahony’s argument than the seemingly innocent claim that like-minded individuals band together in small communities where the daily conduct of their lives quietly and artfully opposes the demonic appetites of bureaucracy. Yes, Mahony thinks of the drive to acquire property as an instrument against nationalization, but this is not an expression of preference for community-property over national-property. It is an expression against the desirability of owning capital at all. Here is how Mahony puts it in the same 1944 essay:

The results of a perfected Civil Service are showing themselves now in Europe. The alternative to such a system is a threefold organization which limits the use of power to the maintenance of equity and does not require an extensive officialdom.

This means that it would not be difficult for the business executives and the industrialists to adjust their minds to the advantage of having the use of capital, \textit{not the hoarding of it},... The only point in fighting for private ownership is to prevent State ownership which means dictatorship.\textsuperscript{80}

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\textsuperscript{79} “People’s allegiance will tend to take them to the terrestrial region where the moral standard as expressed in the Political Organ conforms with their own. No other definition of patriotism has a leg to stand on... The boundaries of neither the economic nor the cultural organization need to conform to the national boundaries...The next evolutionary step is to recognize humanity as your people, to become conscious of humanity as an entity and no longer be concerned with your well being or the well being of your particular district but only with the wholesome development of humanity which must, because of the nature of man as a distinct kingdom, be so constituted as to make possible the free development of the abilities of individuals, for each man constitutes a species, and must so function as to be able to adjust himself to the increasing diversity consequent.” (Mahony, “Economics,” MoA, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_3_426.html, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/link/moa_3_428.html).

We can find additional evidence that Mahony is not advocating a collectivist form of ownership, and indeed that she is not making an institutional recommendation at all, when we consider the following sentences from the totalitarianism essay that I have also been referring to:

The problem is how to transform the circulation of capital, not its distribution, so that it may not be something oppressive. The evils of capital derive not from capital per se, not from its ownership by private individuals as versus ownership by the community as a whole, or the State, but from its ownership as versus the right to use it. And we should grasp that capital, and so all the advantages that come from it, can be created only by the spiritual capacities.81

The implication is that capital cannot be reduced to the enumeration of material properties, and the ownership of capital—whether individualist or collectivist—always risks confining capital to just such an enumeration. Yet, every use of capital, with and without ownership, requires engaging with properties that are somehow both extrinsic to matter and external to the subject. Mahony’s primary vocabulary for grasping these properties is “the spiritual”. Even when Mahony recommends an institutional form for managing the transformation in the comprehension of capital she draws on an idiom of the spiritual: “World economy is already here. It needs but a crystal to be thrown into the vat to crystallize it into an instrument for lack of which the world is perishing now—a World Economic Organization.”82 However, it will not do to simply say that Mahony turned to the language of the spiritual, or an anti-materialist idiom, to give expression to certain aspects of capital. This in itself is not special; after all, Mahony had to find some language to make her argument. What is specific to the language of the spiritual is its structured ambiguity. Accordingly, what guarantees the constant circulation of capital, and the envisioning of “world economy” as such, is the relentless translation of properties that are extrinsic to matter as well as external to the subject. What is more, this ceaseless process of translation is possible because nothing in the cosmos is deemed to be sacred or immune to mutation.

Fig. 2.1: Marion Mahony, “The Technique of Sociology. Diagram”. From Magic of America Electronic Edition, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/facsim/moa_2_241_facsim.jpg
Fig. 2.2: Marion Mahony, “Diagram . Threefold Commonwealth .”, From Magic of America Electronic Edition, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/facsim/moa_4_194_facsim.jpg
The present world emergency brings into the clear that the United Nations can best function by taking as a first step co-operation between America and India for Europe is incapable of making decisions since she is still bound to physical concepts - the impulses of the body. She is willful, uncontrolled by feeling or thinking, highly intellectual but lacking in moral or economic fundamentals.

The soundest way to avoid another world war would be a swift co-operation between the extremes - the orient and the occident whose mutual advantage would not tend toward imperialism but toward true democracy, mutual advantage.

America is already established on a moral concept - equity - and India would be glad to co-operate in the economic realm with America working toward a planned economy not bureaucratically controlled.

Willful Europe, thoroughly materialistic and bureaucratically controlled will be slow in adjusting herself to a World Organization.
CHAPTER THREE
Designing Common Property at Castlecrag

The First Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference and Exhibition was held in Adelaide between October 17 and 24 in 1917, and it was in an address to this gathering that Walter Burley Griffin presented the still-raging First World War as the urgent pre-text for town planners to shape a new outlook on our relations in nature. Noting that the blind application of man’s “technical knowledge and mechanical powers” had produced “little or no ultimate or tangible good in time of peace, and only infinite harm in war”, Griffin argued that the role of the expert had to change:

Our duty was once said to be to direct the great sources of power in nature to the use and convenience of man, but it has since been pointed that it is now fully as much our function as planners, as engineers, to determine what not to do, what not to construct...that is to relieve [man] of the burdens of improper or superadaption of nature, that a civilization may be making worse even than the under-development of primitive and simple life.”

Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin had witnessed the eruption of hostilities while traveling through Europe exhibiting their work in 1914, and they encountered the imperial dimensions of the conflict upon returning to their Australian offices later that same year: the implementation of their plan for the Australian Federal Capital ground to a halt because of war-induced shortages; those who opposed militarism, like Mahony, were accused of being German sympathizers and were subjected to a sinister campaign of surveillance; and foreigners (including Mahony and Griffin) were required to register their presence in Australia. Most contentious of all was the issue of conscription. In referenda held in 1916 and 1917, Australian voters repeatedly rejected the Australian Federal Government’s effort to introduce compulsory

2. Surveillance files on peace activists, as well as registration forms completed under the War Precautions (Alien Registration) Regulations of 1916 can be found in branches of the National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA). For an example of how the Australian Commonwealth Investigation Service interpreted opposition to militarism as a pro-German stance, see NAA: A8911, 240. For intelligence gathered on Mahony during the First World War, see NAA: MP16/1, 1917/755. For Mahony’s alien registration form, see NAA: MT269/1, VIC/AMERICA/ GRIFFIN MARION. For Griffin’s alien registration form, see NAA: MT268/1, VIC/AMERICA/ GRIFFIN WALTER.
military service in order to deepen Australia’s commitment to fighting for the British Empire. Amongst those who successfully campaigned against conscription were Mahony’s and Griffin’s friend Adela Pankhurst (Emmaline Pankhurst’s daughter and a suffragette in her own right), and their patron Daniel Mannix (the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne).

Immediate as the upheaval of the War was for Mahony and Griffin, Griffin’s Adelaide talk in 1917 did not propose any sort of political solution to end the conflict. Instead, his lecture, titled “Planning for Economy”, explored how a “comprehensive sense of economy” necessarily entailed inhabiting multiple evaluative viewpoints, including that of nature itself. Fundamental to this phenomenology was a change in the cultural status of the expert, as indicated in the passage quoted above. Griffin did not advocate dismantling of all forms of expert knowledge as a prelude to abandoning industrial society, but his remarks point to a normative difference between two conceptions of expertise. In the older conception, we take for granted that all material, aesthetic, and moral value is of our own making, whereas in the more recent conception of expertise, we are open to the possibility of there being value in the world in excess of instrumental value. Griffin observed that the cumulative effect of the older conception of expertise—of centuries of looking upon the world as something to master and control, and, in particular, of looking at nature merely as a resource for our material gratification—had been the impoverishment of our moral lives. What made this all the worse was that we had cloaked our moral under-development with a veneer of civility.

We might ask: why did Griffin produce ‘economy’ as the primary site for reconstituting our relations in nature? An answer to this question can be found in Griffin’s cryptic appeal to fellow planners at the Adelaide conference to welcome the “present cry of economy”. This remark

4. Ibid.
was almost certainly a reference to the Efficiency Movement, and its ascendant call to rid the public sector as well as private enterprise of waste using managerial techniques championed by Frederick Taylor and others. Griffin took the sheer ubiquity of experts seeking to eliminate inefficiency across various sectors of industrial society as an opportunity to wrench 'economy' from its general understanding as mere "parsimony" and define it instead as the sensibility of comprehensiveness (with comprehensiveness itself understood as the experience of multiple viewpoints including the viewpoint of the other). It was at the limit of the Efficiency Movement, in the exhaustion of its logic, that Griffin saw the possibility for a new general understanding of economy to come to the fore. And for Griffin, the limit of the "present cry of economy" was heterogeneity—a point he registered by citing the Movement's failure to engage the gendered division of labor, as well as heterogeneous communities like cities. He conceded that the "economizing effort" had altered "industrial management, [and] shop practice", but questioned if such practices could be judged as having accomplished anything for "humanity" as long as they failed to address the working conditions of women within households. Griffin also doubted that the quantitative reasoning of the Efficiency Movement, focusing as it did on minimizing means while maximizing ends, could be applied to "systematizing such comprehensive undertakings as our communities, cities or countries."  

Griffin never put it this way, but it is as if he deemed the collectivities produced through the abstraction of capital to be too exclusionary to achieve the sort of transformation in our outlook on nature that he sought. His implicit argument might be paraphrased as follows: although "economizing effort" was inconceivable without an abstract measure for labor as a commodity (a

7. Ibid.
measure that Marx had termed “abstract labor”), the techniques of industrial management could not extinguish difference. Therefore, even within the sphere of capitalist production, while some workers were proletarianized, others would possibly always remain outside class-based solidarities.

Whereas Griffin expressed reservations about the transformative potential of industrial management techniques, he deferred judgment altogether on the transformative potential of the state. Acknowledging that the physical distance between dense industrial cities and sparse agrarian regions created unnecessary waste, Griffin posited that the root of this problem lay in “the current conceptions of political economy and the scope of the state; but these must be passed over, for the proper concern of this Conference is only in an intermediate physical stage of development; as a body we progress through object lessons.” In other words, the question of whether or not the state was capable of responding to the “present cry of economy” was not a concern that belonged to the First Town Planning and Housing Conference and Exhibition. The metaphor of property in Griffin’s sentence (“the proper concern”) is telling. It was for planners to propagate; to constantly produce object lessons that would only ever belong to the “intermediate physical stage of development”. If understood as such, each object lesson would yield an object lesson of its own. What is more, such propagation could be classified as “progress” without ever referencing any specific, pre-disclosed telos. Latent within this non-teleological notion of progress was the hope that these object lessons might gradually shift attitudes on conservation as well as the dominant conception of political economy.

It was in this context that Griffin introduced the goals of his own urban design practice: “Some object lessons of proper individual occupancy are available; but as to neighborhood, or village, or town co-operative preparation for common needs, they are awaiting the development of

8. Ibid, 159 – 160.

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a practical common sense of common responsibilities." Griffin then discussed how his work in the American Midwest had grappled with the task of creating just such an object lesson at the urban scale. Describing his approach to site planning in Grinnell, Iowa (Fig. 3.1) Griffin said,

a glance at the rolling character of the ground shows how the money-absorbing drainage problems arise out of a simple specimen of the usual automatic extension of the gridiron plan of a city; and a comparison of the alternatives also shows the simple means required to avoid all the difficulties, by conforming the features to the natural topography for proper grades without earthwork, producing sites everywhere high in respect to their frontages and outlooks, yet all in strict order, in a parklike, informal environment, and with routes accentuated with parks, but direct and without barren deserts of pavements or objectiveless treadmill inclined planes. There is, in addition, a neighborly system of inter-communication. 10

A few lines later Griffin described his scheme in Mason City, Iowa (Fig. 3.3) in institutional terms,

the few owners, by combining and agreeing upon a single scheme of development, under the landscape architect's control, were able to translate the difficulty [of situating a neighborhood across a ravine] into the supreme advantage of a uniquely beautiful park, available to all, and the highest values in the city for residential land because of the joint benefits. 11

The recurring and various invocations of the "common" in these passages is striking. "[C]ommon needs... common sense... common responsibilities... inter-communication... joint benefits"; all phrases that draw attention to moral-philosophical concerns of satisfaction, consensus, duty, dependence on others, and utility. It is in these passages that Griffin finally offered his audience in Adelaide a relatively detailed description of how planners could parlay the pervasive, but exclusivist, practice of parsimony into a sensibility of comprehensiveness: by designing common property. For it was in the architectural and institutional spaces of common property that ordinary people, in the most quotidian of circumstances, could experience the ineluctably social dimension of all judgments of material, aesthetic, and moral value. At stake was nothing less than the formation of a new kind of moral subject—one capable of looking upon nature as more than just a resource to be exploited or an amenity to be enjoyed.

10. Ibid, 162.
11. Ibid.
Part II of this dissertation examines experiments in the formation of this new moral subject that were purposefully situated within the physical and social environment of small, cosmopolitan neighborhoods. Chapter 4 historicizes the provisional quality of these neighborhood-based experiments in subject formation, revealing their indebtedness to strands of International Socialism that were disqualified as utopian at turn of the 20th century, while concomitantly uncovering their commitment to imagining non-nationalist alternatives to empire. The present chapter analyzes the architectural and institutional configuration of common property within Castlecrag, the first of three adjoining residential suburbs developed by Mahony and Griffin along Sydney’s Middle Harbour between 1920 and 1935 (Fig. 3.4).
Fig. 3.1: Walter Burley Griffin, Re-Subdivision of Janney’s Addition, Grinnell, Iowa for E.W. Clark, Jr., 1913 (National Library of Australia, vn3662595). This illustration, which was published in *Western Architect* 19 (August, 1913): 74, includes a thumbnail drawing of the original subdivision plan towards the lower left corner.

Fig. 3.2: C.R. Allen, Map of Janney’s Addition, Grinnell, Iowa. Engineering drawing of original subdivision, which Griffin reproduces as a detail in Fig. 3.2. Map published in *Grinnell Herald*, 8 January 1909, 4. Courtesy: http://kaiser355.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/janneyplat.jpg
Fig. 3.3: Marion Mahony, Rock Crest – Rock Glen site plan, Mason City, Iowa, 1912 (National Library of Australia, vn3886101).
Fig. 3.4.: Walter Burley Griffin, Plan of the Subdivision of the Castlecrag Estate, Parish of Willoughby, New South Wales, Australia, 1921
Courtesy: National Library of Australia
Financial Imaginaries

In the months following the First Australian Town Planning and Housing Conference and Exhibition, Mahony and Griffin began to actively search for a coastal site where they could build a residential suburb without destroying or privatizing the shoreline. His search would yield their most elaborate test of the possibilities for shaping a new outlook on our relations in nature within a common property regime. It entailed experiments in architectural and urban design, as well as a host of controversial financial and legal innovations.

On September 21, 1918, Griffin, acting through an intermediary, contracted to purchase 650 acres along Sydney's Middle Harbour (Figures 3.5 and 3.6) for the meager sum of 25,000 pounds. This vast area had been part of an even larger land holding assembled circa 1885 by the North Sydney Investment and Tramway Company for the landing of a suspension bridge across Sydney Harbour. In 1889, the Investment and Tramway Company issued debentures worth 300,000 pounds, and in 1893 defaulted on the interest payments owed to the debenture holders.

In 1900, the debenture holders, all of whom resided in London, formed a joint stock company with the sole purpose of liquidating the assets of the Investment and Tramway Company and recovering as much of their loan as possible.

Faced with the prospect of acquiring a large tract of waterfront land for a tenth of what it had been worth just twenty years earlier, Griffin approached wealthy Australian politicians he knew from his work as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction and asked for their help with financing the land acquisition and initial site development. Amongst his early backers were King O'Malley (who as Home Minister in 1913 had appointed Griffin Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction), Elliot Johnson (a former Speaker of Australia's Federal Government).
Parliament and an ardent supporter of the economic and political thinker Henry George), and Agar Wynne (a former Attorney General). Besides the financial opportunity of purchasing land in a distressed sale, these early backers were drawn to the project by Griffin’s proposal to retain the existing features of the coastline and ensure that every future resident of the suburb, as well as members of the general public, would have an undisturbed view of the sea. This was to be achieved through the layout of the suburb, the architectural design of dwellings within the suburb, and by vesting control of the suburb’s growth in a development company managed by Griffin. Named the Greater Sydney Development Association Limited (GSDA), the development company’s objectives were put forward in its prospectus to would-be shareholders:

the gradual development of...high class residential suburbs conserving the maximum of their natural beauty with adequate access to the water fronts for the public; the provision of swimming baths and boating and sailing facilities; the establishment of reserves for recreation purposes including riding, golf, cricket, tennis, bowls and other exercises; and the construction of buildings and all other improvements aesthetically in keeping with the surroundings so far as possible of the native rock, and subordinate to the natural features of the land.

To this end sales to private buyers will be safeguarded by the control of the Company in regard to all erections as well as uses and the Company proposed to assist in building.14

On November 20, 1920, GSDA was formally incorporated with an initial share capital of £30,000. O’Malley, Johnson, and Wynne were amongst its original shareholders as was Griffin’s brother-in-law and colleague Roy Lippincott. The company’s Memorandum and Articles of Association created two classes of shares with “the holder of an A share being entitled to ten votes...in respect of each A share held and the holder of a B share being entitled to one vote in respect of each B share held.”15 The total number of A shares issued could not exceed one-tenth the number of B-class shares issued, and only Griffin or his nominees could hold and exercise the voting rights of an A share. A-class shares were not transferrable, and in the event of Griffin’s

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death, all A shares would be re-classified as ordinary B-class shares and would no longer carry any additional voting rights.

These were extraordinary provisions. Not only were there no other examples in Australia of a real estate development company granting special voting rights to the sub-divider to ensure architectural control over the proposed development, but the practice of creating different classes of shares was itself of relatively recent vintage. The presumption that a shareholder’s economic interest was coterminous with her voting rights was first challenged in 1898 when the US-based International Silver Company authorized eleven million non-voting common shares alongside nine million preferred shares with voting rights (in 1902, the same company granted reduced voting rights to holders of common shares: one vote for every two common shares held, whereas the holders of preferred stock were entitled to one vote per share).¹⁶ Over the next twenty years more than 180 firms in the US issued non-voting stock, and in a notorious case from 1925, the investment bank Dillon, Read & Co. sold non-voting stock in automobile manufacturer Dodge Brothers worth nearly $130 million to public subscribers, while investing less than $2.25 million in order to keep 100% of the voting stock for itself.¹⁷ Dillon, Read & Co.’s behavior galvanized criticism against the creation of a special class of shares for management, and was the subject of a scathing attack by the economist William Ripley.¹⁸ After the New York Stock Exchange prohibited the listing of non-voting stock in 1926, some firms, notably the Ford Motor Company, issued stock with inferior voting rights rather than no voting rights at all, thus allowing the

promoters of family firms and other close-held businesses to raise equity capital from the investing public and still retain managerial control with only a small equity holding.

Although these events were widely reported at the time, Mahony and Griffin never made any overt reference to them, making it difficult to ascertain how they understood these developments. Nor, therefore, can we confidently claim any particular US firm’s capital structure as a model for GSDA. Sometime after 1925, in the midst of an acrimonious dispute between Griffin and a group of GSDA shareholders over the valid use and number of A shares issued, King O’Malley claimed that he was the one who suggested the creation of A shares as a mechanism for protecting the water frontages at Castlecrag.¹⁹ There is neither any extant evidence to buttress O’Malley’s claim, nor is there anything to conclusively refute it, again making it difficult to assign a specific source for GSDA’s innovative capital structure.

I would like to offer a different sort of explanation for Griffin’s reliance on a dual class stock structure to conserve the coastline for the sake of the other (meaning both future generations, as well as other creatures that found habitat along the coastline). It is an explanation that ironically places Griffin’s thinking within the tradition of utilitarian criticism of management holding a special class of stock (typically referred to as management stock). What I mean is that Griffin’s reasoning for using additional voting powers to ensure the protection of the land even in instances when the majority of shareholders wanted to pursue a different course of action might be indebted to the impulse to hold corporate insiders accountable to the multitude of ordinary shareholders—an impulse that would later inform Ripley’s indictment of Wall Street and the New York Stock Exchange’s prohibition of listing non-voting stock. The structural affinities between Griffin’s justification of the A shares and utilitarian criticism of self-serving practices by management are not hard to imagine: both arguments prioritize a conception of the common over the tyranny of

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¹⁹. Copy of undated and unsigned affidavit by King O’Malley, NLA MS 460/17.
majority opinion. In Griffin, the common is the place from which we can experience multiple viewpoints, including the perspective of the other. This he prized over the claims of collectivities. The critic of management stock, for her part, prized public trust in the financial system over the mere possession of a majority of votes. Important differences in the understanding of the common set Griffin apart from the critic of management stock; the latter probably lacked the sensitivity to the social dimensions of our evaluative judgments that I am claiming for Mahony and Griffin. Nonetheless, the affinity between the two arguments should not be ignored.

Perhaps the more compelling justification for placing Griffin’s reliance on a dual class stock structure to conserve the waterfront within the tradition of 20th century criticism of management stock can be found in a historical link that connects Mahony’s and Griffin’s urban design practice to that line of criticism. In 1914, an entrepreneur named P.B. Moss commissioned Mahony and Griffin to design a Garden City in rural Montana. An analysis of the physical layout of this city, and its relation to the Garden City concept originated in late 19th century England by Ebenezer Howard is offered later in this chapter. For now, I wish to focus on the Prospectus of the Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation, the legal and financial structure devised to implement Moss’s real estate venture. The Prospectus announced that the Corporation had a share capital of $10 million, which was divided into dividend-bearing Redeemable stock, as well as profit-sharing Treasury and Organization stock (here “Organization stock” was used to denote the class of shares more typically referred to as management stock). The Organization stock, issued solely to Moss as the promoter of the enterprise, was non-transferrable for a period of five years. This, the Prospectus reasoned, ensured that management would dedicate itself to the development and administration of the proposed Garden City. It would have the effect of curbing speculative behavior on the part of the promoter that would likely hurt the investment goals of those who held profit-sharing Treasury stock.

It should be mentioned that the Prospectus of the Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation did not mention voting rights at all. Still, in embargoing the transfer of Organization stock, Moss sought to communicate his commitment to aligning promoter's interests with the interests of the substantially larger body of ordinary shareholders—a commitment that only makes sense in light of burgeoning criticism of corrupt insider practices that were made possible by the allocation of a special class of shares to management.

We might legitimately ask what, if any, bearing the capital structure of the Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation had on Mahony and Griffin. Amongst Mahony's and Griffin's professional papers in the National Library of Australia is an annotated, draft of the Prospectus of the Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation. The annotations are unmistakably in Griffin's handwriting and mostly consist of the word "Revise" in the margins. The paragraphs that Griffin had marked up as requiring revision appear in different form in the final, published Prospectus from 1914, suggesting that Griffin played a role in shaping the document, including the sections on safeguarding investor interests (Fig. 3.7).

My purpose in relaying these details is partly to account for the apparent peculiarity of GSDA's dual class stock structure. But it is also to reconstruct an unexpected context for Mahony's and Griffin's non-utilitarian approach to conservation. It would seem that a utilitarian desire to protect and advance economic interests morphed into an ethos that prioritized duties towards others over the rights of an individual. As a sloppily typed sentence in the draft prospectus of the Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation put it, the

stringent provision as to Organization stock precludes the holders thereof from making a quick clean up by offering it below par for cash and thus getting out from under responsibility which must be conserved to insure success and safeguard the interest of all concerned.  

Fig. 3.5: Marion Mahony, Sydney Harbour · Location of Castlecrag. From Magic of America Electronic Edition, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/facsim/moa_3_172.html
Fig. 3.6: Marion Mahony, Castlecrag’s Three Promontories. From Magic of America Electronic Edition, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/facsim/moa_3_039.html
Fig. 3.7: Walter Burley Griffins’ annotations on Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation Prospectus, c. 1914
Courtesy: National Library of Australia
"The Finest Harbour Views"

The land holdings of the North Sydney Investment and Tramway Company had principally consisted of three promontories, or rocky headlands, that jutted out into Middle Harbour. In 1918, when Griffin contracted to purchase 650 acres of the Investment and Tramway Company’s former holdings, there were already two other smaller, partially built-up residential subdivisions located on the southernmost promontory. Publicity materials and auction records for these two subdivisions reveal important features of suburban waterfront development in early 20th century Sydney, and, more generally, the sort of normative approach to town planning that Mahony and Griffin wished to transform. Having invoked these two subdivisions as a foil, I will describe the architectural and institutional elements of Mahony’s and Griffin’s common property regime at Castlecrag before proceeding to discuss the provenance of these designs and the controversies they engendered.

A loose-leaf sales plan measuring 28” x 18.5” announced the 1904 auction of twenty-one plots at Yachtville Estate, a subdivision located along the South Arm of Middle Harbour’s Sugarloaf Bay (Fig. 3.8). Each one-acre plot extended right up to the water’s edge—a feature emphasized in the announcement’s tag line, “Absolute Water Frontage”, as well as in the a drawing depicting waves crashing against the edge of the estate. The accompanying sales brochure described the implications of the auctioneer’s phrase “Absolute Water Frontage”:

Each allotment has absolute Water Frontage. To understand the inestimable value of this right it must be remembered that many properties are cut off from the water by 100 feet reservations, and that the Government are precluded, by Act of Parliament, from further alienating the frontage of our Beautiful Harbour. At no distant date these eligible Water Frontage sites, free from reservation of any kind whatever, will command Fabulous Prices.²²

In 1911, another auctioneer made a similar offer of “Absolute Water Frontage Blocks” at Torquay Estate in Middle Harbour.\textsuperscript{23} This time the auction was for forty-eight plots splayed over an area much larger than Yachtville Estate. Lot size and shape varied considerably within Torquay Estate, and despite the sales pitch, eighteen plots had no waterfront access whatsoever. The loose-leaf sales plan for Torquay Estate was unusual enough to merit comment. Measuring at 37.5” x 22.5”, this illustration combined plan and aerial perspective into a single picture plane (Fig. 3.9). These merged views, an inconsistent scale, and the sharp contrast between planned and unbuilt zones along Middle Harbour, presented the disparate plots of Torquay Estate as relatively homogenous and ready for occupancy.

Yachtville and Torquay estates were explicitly marketed as places for sailing enthusiasts to build vacation homes. Land development in each of these subdivisions entailed clearing the land of vegetation, leveling contours, and laying out plots that were more or less at right angles to the main thoroughfare. Other than the roads, there were no shared spaces in either estate, and consequently there was no public access to the waterfront from either of these subdivisions.

In contrast, Mahony’s and Griffin’s sales plan for Castlecrag included an estate plan drawn to approximately 1:2,500 scale depicting irregular lots nestled within contour drives of varying widths (Fig. 3.10). Also visible within the estate plan are several irregularly shaped areas labeled “Reserves for Public Use”. These were park and recreational spaces to be shared between and amongst Castlecrag residents and members of the general public. Four of these reserves were enclosed by private residential lots, while two reserves opened onto a 50’ wide road called The Rampart. Residents and visitors who did not possess lots abutting a reserve could walk to any one of these spaces using narrow easements and pedestrian pathways that cut across the entire suburb. The entire foreshore of the suburb was also designated as a public reserve. Oddly, water was not

\textsuperscript{23} Hardie & Gorman Pty. Ltd, \textit{Torquay estate, near The Spit, Middle Harbour} (cartographic material), 1911.

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depicted as such within the pictorial space of the estate plan, but the accompanying illustrations on the 11” x 22” sales plan showed Castlecrag’s location on Middle Harbor. The document also described Castlecrag as “THE NORTH SHORE SEAVIEW ACROPOLIS”, and included the following three tag lines:

SAFEGUARDED WATER SIDE RESIDENCE COMMUNITY
UNIQUE HOMES, GROUNDS – PARKS – PLAY GROUNDS
LESS THAN FOUR MILES FROM CIRCULAR QUAY

Whereas the publicity and auction records for Yachtville and Torquay estates presented these places as a final opportunity to own land right up at water’s edge, the equivalent material for Castlecrag presented it as a “community”; a place where the safeguarding of the waterfront went hand-in-hand with inhabiting shared recreational spaces.

The conjunction of the conservation of the waterfront and the formation of a community within shared spaces appeared in subsequent publicity materials as well, although rarely with enough specificity to understand how these two features of Castlecrag related to one another. For example: soon after the incorporation of GSDA, Mahony and Griffin circulated a 9” x 17” poster consisting of two photographs and a block of text telegraphically comparing Castlecrag to much sought-after residential suburbs in Australia (Fig. 3.11). The photograph on the left depicted a group of homes that had recently been built in Castlecrag, while the photograph on the right offered a glimpse of the view from the high point on the promontory looking out towards the bay. Both photographs are unremarkable, and placed next to each other they appear no more or less mundane than an advertisement for landscape; that is, for a certain privileged view of the land. And indeed the banner text of the advertisement acknowledged as much, coaxing potential homebuyers to “BE SURE TO SEE THE FINEST HARBOUR VIEWS” before deciding on their

24. Greater Sydney Development Association Limited, Plan of the subdivision of the Castlecrag Estate, Parish of Willoughby, County of Cumberland (cartographic material), 1921.
purchase. But it was the block text below the photographs that conveyed the impression that private investment gains could be accrued from the experience of looking out on a vista of vastness that was secured through quotidian acts of sharing space. Thus, the advertisement’s block text announced that,

PERMANENT HARBOUR VIEWS • Only at Castlecrag is there space to lay out PARK-DRIVES PERFECTLY GRADED, safeguarding PERMANENT VIEWS...

NATURAL BEAUTIES PRESERVED FOR ALL-TIME • GROTTOES, CASCADES, LOOKOUTS, PLAYGROUNDS, AND WATER-FRONT PARKS reserved.

BEST INVESTMENT IN RESIDENT PROPERTY IN THIS HEMISPHERE\

We might begin to reconstruct how Mahony and Griffin linked the preservation of the coastline to shared spaces by noting what they took as the basis for investment gains in land. Mahony and Griffin insisted that rational calculations about land values arose from imagining the perspective of the other, including future generations we could not possibly know. This was an elementary aspect of the economic realm, organized as it was into producers and consumers. We could never reasonably predict what someone else would pay for something unless we tried to imagine the profound significance that a given object had from the vantage of another’s first person view. Although Mahony and Griffin considered these mental processes to be routine, they saw a need to train these habits so that we might become more sensitive to other ways of being in the world. And it was in shared spaces that we could develop such sensitivity.

This openness to the other was in sharp contrast to Yachtville and Torquay estates, where the phantasmagoria of future land values was tied to future buyers being identical to us. That is, future buyers would find owning private property right up to the water’s edge as desirable as we do today, and would pay more for it in the future because of the greater scarcity of such property.

26. Ibid.

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Architecturally, this narrowing of possibilities took the form of (seemingly) homogeneous lots that were created through acts of leveling all features of the land that got in the way of private access to the water. On the other hand, in constructing contour drives to structure urban form at Castlecrag, Mahony and Griffin deliberately embraced contingency and refused to stage the homogenization of land as the necessary basis for accruing investment gains.

Moved by a practical urgency to alter a dominant outlook on nature, Mahony and Griffin produced the economic as the register in which ordinary people could vividly experience the external and social dimensions of our evaluative judgments. This basic proposition, that we come upon meaning in our daily relations with others that calls forth our evaluative judgment, would have been obscured if they had nostalgically called for a return to a pre-industrial conception of nature. Such a call would have undoubtedly produced nature as a self-standing entity. As we shall see, their critique of the city grid, which was primarily elaborated through their design of contour drives and a network of meandering pedestrian pathways and easements, studiously avoided sentimentalizing nature as a self-standing entity.
Fig. 3.8: Batt, Rodd & Purves, Yachtville Estate Sales Plan, 1904 (National Library of Australia, map-lfsp1533-e)
Fig. 3.9: Hardie & Forman, Torquay Estate Sales Plan, 1911 (National Library of Australia, map-lfsp1536-v)
Fig. 3.10: Greater Sydney Development Association Limited, Sales Plan for Castlecrag Estate, Parish of Willoughby, New South Wales, Australia, 1921 (National Library of Australia, vn3699449).

Fig. 3.11: Greater Sydney Development Association Limited, Castlecrag Promotional Poster Courtesy: National Library of Australia

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An infra-red aerial photograph of Sydney’s Waterways, taken in 1935, reveals significant variation in the form and density of urban development across North Sydney suburbs, including Castlecrag (Fig. 3.12). Densely built up areas appear in white, while unbuilt areas appear in a dull gray, and roadways appear in a darker, more saturated shade of gray. There are three morphological features found in several of the other North Sydney suburbs that are completely absent from Castlecrag. The first feature is a high density of built structures. The second is a gridiron city plan. And the third morphological feature not found in Castlecrag but found in other North Sydney suburbs is the presence of buildings and roads at the edge of the waterfront. A municipal plan for Willoughby (the local authority for Castlecrag), drawn soon after the infra-red photograph was taken, confirms these points of divergence (Fig. 3.13). The municipal plan demarcates precisely what the infra-red photograph illustrates spectacularly: adjacent suburbs are much denser, structured by a street grid, and built right up to the water’s edge.

In this section and the next, I situate Mahony’s and Griffin’s designs for low density neighborhoods, contour drives, and shared park and recreational spaces in relation to a Midwest-American discourse on the city grid. Criticized as monotonous and as a malleable instrument of speculation, antipathy towards the grid in the second decade of the 20th century at times took the form of suburban subdivision plans that borrowed formal elements from the Garden City movement. Charting Griffin’s reticence on the merits of the Garden City, the analysis here uncovers a different formulation of the problem with the grid. I argue that Mahony’s and Griffin’s approach to suburban development was not so much motivated by a fear of monotonous repetition and speculative manipulation, as it was driven by a concern that a detached stance towards the world had yielded untenable notions of human will and rationality, and an undesirable politics. We
will see that the focal point of Mahony’s and Griffin’s critique was not the 19th century city grid, but its well-known 18th century ancestor the rectangular land survey.

We can be quite sure that Mahony and Griffin were well versed with the chorus of complaints against Chicago’s metropolitan grid (Fig. 3.14) given how widely these criticisms were discussed and repeated over several generations. As early as 1868, Olmstead and Vaux had questioned the suitability of the grid as an organizing principle for suburban development. Their *Preliminary Report on the Suburban Village of Riverside* chastised the “desultory hap-hazard way” in which Chicago suburbs had cropped up, testily noting that these communities had failed to distinguish themselves from the “constantly repeated right angles, straight line, and flat surfaces which characterize our large modern towns.” Some forty years later, Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett dramatized the complaint against the drabness of the grid very differently. Whereas Olmstead and Vaux claimed for the suburb a form of planned informality, with curving streets, as the necessary and refreshing contrast to the city grid, Burnham and Bennett’s 1909 *Plan of Chicago* placed a veil of formal planning tropes, with diagonal avenues and terminal plazas, over the city grid (Figures 3.15 and 3.16).

In retrospect, we might record the effect of these broadsides as opening up, rather than resolving, the question of an alternative to the metropolitan grid. The strongest evidence to support such a historical understanding of Olmstead’s and Burnham’s respective interventions is the 1913 City Club of Chicago’s competition for a model quarter-section of an inner-suburb of Chicago (Fig. 3.17). Founded in 1903 as a non-partisan civic organization, the City Club was thought of as something of an alternative to the Commercial Club, which had older roots, wealthier members,

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and was the lead proponent of Burnham’s 1909 Plan. In hosting a competition for a model quarter-section of an inner-suburb, the City Club seemed to fault the Burnham plan for ignoring residential neighborhoods, and indeed internal records of its City Planning Committee bear out as much. But the City Club also exhibited a diffidence in endorsing the creation of large-scale, park-like suburbs on the lines of Olmstead’s and Vaux’s Riverside. This was suggested obliquely in bibliographic references that were made available to prospective competitors, which consisted almost exclusively of texts on English and German garden suburbs.

It might be helpful here to include a quick summary of the Garden City movement. In 1898, the English social critic Ebenezer Howard published *To-morrow: a peaceful path to real reform*, which sought to model a new form of community by drawing upon the strengths of the town and the country. The text was well received enough for Howard to re-publish it in 1902 as *Garden Cities of To-morrow*. In the intervening years, Howard founded the Garden Cities Association in order to realize his scheme of housing people in self-sufficient clusters of 32,000, each built on a site of 6,000 acres. In 1904, First Garden City, Ltd., a company created by the Garden Cities Association, hired Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker to plan the First Garden City of Letchworth (Fig. 3.18). In 1907, Unwin became involved in the creation of a Garden Suburb at Hampstead, which had no pretentions of being a self-sufficient city. In 1908, the Russell Sage

31. Details on the City Club of Chicago’s competition brief, including the literature it recommended to prospective entrants, and the final jury and reviewer comments can be found in Alfred B. Yeomans, *City Residential Land Development: Studies in Planning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916).

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Foundation founded Forest Hills Gardens (Fig. 3.19), a planned residential community in Queens, New York that was partly modeled on the Hampstead Garden Suburb.\(^{34}\) Separately, following the creation of the Deutsche Gartenstadt-Gesellschaft in 1902 and the translation of Howard’s text into German by this organization in 1907, there was a proliferation of projects and texts in Germany that were identified as garden cities, garden suburbs, and garden estates.\(^{35}\)

The City Club of Chicago’s competition jury, perhaps unsurprisingly given the literature it recommended as reference material, favored entries that used a curved or looped roadway to disrupt the grid and create an interior focal point for the neighborhood (Figures 3.20 and 3.21). Several schemes conformed to the Beaux-Arts approach to city planning with boulevards, vistas, and large lot sizes (Fig. 3.22). A couple even had Baroque-inspired focal points at the center of the quarter-section (Fig. 3.23). In each of these schemes, the proposed neighborhood turned its back on the prevailing grid, suggesting that, at least in the context of this competition, an inward orientation was widely thought of as the only way to adequately provide for parks, playgrounds, public buildings, and social amenities. Frank Lloyd Wright, who submitted a “non-competitive plan”, was one of the few respondents to the competition brief who sought to extend the city grid into the quarter-section in order to create a matrix of individual and social spaces (Fig. 3.24).\(^{36}\) In other words, with very few exceptions, the city grid was taken to be a repetitive structure that offered few opportunities for building a rich social life.

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Griffin had a direct connection to the City Club competition, serving as a consultant on Edgar Lawrence’s scheme (Fig. 3.25). Lawrence was an employee of Griffin’s at the time, and the extent of Griffin’s involvement in the scheme has never been ascertained. The scheme consists of a hierarchy of recreational spaces that are splayed in a radial pattern around a water basin. Jurors and reviewers commended the scheme’s ambitions, and the locations assigned to residential and commercial units. Lawrence’s elaborated circulation system, which segregated different types of traffic—and not just into external and internal traffic, but internal traffic was itself grouped into different kinds of congregation (“private”, “neighborhood”, “school”, “interfellowship”)—received uneven praise from the competition jury.37

It is possible that Griffin first encountered the literature on garden cities and suburbs in the context of the City Club competition. At the very least, his connection to the competition establishes that he could have been aware that the Garden City had come to be thought of as an alternative to the 19th century city grid. This is important to bear in mind as we examine Griffin’s reluctance to acknowledge the Garden City as a model worthy of emulation. This in turn will help identify the conceptual stakes of the contour drives and meandering pathways at Castlecrag.

As I mentioned previously, in 1914, the entrepreneur P.B. Moss commissioned Mahony and Griffin to design a Garden City called Mossmain in rural Montana. Moss had the idea of building a trading zone in Montana at the intersection of two branches of the transcontinental railroad (Fig. 3.26). Comparable to what we would now call a logistics hub, this zone—which Moss contemplated would be the size of Maine—was to include a business district, warehousing facilities, and a residential sector (Fig. 3.27).

It is unfortunate that Mossmain has received very little scholarly attention from historians of the Garden City movement. Historically speaking, the plan to develop a Garden City with

industrial employment opportunities in the rural, mid-Western United States as early as 1914 would force us to amend our timeline for the birth and spread of the Garden City movement in North America, which currently begins with the development of Forest Hills, New York (1909) and Mariemont, Ohio (1921)—both of which were modeled on garden suburbs rather than garden cities with diverse land uses that were separated into discrete sectors.  

Historiographically speaking, Moss’s interpretation of the First Garden City Ltd. as a successful financial model for rescuing people from urban squalor, suggests that it might be anachronistic to think that Ebenezer Howard’s collaboration with bankers to found First Garden City Ltd. was necessarily understood at the time as a capitulation to capitalism that foredoomed any potential for social reform that Howard’s Garden City concept may have had. At the very least we have to ask how it was that Moss knew what he did about the Garden City concept, given that its wider reception in the United States at the time was circumscribed by a narrower focus on building residential communities for families with modest means. One clue for solving this puzzle can be found in the prospectus document for Mossmain, which contains a congratulatory message from the Secretary to the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association and suggests that Moss had been in correspondence with planners in Howard’s circle (Fig. 3.28)

What seems incontrovertible is that Moss’s knowledge of the Garden City was not filtered by Griffin’s agnostic, if not downright antagonistic, stance towards the Garden City movement. Included on the very same page of the Mossmain prospectus where the Secretary to the

International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association expressed his enthusiasm for Mossmain was a grudging acknowledgement from Griffin that the Garden City movement might hold lessons for his own work:

We have in America and in the newer countries much greater possibilities of town planning than have been recognized in the European experiments or garden villages, although, of course, we can profit to a degree by their experimentation. We expect to go much beyond in our own work, in fact, I think we are already doing so in the detail plans of the ideal townsite of Mossmain and in the towns that I have laid out or am laying out in Australia.40

Griffin’s churlishness is belied by formal similarities between Mahony’s and Griffin’s plans for Mossmain and diagrams associated with the Garden City movement. For example, in both the first Mahony-Griffin scheme for Mossmain (Fig. 3.29) and the Unwin-Parker Plan for Letchworth (Fig. 3.18), the train line marks the edge of the business district and there is a large play field immediately adjacent to the railway station. The second Mahony-Griffin scheme for Mossmain (Fig. 3.30), which consists of functionally distinct polygonal nodes that are linked by long avenues, seems similar to the Mahony-Griffin Canberra plan (Fig. 1.10) except that the second Mossmain scheme has none of scalar variation within and amongst nodes that characterize the Canberra plan. It might be more fruitful to identify the Mossmain scheme with Ebenezer Howard’s “Group of Slumless Smokeless Cities” (Fig. 4.3). Notably, the second Mossmain scheme shares in the gestural quality of Howard’s illustration, with a larger central node and a number of satellite nodes that vary only slightly in internal structure but nonetheless appear to be uniformly of the same size and scale. Beyond these diagrammatic affinities, the first Mahony-Griffin scheme for Mossmain included a hierarchy of roads and streets to separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic with and across city sectors, and it included open spaces for organized play and recreation—all hallmarks of the early North American-interpretation of English and German garden suburbs.

40. Mossmain Montana (Billings: Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation, 1914), 14.
Given these formal resemblances, the hostility of Griffin’s remarks on the Garden City movement is puzzling. In texts written in the 1920s and '30s, Griffin indicated that his distaste for the Garden City movement arose from its instrumentalist conception of nature, and from its complicity with a hyper-rationalist outlook on the world that exclusively understood all plant life that was not deliberately cultivated as weeds. This suggests that Griffin disliked the normative stance of the Garden City movement rather than its morphologies. The next chapter argues that Mahony’s and Griffin’s seemingly instinctive criticisms of instrumental reason, as displayed in Griffin’s aversion for the norms of the Garden City movement, were energized by, but also subsumed within, the dialectic of fin-de-siècle Utopianism and International Socialism. However, this was not the only arena in which Mahony’s and Griffin’s critique of rationality emerged. Their interrogation of the limit of rationality was also enacted through their urban design practice; specifically, through their extension of the American landscape design sensibility of the ‘Picturesque’ at Castlecrag. It is to those visual and building practices that I now turn.
Fig. 3.12: Infra-Red Photograph of Sydney’s Waterways, Sydney, Australia, 1935 (Castlecrag is located in left third of the image, in the middle-ground, the second promontory from the bottom) Courtesy: National Library of Australia

Fig. 3.13: Willoughby Municipal Plan, Willoughby, Australia, c. 1935 Courtesy: National Library of Australia
Fig. 3.14: Rufus Blanchard, Map of Chicago and Environs, Chicago, IL, 1869.
Fig. 3.15: Olmstead, Vaux, & Co., General Plan of Riverside, Riverside, IL, 1868.

Fig. 3.16: Burnham and Bennett, Plan of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 1909.
Fig. 3.17: Plan of the Typical Quarter Section in the Outskirts of Chicago. From Alfred Yeomans, *City Residential Land Development: Studies in Planning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 3.
Fig. 3.18: First Garden City of Letchworth, Plan of Present Development, Spring 1910. Courtesy: First Garden City Heritage Museum
Fig. 3.19: Detail Plan of the Construction of Forest Hills: The First Garden City in America. From Edward Hale Brush, “A Garden City for the Man of Moderate Means,” *The Craftsman* 19 (February 1911).
Fig. 3.20: First Prize Plan by Wilhelm Bernhard. From Alfred Yeomans, *City Residential Land Development: Studies in Planning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 11.
Fig. 3.21: Second Prize Plan by Arthur C. Comey. From Alfred Yeomans, *City Residential Land Development: Studies in Planning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 17.
Fig. 3.22: William Drummond, Bird's Eye-View of Alternative Scheme for 'Unit' Development. From Alfred Yeomans, *City Residential Land Development: Studies in Planning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 43.

Fig. 3.23: William H. Schuchardt, Bird's Eye-View of the Quarter Section. From Alfred Yeomans, *City Residential Land Development: Studies in Planning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 78.
Fig. 3.24: Plan by Frank Lloyd Wright. From Alfred Yeomans, *City Residential Land Development: Studies in Planning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 98.
Fig. 3.26: Location of Mossmain. From Mossmain, Montana (Billings: Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation, 1914).

Fig. 3.27: Mossmain Trade Zone. From Town Plat of Mossmain, Montana (Billings: Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation, 1914).
THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT

In an article on "The Garden City Movement," Mr. Ewart G. Culpin, Secretary to the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, with headquarters in London, England, says:

"America, save in a few quarters, has escaped from the evils which beset the older cities of England and Europe, but her cities have too often been laid out without proper regard to the requirements of the site or to the well-being of the people who shall live there. There has been, to a large extent, a neglect of the love of the beautiful; there has been, as with us, a neglect of the civic spirit, and the civic consciousness has been dormant; but I believe, that with the great responsibilities before it, with the capacity for investigating and approximating new ideals, the American nation, when it comes to grasp the Garden City movement, will make of it a still more abiding success than we have as yet been able to attain to on this side of the water.

"I shall follow with the keenest interest the movement that Mr. Preston B. Moss, of Billings, Montana, U. S. A., is initiating and the steps he is taking, believing that this will meet with the success which his enterprise and ability entitle him to. I can say, from my own knowledge, that Mr. Moss has not left untouched one source of information in Europe which could be of value to him, and through him to the people who shall live on the site of the new city (MOSSMAN) he is preparing to develop.

"May the new city of Mossman be not merely a city of houses, but a city of homes, whose citizens shall be able to live a freer, a happier, and a cleaner life, enjoying to the full the advantages provided for them and realizing not only the advantages to them of the city, but their own responsibility for its civic dignity and importance."—London, England, October 13, 1914.

MOSSMAIN TO EXCEL

"We have in America and in the newer countries much greater possibilities of town planning than have been recognized in the European experiments or garden villages, although, of course, we can profit to a degree by their experimentation. We expect to go much beyond it in our own work, in fact, I think we are already doing so in the detail plans of the ideal townscape of Mossmain and in the towns that I have laid out or am laying out in Australia."


Fig. 3.28: The Garden City Movement. From Mossmain, Montana (Billings: Yellowstone Garden City Holding Corporation, 1914), 14.
THE FIRST GARDEN CITY OF AMERICA

From original drawing by Walter Burley Griffin, of Chicago, world-famed architect and designer of Canberra, the new National Capital of the Commonwealth of Australia, now being built on virgin soil midway between Sydney and Melbourne.

The new town of Mossmain is situated at the junction of the Great Northern, Northern Pacific and Burlington railways, near the confluence of the Yellowstone and Clark Fork rivers, in Yellowstone County, Montana; about 250 miles west of the eastern boundary of the state and 50 miles north of its southern boundary. It is 900 miles to St. Paul; 900 miles to Omaha; 650 miles to Denver; 225 miles to Butte, Helena and Great Falls, Montana; 900 miles to Spokane, and 1,000 miles to Seattle from Mossmain.

Fig. 3.29: Walter Burley Griffin, Town Plat of Mossmain, Montana, First Scheme, 1914
Fig. 3.30: Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin, Town Plan of Mossmain, Montana, Second Scheme, 1916 (National Library of Australia, vn3919926).
Picturesqueness

In a photograph taken in 1924 (Fig. 3.31), a narrow pedestrian pathway, probably no more than two feet wide, can be seen peeking through a rugged, bush-covered ridge. Terminating at the edge of a creek, the pathway appears to be unmetalled, and likely to have been formed by cutting, removing, and grinding down part of the ridge. Also visible in this image is a single, over-sized curbstone, which we might guess was fashioned by cutting and polishing one of the rocks that had been excavated to build the pathway. The pathway is one of several trails designed by Mahony and Griffin within Castlecrag. This particular pathway is so narrow that it does not even appear on an annotated sepia-print of the overall plan for Castlecrag (Fig. 3.32). The only indication that such a pathway might exist are the green colorings denoting easements connecting residences to an area marked “RESERVE” along the shores of “Sailor Bay”. In other words, the pathway was constructed and represented as something that a resident or visitor would stumble upon almost by accident. Once a person found themselves on the pathway, they could not but help notice its constructed quality: its acute narrowness and the economy of materials used to build it.

It was in this manner that Mahony and Griffin hoped to prompt Castlecrag residents and visitors into recognizing that rational, imaginative, and intuitive modes of thinking were compatible with one another. Architecturally, this impulse was materialized in their design of objects that were meant to provoke multiple sorts of reactions in onlookers. For example, the pathway described above invited its users to inhabit distinct viewpoints: that of rational calculation, which would say that there are elements of plant life here that had escaped control and grown wild. At the same time, and without any contradiction, the same person could imaginatively reconstruct the purposiveness of the pathway, reflecting on the ways the repeated and varied use of
sandstone as surface, paving, and kerbing produced the pathway as both part of sandstone ridge and apart from it.

The desire to evoke contemplation in a viewer who had chanced upon an unexpected object on the land was unmistakably indebted to the Picturesque tradition of American landscape design, in particular to the representational strategies of Andrew Jackson Downing (1815 – 1852). Downing’s juxtaposition of irregular and symmetrical elements of design within a single visual field (Fig. 3.33) was itself informed by the textual and visual work of English landscape designer Humphry Repton (1752 – 1818), who was himself the subject of a brief but significant revival at the hands of Mahony’s and Griffin’s contemporary and fellow city planner and landscape architect John Nolen (1869 – 1937), who in 1907 edited and introduced a re-issue of Repton’s *The Art of Landscape Gardening*. Surviving records from Mahony’s and Griffin’s Australian offices indicate that Nolen was one of the few American city planners whose journal articles and conference presentations Mahony and Griffin actually took the trouble to send for from the United States and preserve. It is not known, however, if Mahony and Griffin read or owned Nolen’s edition of Repton.

In his Introduction to Repton’s text, Nolen noted that that for Repton the purpose of good design was “to fix attention where it has been caught, [and] to prolong astonishment into admiration.” For his reason, Nolen reminded his reader, mere imitation of nature could never qualify as good design. To this tradition of fixing attention through the juxtaposition of irregular and symmetrical elements within a single visual field, Mahony and Griffin made the striking contribution of insisting that all acts of contemplation that resulted from fixing an onlooker’s attention were rooted in a social context and were not just interiorized thoughts we had.

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42. Ibid, xviii.
In Mahony’s and Griffin’s unrelenting desire to draw a subject into inhabiting multiple viewpoints in quotidian spaces such as the pathway at Castlecrag described above (Fig. 3.31), we can see a dramatization of their complaint against the pervasive practice of looking upon the land with detachment; of construing land the myriad creatures that lived on it as having no bearing on our being as moral subjects. This habit of mind, Mahony and Griffin correctly diagnosed, was consolidated in the 18th century rectangular land survey. The effect of apprehending geographic features as mute objects that could be abstracted, controlled, or even extinguished, was that land was no longer understood as something that called forth our evaluative judgment. The cultural status of land, after the rectangular land survey, was merely that of a cartographic abstraction to be exploited for human ends.

Here it might helpful to briefly re-count the stated aims and workings of the rectangular land survey in the United States. At the end of the American Revolutionary War, with no means of raising direct taxes, the Continental Congress passed the Land Ordinance of 1785 allowing for land beyond the original Thirteen Colonies to be systematically surveyed into square townships, six miles on a side. Each of these townships was sub-divided into thirty-six sections of one square mile. These sections could then be further sub-divided for re-sale by settlers and land speculators. Recent historical scholarship on the 1785 Land Ordinance has described the adoption of a square grid as the instantiation of the Enlightenment commitment to rationality, comprehensiveness, and organization, while the Ordinance’s provision that land could either be sold to communities as whole townships or as sub-divided lots to individual purchasers has been interpreted as evidence of the Continental Congress’s fidelity to the Enlightenment ideals of individual liberty and egalitarian opportunity. 43 Whatever the merits of these claims, this was not how Mahony and Griffin interpreted the rectangular land survey. In an essay originated in 1935, for the journal *Australian*  

43. Levine, “The Late Eighteenth-Century Rectangular Land Survey.”
Wild Life, which Mahony reproduced in Magic of America, Griffin contrasted this dominant disposition towards the land with what he and Mahony were trying to achieve at Castlecrag:

Castlecrag is an effort toward Land Planning in the fundamental sense of arranging for that use to which the terrain is most suitable. Land in this sense is accorded the respect due to a highly developed and perfected living organism not to be exterminated nor treated as dead material, nor as a mere section of the map.44

In essays written at the very end of the Second World War, Marion Mahony repeatedly invoked the land survey as the inauguration of a corrosive mindset that had justified wanton destruction and genocide in the service of rapacious private accumulation. Far from looking back at the rectangular land survey as a glorious moment in US history, Mahony and Griffin saw it as the consolidation of a disengaged stance towards the land; as the moment when land stopped being viewed as a "living organism".

In the US case, Mahony described the inaugural moment of the Rectangular Land Survey as the "devastation of the wilds", noting that a similar systematic displacement of Aborigines had taken place through the seemingly innocuous act of surveying the land. And in an essay from Magic of America titled "Surveying", Mahony sought to link these histories of the displacement of the Aborigines and Native Americans. In it, she quoted an Aborigine's judgment on the European settler practice of burning the bush before surveying it: "They have no right to do this because it belongs to the birds and the animals as much as it does to them." 45 From this judgment, which invoked the perspective of birds and animals, Mahony went to write:

Contact with the ancient peoples should awaken us to the fact that they use a different kind of thinking from ourselves - an experience which, if we were open minded, would lead us on to the investigating and mastering of that kind of thinking, to take as much pains as we have taken in the mastery of rational thinking in these modern times.46

46. Ibid.
At Castlecrag, Mahony and Griffin sought to instill exactly such a conjunction of differing viewpoints without privileging one perspective over other possible viewpoints. Thus, residents and visitors strolling through the waterfront reserves that had been deliberately allowed to grow wild were invited to simultaneously inhabit the view of an architect looking to conserve a tract of bushland, as well as the view of animals and birds that lived on the bushland itself.

This relentless acknowledgement of alterity was unprecedented within the context of mid-west American suburban design. Here the creation of shared spaces through the design of irregular parks had presupposed commonality, as in the case of Olmstead’s and Vaux’s Riverside from the late 1860s where

the fact that the families dwelling within a suburb enjoy much in common, and enjoy it all the more because it is in common, the grand fact, in short, that they are christians, loving one another, and not Pagans, fearing one another, should be everywhere manifest in the completeness, and choiceness, and beauty of the means they possess of coming together, of being together, and especially of recreating together and enjoying them on common ground, and under common shades. 47

Alternatively, informal park spaces were proffered as place from which commonality would be produced in the idiom of hybridity and an all-encompassing inclusivity that mandated all forms of difference be assimilated into a single, coherent identity, as in the case of Mahony-Griffin contemporary Jens Jensen who posited that,

Every nation develops its own art. We are young as a nation and still in the process of crystallization. Every race or nationality brings to us some of its customs and habits which are gradually but surely being molded together, ultimately to form one national character. The environs amongst which the immigrants settle lend their great influence—sung by the poet, painted by the painter and idealized by the gardener. 48

For their part, Mahony and Griffin materialized an idea of community as open to the other through visual and spatial elaborations of the compatibility between rationalist thought and other

modes of being in the world. At the level of representation, there was Mahony's site plan for a residential sub-division in Mason City, Iowa (Fig. 3.3). Drawn on graph paper, this plan depicts the arrangement of homes across a ravine, with the homes staggered so as to take advantage of the contours of the ravine. What is particularly remarkable is its uncanny realization of textual statements by the landscape architect Horace Cleveland in his 1873 book *Landscape Architecture*, where his invective against the practice of imposing rectangular plots on uneven grounds specifically asked his reader to imagine a ravine and the advantages of staggering homes in such a way that river becomes a view that everyone in the neighborhood can enjoy...a view, which Cleveland said would be much enhanced by the inclusion of a little bridge connecting the two sides of the ravine. Mahony's and Griffin's Mason City plan brings into being what had only been a thought experiment in Horace Cleveland's text. At the same time, it achieves this on graph paper, thereby conveying the scheme's conceptual departure from the ideology of the grid at the same time that it registers its historical connectedness to it.

A similar juxtaposition can be found in Mahony's and Griffin's plan for a sub-division in Grinnell, Iowa (Fig. 3.1). Here Griffin's office was hired to re-plan a sub-division that had been originally platted by a civil engineer (Fig. 3.2). Griffin's presentation drawing includes a reproduction of the original sub-division. By doing so, the drawing again shows the scheme's conceptual departure but historical connectedness to the ideology of the grid. The superimposition of rectangular lots on this site plan is also remarkable, since Griffin's site planning scheme used the undulations of the hill to create unobstructed views from each home. Thus, even if each lot were rectangular, the visual experience from each of the homes, or along the curvilinear vehicular roadway, would likely not have capture this rectilinearity.
At Castlecrag, there was an effort to extend the mostly ocular standard for good design, as Downing and Nolen had articulated it, into a spatial condition. Thus, we find homes that were based on the grid juxtaposed up against irregular pathways that took the contour of the land, as in the case of this low-cost Robert and Elizabeth Guy residence, where a modular square having a 4’ side forms two inter-locking squares. Rather than internal walls, columns placed on center at the intersection of the square units separate kitchen, bedroom, and living room, further highlighting the house’s gridiron plan.

Important as the 19th century American landscape discourse on Picturesqueness was for the intellectual and creative formations of Mahony and Griffin, these projects testify to an ambition to ensure that the result of juxtaposing irregular and symmetrical forms was not an interiorized form of contemplation. Instead, in the historical connections to the grid that each of these projects claim, particularly in the explicitly antagonistic link claimed by the Mason City site plan drawn on graph paper, the possibility for appreciating good design is presented as being rooted in a past. For Mahony and Griffin, there could be no re-telling of the past of settler colonies, like the US and Australia, that did not acknowledge the violence that had been done unto the land and those that lived on it. And it was in such acknowledgement that we signaled our openness to the other.
Fig. 3.31: Photograph of pathway through Bushland, Castlecrag, NSW, c. 1924 (National Library of Australia, vn3698352). The lone curbstone can be seen on the left edge of the path leading away from the water in the middle ground of this image.
Fig. 3.32: Plan of the Subdivision of the Castlecrag Estate, 1920. Annotated by Walter Burley Griffin. Courtesy: National Library of Australia
Fig. 3.33: A.J. Downing, Fig. 47. From *Cottage Residences*, 1847.

Fig. 3.34: Thomas Hutchins, Plat of the Seven Ranges of Townships being Part of the Territory of the United States N.W. of the River Ohio, 1785.

Fig. 3.35: Theoretical Township Diagram. Courtesy: US Bureau of Land Management
Fig. 3.35: Mahony and Griffin, Guy Residence, (blueprint)
Castleerag, NSW, Australia

Fig. 3.36: Marion Mahony, Guy Residence
(schematic design)

Fig. 3.37: Mahony and Griffin, Guy Residence,
(location map)
CHAPTER FOUR

An Ideal Community

In a recent feature, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s Radio National admiringly referred to Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin as “idealists” who came to Australia in 1914 to build its capital city only to be thwarted by the bureaucracy, and who, instead of returning in defeat to their native Chicago, “turned their vast energy towards creating an ideal community on the shores of Sydney Harbour.” It is a familiar portrait: the architect valiantly holding on to a cherished ideal. But would Mahony and Griffin have recognized themselves in this portrait? Would they have referred to themselves as idealists? The notion that anything could exist in, or even be conceived of as existing in, a perfected state sits uneasily within their writings. It is certainly true that Mahony and Griffin used the term ‘ideal’ to express a superlative value judgment about an opportunity that they came across in the world, such as declaring a particular location as the “ideal setting” for a particular kind of building. Yet, their writings resist notions of idealization wherein a person or group might look to the past to find the seed of an idea that can be brought to fruition or to its idealized form.

The distinction between these two conceptual meanings of the term ‘ideal’ is brought out in Walter Burley Griffin’s statement from 1911 on his proposal for the Australian Federal Capital: “I have planned an ideal city – a city that meets my ideal of the city of the future.” Through this statement Griffin disavowed any allegiance to any idealized/idolized pattern, preferring that his proposed urban community be seen as only provisional, or as providing for a moment that will likely never arrive exactly as it was anticipated. It was a sentiment that Griffin would repeat with greater clarity in the 1917 address to the First Town Planning and Housing

3. Ibid, 22 (emphasis in original).
Conference and Exhibition held in Adelaide, which we examined at the beginning of the previous chapter. In it, he dismissed the profession’s “discussions over emotions, esthetics, tastes and distastes” as “innumerable abstractions and glittering generalities” that had left town planning professionals “distracted over ‘classic,’ ‘medieval,’ or for that matter ‘modern’ obsolete practices in Europe, which cannot possibly serve as direct criteria of present town possibilities here [in Australia] or elsewhere.” And in a stridently anti-intellectual tone Griffin added,

preparedness for meeting the new community problems can no more grow out of general and erudite consideration than could sculpture arise out of literary critiques. It must arise out of experiments and progressive accomplishments in the art itself and their demonstrated effectiveness – greater or less – and their mistakes.

In describing the discipline of town planning comprised of a series of “experiments” that drew lessons from previous mistakes, Griffin was eschewing a conception of planning as a means to control for a specific outcome. It would seem therefore to be a mischaracterization to call Griffin (or Mahony) an idealist, if that term is understood to denote someone who had internalized a set of principles with which they refuse to compromise. If anything, Mahony’s and Griffin’s consistent stand against seeking instrumental control should alert us to the importance that they attached to contingency, rather than principle, in their moral philosophy.

Perhaps what the designation of Mahony and Griffin as idealists does capture is their commitment to transforming mentalities, and in particular our outlook on nature, through quotidian acts of sharing space rather than through an instrumental politics of control. This was reflected in their architectural and institutional design of common property, as well as in their commitment to building a cosmopolitan social program at Castlecrag. The latter included hosting study circles at their own Castlecrag residence, reading such diverse texts as the Bhavgad Gita and Goethe’s Faust, and staging Greek tragedies at Castlecrag’s outdoor amphitheater (Fig. 4.1).

5. Ibid.
This concluding chapter critically assesses the consolidation of a non-instrumentalist ethics within small-scale urbanity, arguing that Mahony's and Griffin's refusal to resort to a politics of control was informed by varieties of socialism that were progressively disqualified as utopian at the dawn of the 20th century. This might seem like a strange genealogical claim to make given that Mahony and Griffin were recorded as being hostile towards socialism. It is certainly true that they discounted the analytical and transformative potential of socialism. In particular, socialism's focus on the commensurability of workers bothered them in much the same way that liberalism's insistence on equivalence as the necessary basis for state-sanctioned rights bothered them. They thought that neither socialism nor liberalism had a sensitive enough theoretical grasp of difference as the condition of being in the world. Despite these misgivings about socialism (and liberalism), Mahony's and Griffin's understanding of the relationship between ethics and politics was inescapably subsumed within the dialectic of fin-de-siècle utopianism and International Socialism. This is to say that intellectual disputes within socialism gave Mahony and Griffin, amongst others, the idiom to formulate new conceptions of the ethical, as well as ways of conceiving the political future of empire that did not result in the formation of majoritarian nation-states.

The opening up of these possibilities is here charted through a brief exposition of the English socialist Edward Carpenter (1844 – 1929), whose writings Griffin showily attested to knowing and admiring. After showing how the critique of instrumental rationality staged in texts such as Carpenter's was silenced by a certain Kantian formulation of ethical possibility, the
chapter provides a detailed consideration of the Theosophical Society’s appropriation and transformation of Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City concept. This is because leading Theosophists claimed that in Howard’s attempt to design self-sufficient cities and suburbs, they had found a model for making the spiritual transformation of imperial politics a practical pursuit rather than a utopian fantasy. It was in the course of this engagement with the Garden City concept that members of the Australian Section of the Theosophical Society identified Castlecrag as a welcome departure from “orthodox suburbia”.8 And it was this encounter that led to Mahony’s and Griffin’s introduction to modern occultism, including Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy.

Before untangling this convoluted trajectory in Mahony’s and Griffin’s global practice, a quick survey of the historical literature on utopian architecture and urbanism will help clarify the aims of this chapter.

Historical interest in 19th and 20th century utopian monuments and communes peaked in the early 1970s, and was no doubt constitutive of the ostensibly gloomy but resolutely modernist appraisal of modernism called architectural postmodernism.9 There was the architectural historian Anthony Vidler’s reflections on the inevitable failure of architectural determinism, which he saw an inescapable feature of all utopian politics.10 And there was the effort of the architectural theorist Manfredo Tafuri and the so-called Venice School to prepare a historical sociology of architecture as the means for producing “controlled image[s] of the future”, to borrow Tafuri’s own phrase for describing the negative dialectic of the historical avant-garde.11

Motivated by different scholarly and political commitments was the architect and historian

Dolores Hayden’s account of environmental design as the means by which a variety of groups attempted to build a more egalitarian society within the United States between 1790 and 1938.\footnote{Dolores Hayden, \textit{Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975} (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976).} It could be argued that Hayden’s focus on environmental design was anachronistic for almost the entire period she investigated; that it is better suited for analyzing building practices from the 1960s onwards, which is when the term ‘environment’ came to signify a realm that could be manipulated. Hayden was perhaps aware of this tension and wittingly adopted environmental design as the focal lens of her analysis in an effort to counter architectural histories of utopianism that almost exclusively examined monumental civic buildings and vanguardist projects, which is the sort of study associated with the Venice School. Yet, Hayden and Tafuri (and Vidler) ultimately shared a view of utopian architecture as the blueprint of an ideal society—as an instrument for projecting, realizing, and universalizing a particular political vision.

Crowded out by this view is the possibility that architecture and urbanism could constitute a transformative outlook on the world that deliberately renounced a teleological and instrumentalist conception of politics. It is an effort to historicize this dimension of Mahony’s and Griffin’s global practice that this chapter reconstructs the arguments by which certain forms of socialist thought and activity were disqualified as utopian.
Varieties of Socialism

In a remarkable recent study of anti-colonial thought, the literary critic Leela Gandhi recuperates silenced fin-de-siècle metropolitan radicals who “renounced the privileges of imperialism and elected affinity with the victims of their own expansionist cultures”\(^{13}\). For these radicals, empire was not simply territorial occupation, or even a clash of cultures; it was a peculiar mentality that incessantly attached racial, cultural, and civilizational hierarchies to the relationships between and amongst species, genders, and nationalities. Accordingly, the work of these radical thinkers is visible as “utopic flights”, or the “departure from inherited communities”—a characterization Leela Gandhi inherits from the political psychologist Ashis Nandy’s book *The Intimate Enemy*, which also notates the “psychologically significant response of many who opted out of their colonising society for the cause of India.”\(^{14}\) This framing of anti-colonial thought resonates with Mahony’s and Griffin’s refusal to be complacent about imperializing actions undertaken by the United States under the cover of a popular electoral mandate. It also seems to well describe their definition of empire as a corrosive habit of mind that could only be countered by a democratic mindset and a formulation of community as always open to the other.

There are two other facets of Leela Gandhi’s work, titled *Affective Communities*, that are germane to the study being undertaken here. First, Edward Carpenter is one of the metropolitan radicals whose “innovative border crossing” Leela Gandhi excavates with persuasive sympathy.\(^{15}\) A founding member of the Fabian Society, Carpenter’s criticisms of industrial society and his departure to rural Derbyshire to take up small-scale farming made him something of a legend within Victorian England’s “Back-to-Land” movement—a movement which at the


\(^{15}\) Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 7.
very end of the 19th century produced rural England as a site of spiritual regeneration in the face of rapid industrialization and urbanization. Historical scholarship has generally described Victorian and Edwardian ruralism as a form of nostalgia that pitted spiritual progress against material progress. This theme is echoed in the literature on rural communes that were built in this period, some of which were explicitly modeled on Carpenter's farm. If we were to go by the depiction of Carpenter in these texts, we might come away with the impression that his thought amounted to nothing more than an anachronistic and innocuous anti-industrialism. It is this received portrait that Leela Gandhi greatly enriches by showing how Carpenter's vehement condemnation of British imperialism made common cause out of the struggles for animal rights, prison reform, and the colonized. What is more, she argues that in resisting the disciplinary power of 19th century sexology, Carpenter's sexual evasiveness, which she terms "(homo)asexuality", served as a "prelude for a radical reinvention and reimagining of community, kinship, sociality".

The second aspect of Leela Gandhi's *Affective Communities* that bears on the analysis here is her meticulous linking of "utopic flights, like Carpenter's sexual evasiveness, to the International Socialism of the 1880s whose cosmopolitan character and aspirations she sees as having important precedents in the last years of Chartism, as well as in the immediate aftermath of the revolutions of 1848. Despite transnational solidarity and anti-imperialism being defining features of the First International, British and Continental socialism would go on to repeatedly disparage individuals, groups, and subcultures that opposed imperialism through quotidian habits

of diet, bodily comportment, and sexual relations. These practices were disqualified as not properly political; a distraction or, worse, an enfeebling of organized socialist activity—charges that were elaborated by Engels in his 1892 pamphlet *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* and reiterated by Lenin in 1920 in his "Left Wing" *Communism: An Infantile Disorder.¹⁹*

Leela Gandhi astutely notes that the subjugation of certain groups and gestures as "utopian" and "infantile", as distinct from "scientific" and "mature", is a direct descendent of Kant's version of enlightenment as the exit from nonage, in which freedom is equated with adulthood and in which the very possibility of the ethical requires the subject to be severed from all external influences and relationships. Accordingly, she sees the historiographical burden of interrogating Victorian radicalism as recuperating its inventiveness and provisionality; to notate its affective relations and callings, rather than to subjugate it and insist that Victorian radicalism be recognized as its own self-standing orthodoxy.

In broad agreement with this historiographical approach, I wish to extend the discussion on Kant's formulation of ethical possibility in order to draw out the distinction between a morality based on the exercise of will and an ethics rooted in the formation of habit. The former notion is Kantian, though Kant was not its only proponent. The latter notion, although Aristotelian, here is linked to strands of 20th century counter-imperial thought (I emphasize 'counter-imperial' and not the more familiar 'anti-imperial' because I am referring to divergent arguments on the future of empire, only one of which called on Europe to relinquish her overseas territorial possessions. Besides which, anti-imperialism is all too often conflated with anti-colonial nationalism, and the aim here, following Leela Gandhi, is to uncover arguments against empire that originated outside the colonized periphery, as well as those that were elaborated in

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the crossing to and from metropole and colony). The argument here is that habit, with its connotations of routine and rootedness, was understood within counter-imperial thought to better capture the everyday experience of acting accountably in the world. As certain modes of being came to be pejoratively described as ‘utopian’, a new vocabulary emerged to defend the idea that the ethical was situated in our relations with others rather than in the exercise of will. Terms such as ‘crank’ bore the scars of the destructive internal debates over what constituted proper socialist activity, but nonetheless came to be used to denote the limits of representational politics.

These points are brought to the fore over the course of the next two sections, beginning with an excursus on Kant’s definition of enlightenment as the exit from self-imposed tutelage followed by a brief consideration of two texts by Edward Carpenter in which responsibility to the other is figured as the condition of self-knowledge. The chapter then turns to a brief semantic history of utopians, cranks, and practical idealists as a prelude to examining the Theosophical Society’s appropriation of the Garden City concept, as well as Mahony’s and Griffin’s configuration of the neighborhood as the setting in which democratic habits and the ethical impulse could be trained.
The Space of Intimacy

In his celebrated commentary on Kant’s “What is Enlightenment?” essay, Foucault noted that Kant described our exit (Ausgang) from nonage as both an ongoing process and as an imperative. In this way, even as the very possibility of the ethical rests on exiting nonage, we must heed the call to join in this ongoing process. We must recognize it as our task and responsibility. We must acknowledge that our state of immaturity is self-imposed. That is, we must respond ethically if we are to be ethical. Foucault extends this ambiguity in Kant, characterizing the pursuit of a critical ontology of the self as an attitude or an ethos rather than a body of knowledge.

Foucault also makes passing references to the links between “What is Enlightenment?” and what he terms other essays by Kant on the “internal teleology of time”, suggesting that the latter offers clues as to how an individual can still be held responsible and be said to have freedom and agency in a world that can be explained causally with detachment. But it may not be enough for us to rest with Foucault’s tantalizing indication towards other essays, especially given the conceptual, historical and, indeed, political stakes that I have been attributing to detached forms of engagement in the world. Therefore, we need to carefully read Kant’s “Speculative Beginning of Human History”, which was published just two years after “What is Enlightenment?” in the very same periodical. Using the Book of Genesis as his map, Kant charts a “flight of fancy” into “freedom’s first development from its original capacities in the nature of man”. There are four steps in this development: the instinct for nourishment, the instinct for sex, the reflective expectation of the future, and man conceiving himself to be the end

23. Ibid,49.
of nature and to be his own end rather than the means to any other end. "This [final] step is at the same time also connected with man's release [Entlassung] from nature's womb". What is the relationship between the release from nature's womb and the exit from self-imposed immaturity? The terms 'release' and 'exit' are both violent metaphors, but the relationship between these two passages goes much further than formal parallelism. Here again is "Speculative Beginning of Human History":

This step is at the same time also connected with man's release from nature's womb, a change that is, indeed, honorable, but also full of danger, since she drove him out of the safe and secure state of childhood—a garden as it were, that cared for him without his troubling himself (Gen. 3:23)—and threw him into the world, where he was awaited by so many cares, burdens, and unknown evils. In future times, the toilsomeness of life would often arouse in him the hope for a paradise—the creation of his imagination.

The projection of some phantasmagoria and the internalization of "hope for a paradise" are the conditions of possibility for Kant's notion Enlightenment, which after Foucault we note is "conceive[d] as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us". Without the internalization of hope, it is inconceivable that Reason should "restlessly and irresistibly drive us to develop those capacities that lie within us." It is fundamental to the exercise of freedom and morality in a world that can be causally explained.

Influential as Kant's formulation of ethical possibility remains, there have consistently been alternative conceptions of the ethical. Notably for our purposes, there were thinkers writing none more than a century after Kant who refused to accept the severing of the individual from all

25. Ibid.
26. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", 50.
affective bonds as the necessary precondition for ethical behavior. Writing against the backdrop of 19th century colonialisms, these thinkers, here exemplified by Edward Carpenter, insisted that our capacity to make moral judgments and act accountably in the world existed within our relations with others. That is, in place of the conjectural anthropology that Kant offers to explain our capacity to act in accordance with Reason Carpenter constructs a *historical* account that calls on us to recognize others as others as a first step towards gaining a critical self-awareness. Brief excerpts from two texts by Carpenter will allow us to glimpse this argument. These excerpts also help establish that Carpenter’s critique of the sexual division of labor, as well as his critique of instrumental reason were clear forerunners, if not direct sources, for Mahony’s and Griffin’s thinking on the economic.

The first text is *England’s Ideal* (1887) in which Carpenter recommends that the English follow the Irish in going barefoot for a large part of the year, or at least only wear sandals on their feet.\(^{29}\) It is not just that Carpenter wants the English to learn from their Irish subjects; he wants the English to interrogate the customs that constitute the veil of decency that covers exploitative economic arrangements within Britain, and within her overseas possessions of Ireland and India.

The second text is Carpenter’s *Love’s Coming Age* (1896), which vividly identifies heterosexuality as a psychological and conceptual source of disenchantment, or a form of detached engagement with the world, as well as economic subjugation and imperial conquest:

> The sex-passion in man is undoubtedly a force—huge and fateful—which has to be reckoned with... Man with his great uncoordinated nature has during these later centuries dominated the other sex, and made himself the ruler of society. In consequence of which we will naturally have a society made after his pattern...a society ungrown, which on its material side may approve itself a great success, but on its more human and affectional side seems at times an utter failure...It is very maddening at times to think that...the organization of society...should be in the hands of...men, to whom it seems quite natural that our marriage and our social...

institutions should lumber along over the bodies of women, as our commercial institutions grind
down the bodies of the poor, and our 'imperial' enterprise over the bodies of barbarian races.\(^\text{30}\)

My point in telegraphically raising these texts is not to merely correct some
historiographical bias or redress an omission in the annals of 19\textsuperscript{th} century community design. It is
to recuperate the specifically counter-imperial context in which ethical possibility was rooted in
habit; it is to show how the very possibility of the ethical included the practice of looking at other
groups with which we are intimately tied to reflect on our own habits (think back to Marion
Mahony’s rhetoric of the \textit{inter-organized} local group, and Carpenter’s digging up of Irish
footwear, or lack thereof, as an object lesson for their English subjugators).

In each of these texts, self-knowledge is a predicate of our recognition of the other. What
is more, such recognition is situated in our everyday relations in the world, and as such requires
no special deliberation or divine inspiration. Truth or correctness, from this vantage, is \textit{not}
something that we gain through detached observation. It is an engaged form of judgment; a form
of responsiveness to evaluative meaning that we constantly and unconditionally come upon in
the world. In this way, anyone, young or old, could be a moral exemplar. Exemplary conduct
requires no special form of looking at past event or any visionary proclamations about some
putatively universal future. Yet, it was this appeal to the sheer force of example that would come
to be mis-understood as an improper socialism; a subjectivism unmoored from material conditions.

\^\text{30}. Edward Carpenter, \textit{Love’s Coming of Age} (Chicago: Stockham Publishing, 1902), 31, 32, 34, 35.
In his 1892 tract on utopian and scientific socialism, Engels was deeply concerned with the political context in which the various metaphysical attitudes that go by the names of ‘science’, ‘materialism’, and ‘deism’ were historically formulated and set to work. It is in keeping with this commitment that Engels located the emergence of his own “historical materialism”—or the methodological insistence that the philosophical and political confrontations that marked the transformation of feudalism to capitalism were inseparable from changes in economic conditions—within industrialized societies where for the first time distinct economic classes could be discerned. For Engels, the contingency of historical materialism did not preclude its use as a method for analyzing developments prior to class formation, and indeed he masterfully presented just such an analysis of the philosophical, political, and economic foundations of historical materialism itself. Lurking in this cunning defense of historical materialism lay the grounds for declaring that the programs of Saint Simon, Fourier, and Owen “were foredoomed as Utopian”: emerging as these programs did circa 1800, these could only be “crude theories” that corresponded to “crude capitalistic conditions and crude class conditions.” Thus, “the more completely [these new social systems] were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure phantasies.” Although Engels (along with Marx) readily assimilated Saint Simon, Fourier, and Owen as precursors to International Socialism, Engels belittled them for being unable to recognize the integrated character of philosophical inquiry, political practice, and economic conditions. For this reason, Engels claimed, Saint Simon, Fourier, and Owen could only conceive of society as riddled with injustices the removal of which

31. Engels, Socialism, xviii.
32. Ibid, 11.
33. Ibid, 12.
was the task of reason. It was necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments.\textsuperscript{34}

Wherever possible. This was another way for Engels to register his principal complaint against utopian schemes. Utopia literally signified 'no-where'. Utopian schemes were not doomed to fail because they were too rosy, or because they attempted to achieve too much. They were doomed to fail because they were imposed without regard for the material conditions necessary for socialism to take root. Imposing an allegedly perfect social order “wherever it was possible” only confirmed that utopia belonged to no where in particular. Worse still, the “Utopians’ mode” mistook socialism to merely be the “expression of absolute truth, reason, and justice, [which] has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power.”\textsuperscript{35}

The problem with all quests for “absolute truth”, according to Engels, was that it conceived of the truth as existing “independent of time, space, and the historical development of man.”\textsuperscript{36} Thus, despite its nomenclature, Saint Simon, Fourier, and Owen each had their own version of “absolute truth” conditioned by the particularities of their individual circumstances and “subjective understanding”.\textsuperscript{37} These different subjective understandings, being irreconcilable, gave rise to “a kind of eclectic, average Socialism...[in] the minds of most socialist workers in France and England. Hence a mish-mash allowing of the most manifold shades of opinion; a mish-mash of such critical statements, economic theories, pictures of future society.”\textsuperscript{38}

The notion that political eclecticism was incompatible with organized socialist activity is echoed in an apocryphal comment attributed to Henry Hyndman, who founded the Social Democratic Federation in Britain in 1881: “I do not want the [socialist] movement to be a

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 26.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 27.
depository of old cranks, humanitarians, vegetarians, anti-vivisectionists, and anti-vaccinationists, arty-crafties and all the rest of them...They confuse the story.”39 What we should note from these comments by Engels and Hyndman is that it was not enough to abjure “mish-mash” and confusion; the disorder had to be attributed to an incongruous reliance on individual volition—an anathema to a social understanding of the world. And the perpetrators of the disorder had a name: cranks. As a noun, ‘crank’ had, by the middle of the 19th century, come to signify a person who is apt to take up eccentric notions or impractical projects. So derisive were the connotations of the word ‘crank’ that George Bernard Shaw, the Rossetti sisters, and M.K. Gandhi would all use it with a deliberate edginess to insist on the virtue of exilic politics—the affective and ethical possibilities that could only exist between misfits and not within the format of representational politics.40 In other words, the very descriptor of idiosyncrasy (and idiocy) was at the same time being used to assert incommensurability as a valid and honorable quality of counter-imperial ethics and politics.

40. An example of how George Bernard Shaw used the word ‘crank’ to describe his own exilic status can be found in an essay he penned in 1889 for The Star: “I moved amidst cranks, Bohemians, unbelievers, agitators, and...riff-raff of all sorts.” (‘crank, n.5”. OED, Oxford University Press). In their discussion of the space of anarchist practice, Helen and Olivia Rossetti described the office of a fictional anarchist journal as a resort for a “strange medley of outside cranks and déclassés...There appeared to be a magnetic attraction about the place to tramps, désouvré cranks, argumentative people with time on their hands, and even downright lunatics. Foreigners of all tongues assembled in the office.” (Isabel Meredith [Helen and Olivia Rossetti], A Girl Among the Anarchists, London: Duckworth, 1903, p. 131). See also Judy Greenway, “No Place for Women? Anti-Utopianism and the Utopian Politics of the 1890s,” Geografiska Annaler Series B, Human Geography 84, no. 3/4, Special Issue: The Dialectics of Utopia and Dystopia (2002): 201-209 for an astute reading of the turn to fiction to critique anarchist practice while retaining the critique of bourgeois domesticity. Of the numerous occasions that M.K. Gandhi described himself as a crank in the course of his discussions of hospitality, vegetarianism, and the non-instrumental nature of non-violence, one of the funniest and most strident declarations can be found in his weekly publication Young India: “I have been known as a crank, faddist, mad man. Evidently the reputation is well deserved. For wherever I go, I draw to myself cranks, faddists, mad men...They often find their way to Sabarmati [the ashram, or commune, that Gandhi built on the outskirts of Ahmedabad in 1915].” (Gandhi, “Food Faddists,” in Young India 11, no. 24 (June 13, 1929): 193). For a fuller discussion of how Gandhi’s self-description as a crank and faddist resisted the representational logic and teleological outlook of liberal politics see Devji, Impossible Indian, especially pp. 88, 103 – 104. Paul Laity, “A brief history of cranks,” Cabinet 20 (Winter 2005/06) provides some insight into the contours of the disqualification of certain English socialists as cranks, but fails to situate this discourse in its international setting.

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For their part, Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin never referred to themselves, or any of the neighbors in the subdivisions they designed, as misfits. However, Mahony did go on to advocate for a politics that recognized the incommensurability of different peoples. Here are her remarks from Magic of America on the friendship she formed with other women undergraduates at MIT:

Far apart from each other in their spheres and interests and points of view yet with the closest ties of affection, this one little unit can well make clear the absurdity of the hope so frequently expressed in these days that the solution of our social problems will come about through human beings becoming more alike. They are due to become more and more unlike as individuals. 41

Although it is certainly accurate to say that Mahony was no more sympathetic to the socialist focus on the commensurability of workers laboring under the same economic conditions as the basis of social analysis and revolutionary action than she was to the liberal insistence on equivalence as the only basis for a politics of state-sanctioned rights, she did share the skepticism that Engels had towards all assertions of a seamless continuity between subjectivity and agency. Beyond this parallel, Engels and Mahony appear to briefly intersect in their respective critiques of metaphysics. Here is Engels:

To the metaphysician, things and their mental reflexes, ideas, are isolated, are to be considered one after the other and apart from each other... fixed, rigid, given once for all. For him a thing either exists or does not exist... Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another; cause and effect stand in rigid antithesis one to the other... Dialectics, on the other hand, comprehends things and their representations, ideas, in their essential connection, concatenation, motion, origin, and ending... Nature is proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that is has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasing daily. 42

And here is Mahony, writing some fifty years after Engels, in Magic of America:

an essential of creation is polarity, conflict if you are not afraid of that word... the sense of smell is the first in the order of development. It, interestingly enough, is the fighting sense. It rouses man to a knowledge of his battle with the external world. It warns him of danger and

42. Engels, Socialism, 31 – 32, 34.
awakens his consciousness to the things that he can enjoy without fear. It is the first of the five senses which acquaint us with the manifested world...Through these five senses which arise from the contact or conflict of the astral with the etheric (smell, taste, seeing, warmth, hearing) the brain mind - the moon mind - is developed. Afterward if these senses have been well developed...[we can develop] the Imaginational, the Inspirational and the Intuitional senses - by which we can perceive things in the supersensible world.\textsuperscript{43}

The intersection of Engels and Mahony is this: everything that we can cognize is constituted through an antagonistic process. In fact, both Engels and Mahony speak ironically of antagonism as an essential condition for understanding that nothing can exist as an unscathed essence.

Whether Engels and Mahony shared conceptual starting points in the formation of the dialectic as a mode of philosophical understanding would require elaboration in too much detail to be accommodated here. Instead, let us look at the divergence of their lines of thinking that occurs at the very moment of their intersection. Engels claims his own present to be the first historical moment in which a scientific outlook consists in recognizing that ideas, mentalities, and things are constituted from without. To borrow phrasing from Foucault’s previously cited analysis of “What is Enlightenment?”, historical materialism is less a body of knowledge than it is a critical stance towards itself and towards the worlds it inscribes. And it is the oscillation between knowledge so gained of our mental states and knowledge so gained of the material worlds we inhabit that enables the concatenation of our subjectivity as laboring subjects living under specific economic conditions, and our collective agency as a class.

Mahony has no comparable understanding of the historicity of class formation. But the more profound methodological divergence lies in her annotation that our ability to perceive is itself formed antagonistically. Here, Mahony is following texts of Esoteric Christianity she encountered in the 1930s, which held that everything in the external world, as well as our own abilities to intuit, imagine, perceive, cognize, and experience is constituted by the interaction of

supersensible properties that cannot be reduced to natural properties that are studied with
detachment in the manner that the natural science study nature. At the same time, these
properties were not to be thought of as supernatural or somehow outside the scope of quotidian
experience. In this way, we can cognize meaning as something we come upon in the world,
without either designating such meaning to have a sacred source, or requiring detached,
scientistic explanation.

But this is to get ahead of ourselves. We need to first take stock of the circumstances of
Mahony’s encounter with modern occultism. Her introduction to the texts of esoteric Christianity
would only come as a result of the Mahony-Griffin designed subdivision of Castlecrag becoming
a hub of activity for a variety of spiritualists beginning in 1926. Prominent amongst these early
admirers of Mahony and Griffin were members of the Australian Section of the Theosophical
Society. Over the preceding two decades, the Theosophical Society had devoted considerable
energy towards studying different utopian settlement movements, paying close attention to the
Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City concept. Arguably their particular fascination with the Garden
City movement owed much to Howard’s much vaunted promise of a peaceful path to real
reform—itself a thinly veiled attempt by Howard to assuage fears that his scheme was socialist,
or, worse, utopian. It was in the Theosophical Society’s intimate embrace of the Garden City
movement that its Australian Section can be found literally wandering around the burgeoning
Castlecrag subdivision. In what follows, I document the Theosophical Society’s interest and
involvement in the Garden City movement, and argue that the Theosophical Society re-scripted
Ebenezer Howard’s associational politics through its pedagogical activities in the First Garden
City of Letchworth, through the construction of its own Theosophical Garden City on the
outskirts of Bombay, and through its program of public events advocating Garden City living in
Australia. It was in the context of this re-scripting that Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin were drawn into the spiritual politics of modern occultism; an association which began in 1926 when the General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Australia hosted them at a vegetarian dinner for “practical idealists.”

44. “Advance! Australia Club,” *Advance! Australia* 1, no. 4 (October 1926): 185
Fig. 4.1: Edward Carpenter wearing sandals c. 1905.
Theosophists Theorize the Garden City

In this section, I briefly survey the Theosophical Society’s engagement with Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City concept, noting how the Society embraced and transformed the notion of seceding from existing metropolitan centers as well as the notion of cooperative living that were closely associated with Howard’s concept and the Garden City movement. The Theosophical Society’s interest in the Garden City dates back to 1904 when two English Theosophists took up residence in the burgeoning First Garden City of Letchworth. It peaked in the mid-1920s with the construction of a Theosophical Garden City on the outskirts of Bombay, and the launch of a movement to popularize Garden City living in Australia. I argue that the Theosophical Society produced the British Empire as the location for articulating a new politics, in the sense that their activities took place within the British Empire (England, India, Australia), and in the sense that the political status of these sites (metropole, colony, dominion) constituted the conceptual terrain the Theosophical Society actively re-theorized by posing conflict as an opportunity to affirm the value of universal brotherhood—a notion of fraternity that exceeded kinship and commonality.

The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 in New York by H.P. Blavatsky, a Russian writer, along with Henry Steel Olcott, a veteran of the American Civil War. Although their earliest collaborations involved experiments in mediumship and paranormal phenomena, they quickly abandoned these pursuits and decamped for India where they declared universal brotherhood, the comparative study of religions, science, and philosophy, and investigations into unexplained laws as their primary objectives. My concern here is with a slightly later period in the Theosophical Society’s history, when it was under the leadership of the ex-socialist and ardent supporter of Irish and Indian Home Rule, Annie Besant (1847 – 1933), and her successor George Sydney Arundale (1878 – 1945). Under their leadership, particularly in the mid-1920s,
the Theosophical Society waded into public debates on national self-determination, free trade and immigration, the virtues of temperance versus prohibition, the need for co-education, the imperative to stop animal vivisection, and the format of civil disobedience. The details of all of these debates need not detain us, but we ought to note that these debates were conducted without the slightest trace of contempt for opposing points of view and those that held them. This methodological commitment to non-violent debate extended to the Theosophical Society’s transformation of Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City concept. Though Besant and Arundale, amongst other Theosophists, did not share the utilitarian conception of nature that was foundational to Howard’s concept as well as the Unwin-Parker plan for the First Garden City of Letchworth, the Theosophical Society never publicly criticized Howard, Unwin, or Parker. Instead, the Theosophical Society embraced the Garden City idea of living in a relatively dense setting away from existing metropolitan sites and surrounded by an agricultural greenbelt with the intention of shifting attitudes towards nature and politics, including the very attitudes that prompted and sustained the English Garden City movement.

The Theosophical Society’s engagement with the Garden City movement has been almost entirely ignored by the field of planning history, and on the few occasions when the subject has come up for discussion it has been obscured by muddled historiography and hearsay. Take the case of the Theosophical Society’s early presence in the First Garden City of Letchworth. Mervyn Miller’s *Letchworth* lumps Theosophists together with an assortment of arcadians and mystics who lived in Letchworth in a manner that is all too reminiscent of George Orwell’s sneering description of socialism as a “magnetic force every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, ‘Nature Cure’ quack, pacifist, and feminist in England.”

Orwell’s attack specifically arose in the context of the “disquieting-prevalence of cranks” at an Independent Labour Party gathering in Letchworth in 1937. For his part, Miller reads Orwell’s jibe as a propagandistic lament on the state of English Socialism. What Miller does not seem to notice is that he reproduces the structure of Orwell’s argument by refusing to concede the distinction between varieties of mystical thinkers, and by refusing to consider the ethical and political possibilities achieved through regimes governing diet, bodily comportment, and sexual relations. Miller’s only interest in notating the presence of fringe groups like the Theosophical Society in Letchworth is to affirm the idyllic character of the First Garden City and the visionary credentials of its founders.

While conventional histories of town planning, such as Miller’s Letchworth, have presented the Theosophical Society’s presence in the First Garden City as epiphenomenal with respect to the form of the city, urban and architectural historians have entirely ignored the Theosophical Society’s role in conveying Ebenezer Howard’s concept to the distant reaches of the British Empire. Crucially, the Theosophical Garden City built in the Bombay suburb of Juhu in the mid-1920s has never before been subjected to historical scrutiny or architectural analysis. Although the settlement remains in almost the same configuration as was proposed in 1924, few of its current members are aware that it was conceived of in the context of the Theosophical Society’s two-decade long interest in the Garden City concept. Contributing to the relative obscurity of the place, and its founding impetus, is the omission of the words ‘garden city’ from its current name. The settlement is now colloquially referred to by its residents and other Theosophists as the “Juhu Colony”, and by the few outsiders who know of it as “Parsi Colony” (Parsi means Persian, and a considerable fraction of the Theosophical Society’s membership in Bombay are Persian-descent Zoroastrians).

46. Miller, Letchworth, 92.
Finally, despite organizing radio broadcasts, public lectures, and print publications in the mid-1920s on the subject of town planning in general and on garden suburbs in particular, the Australian Section of the Theosophical Society receives absolutely no mention in either general surveys of Australian planning history, or even in specific studies on the Australian reception of the Garden City idea.47

At one level my study redresses these errors and gaps in the history of the Garden City movement. But beyond that it challenges the historiography of early 20th century (British) town planning as primarily a majoritarian venture designed to improve public health outcomes and real estate values. Likewise, it seeks to correct a historiographical bias that has construed modern occultism to be far removed from everyday concerns and lost in a world of make-believe.48

Continuing from the semantic history of ‘utopians’, ‘cranks’, and ‘practical idealists’ from the beginning of this chapter, this study emphasizes the moral dimensions of town planning and argues that normative concerns about self-governance and cooperation were central to the emergence of town planning as a technology of state at the local level.49 This analytical focus uncovers a previously unexamined archive of the transnational formulation of the Garden City as a site of exemplary conduct, thus challenging conventional planning histories that describe the

Garden City as a coherent formal scheme that was replicated outside Britain with varying degrees of success.  

Our survey of the Theosophical Society’s engagement with the Garden City concept begins in 1904 with the inauguration of the First Garden City of Letchworth and the arrival of its first residents, amongst them a Miss Hope Rea and a Mrs. Kenyon Rogers both of whom were English Theosophists. The earliest published record of the Theosophical Society’s institutional presence in Letchworth dates back to 1908 when its Letchworth Centre opened in Co-Operation Hall on Leys Avenue—a space most likely rented from the Salvation Army. At that time, organized Theosophical activity consisted of free public lectures on occultism and its relevance to social problems as well as study sessions on key texts by H.P. Blavatsky. By 1912, what had


51. There is no exact record of when they arrived in Letchworth but obituaries and remembrances published in The Citizen after Hope Rea’s death in 1922 mentioned her arriving “while the town was being founded, and because she was in sympathy with the aims set forth in prospectus.” (“Death of Miss Hope Rea,” The Citizen, 20 October 1922). “The Late Miss Hope Rea: Tributes from Letchworth Citizens,” The Citizen, 3 November 1922, includes a letter by “D.H.” stating that Rea and Rogers arrived in Letchworth together. Rea, whose full name was Ada Hope Russell Rea, lived in a home called “Overhill” on Broadway, which she shared with Rogers, also known as Georgiana Eliza Rogers. Upon her death, Rea left her household effects, an annuity, and “a legacy equal to one-half of the renal value of her house” to Rogers “in remembrance of years of unbroken friendship and tender care.” (Local Wills. Herts Express, 16 December 1922). Records kept in The National Archives of UK show that Rogers served on the board of directors of the Theosophical Education Trust (in Great Britain and Ireland) Ltd. from its inception in 1916 until her resignation in 1930; Hope Rea served alongside her until her death. See The National Archives of UK (hereafter TNA) BT 31/32221/143286, No. of Company: 143286; Theosophical Educational Trust (in Great Britain and Ireland) Ltd.

52. Theosophical Society (Letchworth Centre), Theosophical Society Folder, First Garden City Heritage Museum. Though this pamphlet is undated, A.W. Brunt, The Pageant of Letchworth (Letchworth: Letchworth Printers, 1942) notes that the Salvation Army held its first indoors meeting in Co-Operation Hall above its Leys Avenue shop in 1908 (p. 59). The date and month of lectures listed in Theosophical Society (Letchworth Centre) consistently match the 1908 calendar, which lends further evidence to 1908 being the first recorded year of organized Theosophical activity in Letchworth. The pamphlet also lists a weekly study session on H.P. Blavatsky’s The Secret Doctrine at the “Overhill” residence of Rea and Rogers.

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been the Letchworth Centre was now called the Garden City Lodge, and its activities included talks on the American poet Walt Whitman and the French vitalist philosopher Henri Bergson.\textsuperscript{53} What is more, the Lodge and the Theosophical Society’s sub-group The Order of the Star began to organize member-only meetings, and meetings were no longer held in the Salvation Army’s Co-operation Hall.\textsuperscript{54} More direct evidence of the growing membership, and resources, of the Letchworth branch of the Theosophical Society can be found in its successful construction of a purpose-built, one-room lodge in 1914 at the urging of Hope Rea (Figures 4.5, 4.6, 4.7).\textsuperscript{55} Inaugurated by Annie Besant herself, this brown brick building was named Vasanta Hall in a tribute to Besant (\textit{Vasanta} is a Sanskrit word denoting the spring season. The Hindi and Punjabi word ‘\textit{Basant}’, which is derived from it refers to the spring, and is also a homonym for ‘Besant’.).

Besides founding and leading the local branch of the Theosophical Society, Hope Rea’s first years in Letchworth were spent writing and producing a series of mystical dramas that she called “Garden City Folk Plays”.\textsuperscript{56} But Hope Rea’s and the Theosophical Society’s more lasting contribution to Letchworth was the creation of an innovative mixed-gender school in 1915. Inspired by the Theosophical Society’s involvement in education in India, Hope Rea and others would work to create the Garden City Theosophical School. Shortly after the School’s inauguration in January 1915, it published a prospectus describing how the concept of the Garden City fitted with the concept of a Theosophical education.\textsuperscript{57} For example, it included the following extract from a private letter by the President of the Theosophical Society Annie Besant:

\begin{quote}
53. \textit{Garden City Lodge Theosophical Society} (1912–13), Theosophical Society Folder, First Garden City Heritage Museum.  
54. Ibid.  
\end{quote}
Education as Service (by J. Krishnamuti) outlines our ideals. These are to be worked out in practice, according to the possibilities of the place. Letchworth (Garden City) ought to be a good ground, and it would be a very wide thing to start a Theosophical School there, i.e., one in which religion would be treated as one root with various branches, all scriptures used, etc.\(^{58}\)

The prospectus went on to make explicit how the hubris of Letchworth might match the equally ambitious aims of the Garden City Theosophical School:

Garden City, is, in the words of its founder, Mr. Ebenezer Howard, ‘the most comprehensive social experiment of our time.’ It is fitting, then, that a Theosophical School should find its place there.

The town (34 miles from London) stands in the midst of an agricultural district on the uplands of Hertfordshire, and every effort has been made by the Garden City Company to preserve the existing natural beauties.

The climate is healthy and bracing; the Garden City has, in fact, provided itself to be ‘Europe’s most healthy town.’\(^{59}\)

It was not just that the Theosophical Society viewed the First Garden City as an opportunity to test their ideals. As the School’s prospectus put it, the Theosophical Society had conceived of education in much the same way that Garden City’s founders had conceived of Letchworth—as a beacon that would influence its surroundings and create model citizens:

The school must be a centre of good and joyous influences, radiating from it to the neighbourhood. Studies and games must be turned to the building of character, to the making of the good citizen, the lover of his country.\(^{60}\)

If reports on the Theosophical Society’s 1920 conference on pedagogy and the Garden City are anything to go by, the impression that the Garden City was both the setting and the template for the practical implementation of novel social programs was a widely held one. Take for instance the comments of the public health specialist Dr. Ralph H. Crowley, who apparently noted that whereas “so-called ‘cranks’” had been unable to implement pedagogical reforms in existing schools, “the Garden City or New Town gave opportunities for wise experimental

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58. Ibid, 4.
60. Ibid, 4.
work." Crowley called for the school in the Garden City to be “the centre of the community,” not only anchoring community life for children and adults, but also setting an example of reform and daily practice that was economizing rather than wasteful. Crowley did not identify himself as a Theosophist, but did enroll his daughter Mary (who would go on to be Britain’s leading school architect) in the Garden City Theosophical School at Letchworth. More generally, what we should take away from all these comments by Crowley and Besant on the conceptual links between experimental pedagogy and the Garden City is that the Theosophical Society’s earliest engagement with the Garden City concept included a lucid understanding of the opportunities for social reform structured by Ebenezer Howard’s public health claims. This is important to bear in mind as we travel to Bombay and Australia, where the Theosophical Society would extend the meaning of the Garden City concept with very little reference to Howard’s public health claims.

George Sydney Arundale was an important educationist in the first decades of the 20th century. An early principal of the Theosophical Society-founded Central Hindu College in Benares, Arundale was also a founding member of the Theosophical Education Trust, which governed the Garden City Theosophical School in Letchworth. It was against the backdrop of the Society’s growing presence in Letchworth and Benares that Arundale raised the possibility of the Theosophical Society strengthening its presence in Bombay. Here is how he apparently put it at the Theosophical Society’s 1922 convention held at its international headquarters in Adyar: “‘You know that I believe that just as Adyar represents Power, and Benares Wisdom, does Bombay represent Activity.’”63 He is also supposed to have spoken of the three cities as forming a triangle, saying “‘How happy we should all be if Bombay would complete the triangle—Adyar at the apex, Benares on the right and Bombay on the left, at the base.’”64

Regardless of how contrived Arundale’s designations may seem to us—‘power’ for the organizational seat of the Theosophical Society, ‘wisdom’ for the historic center of the Society’s educational activities and place of pilgrimage for Hindus, and ‘activity’ for the region’s leading trading city—it was taken seriously by a group of Bombay-based Theosophists who, in 1924, claimed it as their inspiration for building a Theosophical Garden City on the outskirts of Bombay. In fact, the very first illustration in their promotional booklet for this proposed settlement was a map of the Indian subcontinent indicating the vertices of Arundale’s imaginary triangle (Fig. 4.11). That proposing, designing, financing, building, and eventually running a Garden City were presented as instantiations of ‘activity’ should make us pause and question planning histories that exclusively conceive of occultism as a fanciful endeavor that at best only

64. Ibid.
added colorfulness to the serious business of solving over-crowding, high infant mortality, and all the other public health problems that we are told town planning was created to address.

After a brief search, the promoters of this garden city identified a stretch of beachfront in Juhu—which at the time was still a sparsely inhabited suburb northwest of the municipal boundary of Bombay Island (Fig. 4.12)—where they would develop Vasantapuram (literally Basant/Besant City). Here is how the promotional booklet described the opportunity the promoters had found in Juhu:

This extensive palmgrove overlooking the gentle curve of the bay gives health to the sickly, rest to the weary and inspiration to the idealists.

We cannot be too thankful for having been guided to a spot like this for the founding of a Theosophical Garden City. Its distance—a mile and ¼—from the railway station may be considered a hardship but a motor bus service is contemplated. The quadrupling and electrification of the B.B. & C.I. Railway suburban line will further shorten the time spent in journeying to and from the city.65

For the Garden City purist, a description like this might well set off an alarm. What kind of Garden City is this if residents were expected to be regularly “journeying to and from the city”? Surely to be worthy of the mantle ‘Garden City,’ Vasantapuram should have offered some hope for employment, and some connection to agriculture within its bounds? Without that, at best, it could be referred to as a Garden Suburb. Moreover, the promotional copy about giving “health to the sickly” makes it sound more like a sanitarium than a place of residence. In fact, the promotional booklet stated that the proposed Bombay Theosophical Colony would appeal to three sub-groups of Theosophists: 1) city residents looking for healthier surroundings; 2) residents outside Bombay Island who might be looking for a retirement home where work is combined with worship and a restful life; 3) those “desirous of a Vanaprastha life.”66 The booklet continued,
“Above all, the Colony seeks to become an *Ashram* for the aspirant, an asylum for the soul-sick, a peace-lover’s paradise.""}67

The turn to Sanskrit in the preceding sentences is crucial to understanding the stakes of the Theosophical Society’s transformation of Ebenezer Howard’s concept in its Vasantapuram project. Let us first consider the meanings of the word ‘*ashram*’. Etymologically it signifies a nearness to exertion, with ‘śram’ conveying an austere form of effort. In modern South Asian politics, the *ashram* referred as much to a secluded place as it did to an epistemic site for producing new sorts of neighborly relations outside of the logic of imperialism and its derivative forms of anti-colonial nationalism.68 ‘Vanaprastha’ literally means ‘moving towards the forest’. It is said to be the penultimate stage or āśrama of life. These two usages of *ashram/aśrama* are linked within a ritualized notion of duty or dharma. A simple, perhaps simplistic, way to think of that link is to say that in 20th century South Asia, it was a nearness to exertion that allowed counter-imperialists to ritualistically appropriate their place in the world. The reverberation of notions of nearness, exertion, neighborliness, ritual, duty, appropriation in the promotional copy for Vasantapuram is hard to ignore. If my brief sojourn through the modern usage and etymological connotations of *ashram* and *vanaprastha* is correct, then it will go a long way in helping us make sense of seemingly incongruous promises like providing a place where work is combined with worship and a restful life. Moreover, the ethical dimensions of duty that I am claiming were attached to the modern usage of *ashram* and *vanaprastha* might hush the anxiety of our hypothetical Garden City purist who is concerned that Vasantapuram was just an ordinary suburb or retirement colony.

67. Ibid.

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The architectural and urban designs for Vasantapuram were drawn by a Theosophist and late entrant into the Arts and Crafts movement named C.B. Kora of the Bombay-based architectural firm Kora & Bhatt. The promotional booklet for this settlement actually presents two schemes: a six acre “Scheme In Hand” (Fig. 4.13), and a twenty acre “Whole Scheme” (Fig. 4.14). The “Scheme In Hand” consisted of thirty cottages in three different variants (Figures 4.15, 4.16, & 4.17), a Masonic Temple, and an existing cottage (Fig. 4.18) that was to be incorporated into the Theosophical Garden City. Judging by the number of bedrooms across the specified mix of cottages, the probable gross density for the “Scheme In Hand” was fifteen people an acre, which would be considerably less than the fifty people an acre net density implied by Letchworth town planner Raymond Unwin’s Nothing Gained From Overcrowding! (1912). The “Whole Scheme” consisted of eighty-five cottages, five distinct congregational spaces, a mix of recreational, cultural and work spaces that were to be used communally by Vasantapuram residents, shared infrastructure, and centrally located open spaces. Again, judging by the total number of bedrooms in the specified eighty-five cottages, the gross density for the “Whole Scheme” was probably as low as twelve persons an acre.

There are two spatial features of cooperative living in Vasantapuram that, upon close scrutiny, reveal how the Theosophical Society’s moral philosophical claims about conflict and identity were materialized through urban design. The first feature is the co-location of congregational spaces, and the second is the spatial distribution governing commensalism.

The prospectus published in 1924 by the Vasanta Theosophical Co-operative Housing Society, the legal entity that promoted Vasantapuram, is a good place to begin our inquiry into

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69. Vasantapuram.
70. Raymond Unwin, Nothing Gained by Overcrowding! (Westminster: P.S. King & Son, 1912).
the location of congregational spaces. The document opens with a recitation of the promoters’ motivations for building a Theosophical Garden City:

The time has now come when an earnest attempt by members of the Theosophical Society in Bombay should be made to lead Theosophical Community Life. In order to achieve this objective it is essential that members, living in different places scattered over a wide area and meeting only on occasions should find a common and suitable spot where cheap and yet commodious dwellings can be made available with all the advantages of important Theosophical Institutions for the benefit of the members and their families.⁷¹

The prospectus is relatively coy about the work of these “important Theosophical Institutions”, but expresses a discernable preference as to their location:

The first requisite in preparing the plans of the Colony will be the reservation of ten thousand square yards of land, preferably in the centre, for communal Theosophical purposes such as (1) Headquarters Hall and Library, (2) E.S.T. Shrine, (3) Masonic Temple, (4) Star Home, (5) Sūryāshrama (for the Order of the Brothers of Service).⁷²

The plan for the “Whole Scheme” follows this prescription quite carefully (Fig. 4.14). In fact, Headquarters Hall is the only building to be depicted on the plan; the other proposed structures are only indicated by labels. Despite its palpable importance, neither the prospectus nor the promotional booklet offers any further information on the functional or spatial organization of Headquarters Hall. The promotional booklet only references it in terms of the open spaces and buildings that will immediately surround it:

Headquarters Hall will be surrounded by ample grounds, at four corners of which will be located the Co-Masonic Temple, the E.S.T. Shrine, Graha Geha (Star Headquarters) and Suryashrama. These five will form the power house from which, it is presumed, will radiate those spiritual influences which alone can make brotherhood a reality and life a joyous sacrifice in the service of humanity.⁷³

Here again, we encounter the rhetoric of a positive influence radiating outwards from a center. In Letchworth, Annie Besant and Ralph Crowley had each described the Garden City Theosophical School as an epicenter of civic participation. In Vasantapuram, the hope was that

⁷² Ibid.
⁷³ Vasantapuram.
the co-location of the Theosophical Society's often feuding sub-groups and affiliates would create a shared space that did not otherwise exist in Bombay, and that this example of fraternal relations based on difference would set an example for others to follow. We might also note that this form of fraternity is described in terms of "a joyous sacrifice"—a reminder of the ἀσκῆσις that was formulated by designating Vasantapuram an ashram. As the Vasanta Theosophical Co-operative Housing Society's prospectus put it, "The Colony will provide an Āshrama for those Theosophists who are keen on the practice of Brotherhood in their daily lives by bringing together in one inter-family life, members of different communities, races and cults."74

Although the Vasanta Theosophical Co-operative Housing Society's prospectus expressed a preference for this shared space to be centrally located---a preference that Kora & Bhatt faithfully represented in their "Whole Scheme"---the shared space that was actually built in 1926 is neither centrally located, nor nearly as imposing as the star-shaped configuration shown in the plan for the "Whole Scheme". Instead, the shared space is contained within the footprint of a single storied, two-room Masonic Temple (Figures 4.21 and 4.22). The Temple building, which is still in use for Theosophical Society meetings, is a cross-hatching of the "Scheme in Hand" and the "Whole Scheme". It occupies the half acre designated for a Masonic Temple in the "Scheme in Hand", and is therefore at the edge of the Juhu Colony rather than in the geographic center of it. Yet, the window shutters of the Temple are marked with the insignia of the Masons, the Order of the Star in the East (a messianic cult), and the Theosophical Society itself. This bland ornamental scheme, thus, metonymically conveys to outsiders that the Temple building is a shared space in much the same way that the grandiose star-shaped communal space system at the center of "Whole Scheme" putatively conveyed the shared nature of that zone.

Moving on to the spatial distribution governing commensalism in Vasantapuram, let us first note the variety of non-congregational common areas and shared amenities that are contemplated in the Vasanta Theosophical Co-operative Housing Society’s prospectus and in the subsequent promotional booklet. There was to be a Gujarati and Marathi printing press, a school with residential facilities and with ambitions to grow into a branch campus of the Theosophical Society’s World University, a lecture hall, an art section and museum, administrative offices, a free dispensary and health home for the elderly and sick, a gymnasium, swimming bath, guest house, clubhouse, and theatre. The promotional booklet also lists infrastructure that would be provided if the “Whole Scheme” were ever implemented: servants’ quarters, car garages, water storage tanks, electric power station, flour mill, carpentry workshop, goshala [cow shed], stables, as well as huts for the gardeners and watchmen.

There is an implicit hierarchy within the assortment of common spaces contemplated for the “Whole Scheme”. There are congregational buildings that are quite possibly off limits to all but a small circle of members; there are shared facilities that possibly require hired staff to remain fully operational (such as the printing press, dispensary, swimming pool); and there are tucked away spaces like the servants’ quarters that are shared with the stables. These various sorts of distinctions—amongst the Theosophists, as well as between the Theosophists and their hired help—would probably have to be negotiated quite differently within the confines of the proposed “common kitchen”. The Colony’s promoters had contemplated that this kitchen would provide Indian and European meals to Vasantapuram residents, that it would also include an eating space for a few residents who wished to dine together, and that the kitchen would be attached to “green and dry good store-houses, a Dairy, a Bakery and a Laundry.” 75 This amalgam of uses within a single plot, and probably within a single structure, implies that a single place could be the nexus of

75. Ibid.
a range of personal and impersonal relations: residents might dine together by choice or happenstance; they might wait in line with a neighbor’s servant while buying bread or milk; deliveries of provisions not grown in the kitchen garden would have required vendors to visit the common kitchen; and there would have been occasions when several Vasantapuram residents would have eaten the same meal prepared in the common kitchen at more or less the same time, but consumed it in the privacy of their own home rather than in a common dining room.

Shared kitchens and dining rooms had been integral to the co-operative housing experiment of Homesgarth at Letchworth (Fig. 4.19). But whereas advocates of Homesgarth, like C.B. Purdom, emphasized the efficiencies that could be extracted by collectivizing housekeeping, no such claims were made about communal cooking and dining in Vasantapuram.76 Likewise, we should note that unlike the many Anglo-American co-operative living arrangements of the 19th and 20th century that eliminated the private kitchen from the primary living space of an apartment or home in an effort to reduce time spent by middle-class, white Caucasian women on housekeeping, in Vasantapuram every cottage was designed to have a private kitchen.77 Even the smallest of the three variants, the “C-Type Cottage” (Fig. 4.17), which was all of 540 sq. ft., included an 85 sq. ft. kitchen that opened on to a back verandah, a living room, and a drawing room. Less a home without a kitchen, it was a home without a bedroom! In general, it says a lot about the conception of a place that the only consistent features across its three types of cottages were an 85 sq. ft. private kitchen and a 120 sq. ft. drawing room.

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77. Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981) brings into view a number of such arrangements in the United States, and criticizes Howard and Purdom, as well as modernists like Rudolph Schindler, for their patronizing stance towards women, which is especially noticeable in designs that sought to increase household efficiency rather than address struggles for gender equity. It has to be said, however, that Hayden’s account offers no insight on the relationship between these new visions of domesticity and the emancipation of slaves. See also Lynn F. Pearson, The Architectural and Social History of Cooperative Living (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988) for a similar trans-Atlantic genealogy of 19th and 20th century cooperative living.
to receive visitors. It suggests that while drawing room discussion might be a defining feature of social life in Vasantapuram, communal cooking and eating was not.

Besides the private kitchen and the drawing room to receive visitors, each cottage type had a more intimate gathering space that was both slightly smaller than the drawing room and located more towards the interior of the floor plate. In the “B-Type Cottage”, this more intimate gathering space was called a “Sitting Room” (Fig. 4.16), and in the “C-Type Cottage” it was called a “Living Room” (Fig. 4.17). Neither the “B-Type Cottage” nor the “C-Type Cottage” included a designated eating space. It was only “A-Type Cottage” (Fig. 4.15)—the largest variant of the proposed cottages of which there were to be no more than nine in the “Whole Scheme”—that included designated eating spaces in the form of a formal dining room and a breakfast porch. In fact, the “A-Type Cottage” was the only place where a designated eating space was represented at the scale of architectural plans. We might picture what eating in the clubhouse or common kitchen might have entailed, but there were no architectural illustrations for these spaces. It is as if eating were thought of as a visceral function of the body that need not be performed in a social setting. Might this be because orthodox Hindus in the 1920s maintained strict hereditary distinctions and hierarchical relations through codes governing commensalism? A frequent complaint of Indian nationalists circa 1920 was that Indians could hardly be expected to unite in their opposition to foreign rule if they were unable to eat together without regard for hierarchized distinctions of religion and caste. M.K. Gandhi offered a novel response to this particular question that is worth reviewing in order to contextualize the near total absence of architectural plans for eating spaces in Vasantapuram.

In his recent work, the intellectual historian Faisal Devji notes that M.K. Gandhi chided Indian nationalists for invoking “carnal forms of collective identification” such as eating together
and inter-marrying. M.K. Gandhi’s argument was that such forms of identification imposed a uniform sense of nationality upon disparate peoples, thus subordinating myriad forms of community to the politics of state. This, in M.K. Gandhi’s view, was not a worthy goal of anti-imperialism. He frequently said that there was no reason to ask the British to leave India if Indians were simply going to occupy the same institutions of state-centric governance and if they were going to adopt the same mentalities that had sustained colonial rule over the preceding century and a half. Acknowledging the odious forms of prejudices and institutionalized discrimination harbored through distinctions of caste, ethnicity, and religion, M.K. Gandhi nonetheless saw in these distinctions the possibility for Indian society to govern itself in a multitude of ways and thus withdraw cooperation from a fundamentally unjust state. Arguing that eating should be conceived of like other bodily functions, M.K. Gandhi eschewed corporeal conceptions of political identity that presupposed commonality based on kinship. He sought instead to form moral relations between people through regimes of disciplinary work on the self that drew from the idiom of the ashram, which I referenced earlier.

If this is the context for the near total absence of architectural plans for eating spaces in Vasantapuram, as I suspect it is, then we ought to note the materialization of individual volition within the “A-Type Cottage”. Specifically, the more intimate, or at least the more interior, space of the sitting room / living room found in B-Type / C-Type cottages is replaced with a dining room in the “A-Type Cottage”. It is plausible that with the inclusion of a dining room, the designers and promoters of Vasantapuram imagined that the owners of A-Type cottages should have the choice of inviting some of their visitors (who would have been received either in the drawing room or office) further inside to share a meal. Similarly, the inclusion of a breakfast porch on the plan suggests that the A-Type cottage owner should have the option of eating a

78. Devji, Impossible Indian, 49 – 58.
meal in partial view of his neighbors as well as strangers (the porch faced the Juhu village road). That these options constituted the most expensive and largest of the cottages is troubling. Estimated at twenty thousand Indian Rupees, the “A-Type Cottage” cost nearly five times as much as the C-Type, was two stories tall in a settlement where almost all the other structure were single-storied, had a built up area of 3200 sq. ft., and was to be located on 9,000 sq. ft. plot. The implication, whether intended or not, was that a person of means was likely to have fewer reservations about commensality.

The version of the “Scheme In Hand” that was built starting in 1926 did not include a common kitchen, and we can therefore only infer the historical significance of the near complete absence of architectural plans for eating spaces. My own inference is that although probably aware of cooperative living arrangements in Letchworth, Vasantapuram exhibits a marked reticence on the need for commensality. We cannot know with certainty if this was simply a matter of trying to avoid an explosive issue that was thought to threaten national unity, if it was a perverse attempt at preserving ritualistic notions of pollution and caste purity, or if it had more radical potential of the kind that M.K. Gandhi elaborated. What is unmistakable, however, is that cooperative living in Vasantapuram was to primarily be based on distinctions rather than on some appeal to the essential humanity of all persons. In the next section we will examine how the Theosophical Society appropriated the Garden City’s connotation of cooperative living as both a site and example of non-violent critique, and in doing so transformed Ebenezer Howard’s model of cooperation based on individual freedom into an associational politics based on difference. It is in this phase of the Theosophical Society’s engagement with Ebenezer Howard’s concept that Theosophists in Australia would chance upon the urban design work of Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin.
Brotherhood and Friendship

In 1926, just as construction on the Theosophical Garden City was beginning at Juhu, Annie Besant asked George Sydney Arundale to assume responsibility for the Australian Section of the Theosophical Society as its General Secretary. Soon after his arrival in Australia, Arundale published an essay in *The Australian Theosophist* calling for the Theosophical Society to set for itself the task of launching a worldwide transformation of politics and culture beginning in Australia:

> How well it would be if all over Australia—and everywhere else, too, of course—members, groups of members, groups of families, Centres, Lodges, seriously begin to discuss ways and means of making brotherhood more practical among themselves, discussed schemes of community living, concerted measures for doing as much together as possible, went into the possibilities of combining certain activities to make living cheaper, to make leisure more enjoyable and purposeful, to pool individual resources in pursuit of common happiness and greater efficiency. \(^\text{79}\)

Brotherhood, far from being based on kinship and filiation, had to be secured through discussion. And it was as platforms for such discussion on “schemes of community living” that Arundale launched a new journal (*Advance! Australia*), a Sydney-based radio station (2GB), and a public event series in Sydney (Crusade for a Beautiful Australia). Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin were featured in each of these venues, beginning in July 1926 when the very first issue of *Advance! Australia* included a review of the Mahony-Griffin designed subdivision of Castlecrag along Sydney’s Middle Harbour. \(^\text{80}\) The review commended their approach to site planning noting:

> the architect of Sydney’s latest suburb has laid it out like a theatre, the roads running on comfortable grades along the contours and invisible in the forest cover...Every natural feature of the estate, along four and a half miles of foreshore, is made sanctuary in acres of reserves, connected by park paths, preserving the lookout vantages for the whole community. \(^\text{81}\)

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79. Ibid, 12.
A year later, a group of Theosophists would visit Castlecrag having heard of “some scheme of a garden suburb, which marked [its architect] out as a crank among people commonly held to be sane.” The group’s impressions of the subdivision, published in the September 1927 issue of *Advance! Australia*, repeat the July 1926 review almost verbatim with one curious difference: the second review opened with a sort of confession that since the group of visiting Theosophists did not include an architect, they could not

speak from the point of view of the profession concerning Castlecrag’s special form of domestic architecture. But we can speak for the artist, the musician, the nature lover; for the housewife intent upon the working out of a domestic system in which drudgery can be pushed back far enough to leave space for real living, for the dreamer of a more brotherly social order expressed in conditions more harmonious and beautiful than modern suburbia supplies. As we realized the meaning of what we saw, we were less concerned with the particular form of expression, than with the underlying ideal.  

The ideal this group of Theosophists identified was the replacement of suburbia’s cult of individualism with a “spirit of co-operation.” The piece ends by noting that such praise from Theosophists is likely to result in “the satisfied dweller in orthodox suburbia” hurling the epithet: “‘Cranks in a crank suburb’...[but, as] one of the characters in Bernard Shaw’s St. Joan [says]: ‘We want a few mad people. See what the sane ones have brought us.’” All these reflections crystallize the point I have made about the pejorative ‘crank’ being used with a deliberate edginess to claim novel affective possibilities, no matter how idiosyncratic or marginalizing. And they further instantiate the potential that existed in identifying the Garden City concept as a model for seceding from metropolitan society and re-scripting the politics of the present.

But, what should we make of this group of Theosophists’ assertion that the more they understood what they were looking at, the more convinced they became that the particularity of form was not what they needed to focus on in their critical reflections? Or to phrase this more

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83. Ibid, 117.
84. Ibid, 119.
generally, how did the Theosophical Society’s interest in the Garden City concept, empty the concept of almost all its formal attributes? How was it that, after two decades of organized Theosophical activity in Letchworth, the Theosophical Society felt no compulsion to replicate the Unwin-Parker scheme when building its own Theosophical Garden City on the outskirts of Bombay? Why was it that despite its international headquarters in Adyar acquiring A.R. Sennett’s two-volume *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice* (1905) in 1915, the Theosophical Society did not adopt his specific engineering recommendations for Garden City planning?\footnote{A.R. Sennett, *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice* (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1905). There is an annotation showing the date of acquisition on the cover page of the copy held in the Adyar Library and Research Centre.} We can begin to answer this question by returning to Letchworth of 1914, which is when Annie Besant visited it to inaugurate Vasanta Hall (Figures 4.5, 4.6, 4.7). Rather than praise the building or its architect W.H. Cowlishaw (1869 – 1957), as might be expected of such an occasion, Besant remarked that the wood, brick, and glass of Vasanta Hall were only outward symbols of the goodness of heart of those who were willing to dedicate themselves to service. “The physical building was” *The Citizen* reported Besant as saying, “necessary only as a meeting-place”, and the whole neighborhood ought to welcome it as such.\footnote{“Mrs. Annie Besant at Letchworth,” *The Citizen*, 5 June 1914.}

The notion that it was the spirit in which Theosophists gathered that would prompt strangers to welcome them as friends and neighbors was one that George Sydney Arundale took very seriously. He repeatedly urged Theosophists to debate each other with the greatest of sincerity and firmness of conviction because it was only if we cared about truth that we could defend it without degenerating into violence and name-calling. And it was this engaged form of committing to truth that would seduce strangers and make them want to be our friend. In fact, Arundale’s frequent metaphor for describing how lively debate and disagreement would draw in
others, and thereby affirm the experience and moral value of universal brotherhood, was the Garden City itself:

I see the Lodges of to-day gradually becoming communities...Little by little families congenial to each other have either built or taken houses close together on the outskirts of towns, and community living begins without the loss of individuality. More and more, that which can advantageously be done in common is done in common, with the result that living becomes cheaper, and much more time becomes available for the larger work

In some cases, a number of families live together in a house specially built for the purpose—a kind of monastery without any of the disadvantages or restrictions, and giving ample opportunity for individual development...In other cases there is a kind of village community, a group of houses or cottages, self-contained, a kind of Garden City on a small scale. I can see these communities specially concern themselves with education and with amusements.87

Arundale, well aware that the Garden City concept had been originated as an act of secession from metropolitan life, was careful to stipulate that in producing the Garden City as a template for associational politics, Theosophists would not become insular or removed from those who were not Theosophists:

Though we may live on the outskirts of the town, and grow very self-contained, we shall not become in the least degree exclusive or aloof. On the contrary, the increased sense of brotherhood will compel us to regard our community life merely as a centre from which we radiate our vitality to the farthest limits of our respective circumstances. We shall take part in all the life of our surroundings as we have never taken part in it before. We shall have our center in our town or city...We shall show the world how to live...how to be full of life...in every sphere—in the home, in business, in the duties of citizenship, in leisure.88

Arundale also described how he imagined this involvement would contribute to political life:

How splendid it would be if all Theosophists in Australia were engaged in one way or in another in active politics. Some taking one side, others taking another side; some striving for this, some striving for the opposite...I can picture to myself members of the Society after working hard in this or that political camp, coming to their Lodge meetings and laughing heartily over their homeric struggles with each other, Theosophy and the Theosophical Society ensuring that comradeship...And when I suggest that they will laugh over their struggles with each other I do not mean for a moment that there will be no reality in their differences. On the contrary, they will cling with great conviction to their respective

88. Ibid, 12.

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panaceas. But they will laugh at there being so many panaceas for what is after all but one disease – the disease of un-brotherliness.\textsuperscript{89}

Put differently, conflict was an opportunity to affirm the value of universal brotherhood. Without antagonism, without sincere disagreement, fraternity that was not based on kinship was meaningless. Might this be why Arundale, as well as other Theosophists, saw empire as a more conducive setting for the practice of universal brotherhood than the nation-state, where fraternity implied conformity and a uniform identity rather than a plurality of differences? Empire, by definition, comprised of people of different races and nationalities. Rather than dissolve empire into myriad nation-states, the challenge as Arundale (amongst others) saw it was to make empire into a freely associating federation. To achieve this in the context of the British Empire was not just a matter of giving Britain’s various overseas territories, colonies and dominions the choice of joining a federation or not. It required a politics based on exemplary conduct:

I see that the [Australian] Section forms part of the heart of the great League of Nations which to-day we call the British Empire...The greatest safeguard against wars, quarrels and all kinds of disruptive forces is the Theosophical Society...How does this come about? Not by force. The Society does not believe in force, even if it had the force to wield, which it has not. But by compelling example...Theosophists live differently...They do not live at the expense of others. They do not live on the pain of others, whether human or sub-human...they live hygienically. Their clothes, their homes, all their arrangements for the care of their body, are designed to this end. And they have learned that hygienic living does not merely mean pure air, the right values of food, and so on; it means also artistic and rhythmic living, graceful living.\textsuperscript{90}

This, then, was the crucial difference between the associational politics of Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City concept and the Theosophical Society’s version of it: Whereas Howard had famously posited individual freedom as the basis of cooperation in his Three Magnets diagram (Fig. 4.2), Arundale and other Theosophists looked at conflict, antagonism, and difference as opportunities to affirm the universal value of brotherhood. This entailed refusing to


denounce anyone who disagreed with us; refusing to “impute unworthy motives” to them; refusing to show contempt towards them.\textsuperscript{91} This is how Arundale hoped Theosophists would set examples to live by. For him, the Garden City was as much a place in which such examples could be set (and hopefully followed), as it was itself a concept that could be gently modified without the slightest hint of contempt or disapproval for its originators.

\textsuperscript{91} "Without Fear or Favour," \textit{Advance! Australia}, 1, no. 1 (July 1926): 2.
THE THREE MAGNETS.

TOWN

LACK OF SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY. 
HIGHER WAGES.
TIMELESSNESS. 
CLOSING OUT LIVE.
ISOLATION.
HIGH RENTS.
EXCESSIVE REQUIREMENTS.
FOUL AIR.
SLUMS.

COUNTRY

LACK OF IDEAL COMMUNITY.
HAZARDS OF WORK.
HIGH RENTS.
LONG HOURS.
LACK OF DRAINAGE.
NATURAL LACK OF OCCUPATION.
CROWDED VILLAGES.

THE PEOPLE

WHERE WILL THEY GO?

TOWN-COUNTRY

BEAUTY OF NATURE, SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY.
FIELDS AND PARKS OF EASE.
LOW RENTS, HIGH WAGES.
LOW RENTS, LOW RENT.
LOW RATES, EIGHT TO DO.
LOW PRICES, NO SWEATING.

Fig. 4.2: Ebenezer Howard, The Three Magnets (1898)
Fig. 4.3: Ebenezer Howard, Group of Slumless Smokeless Cities (1902)
Fig. 4.4: First Garden City Ltd, Letchworth, Plan of Present Development, Spring 1924. (Courtesy: First Garden City Heritage Museum)

- Location of the Theosophical Society’s Letchworth Centre, c. 1908
  Location of Vasanta Hall, 1914 – Present
- First location of Garden City Theosophical School on Broadwater, 1915
- Second Location of Garden City Theosophical School (renamed St. Christopher) on Broadway, 1920 – 1934
- Third Location of Garden City Theosophical School (St. Christopher) on Barrington Road, 1915 – present
Fig. 4.5: W.H. Cowlishaw, Vasanta Hall, Letchworth, Entrance, 1914 (author’s photograph)

Fig. 4.6: W.H. Cowlishaw, Vasanta Hall, 1914 (author’s photograph)

Fig. 4.7: W.H. Cowlishaw, Vasanta Hall, Photograph of Interior, 1914.
Courtesy: First Garden City Heritage Museum
Fig. 4.8: C.M. Crickmer, 30 Broadwater, First Location of the Garden City Theosophical School. Courtesy: First Garden City Heritage Museum

Fig. 4.9: C.M. Crickmer, Letchworth School, 1909, Barrington Road Location of the Garden City Theosophical School/St. Christopher. Courtesy: First Garden City Heritage Museum

Fig. 4.10: Morley Horder, Purpose-Built Building for the Garden City Theosophical School (renamed St. Christopher) located on Broadway, Letchworth, 1920. Courtesy: First Garden City Heritage Museum
Fig. 4.11: Kora & Bhatt, The Tri-Angle, in *Vasantapuram—Bombay Theosophical Colony* (1924)
Courtesy: Adyar Library and Research Centre
Fig. 4.12: Kora & Bhatt, Vasantapuram – Juhu – From Bombay, in Vasantapuram (1924)
Courtesy: Adyar Library and Research Centre
Fig. 4.13: Kora & Bhatt, Scheme in Hand, in *Vasantapuram* (1924)
Courtesy: Adyar Library and Research Centre
Fig. 4.14: Kora & Bhatt, Whole Scheme, in Vasantapuram (1924)
Courtesy: Adyar Library and Research Centre
Fig. 4.15: Kora & Bhatt, A-Type Cottage, in *Vasantapuram* (1924)
Courtesy: Adyar Library and Research Centre
Fig. 4.16: Kora & Bhatt, B-Type Cottage, in *Vasanthapuram* (1924)
Courtesy: Adyar Library and Research Centre
Fig. 4.17: Kora & Bhatt, C-Type Cottage, in *Vasantapuram* (1924)
Courtesy: Adyar Library and Research Centre
Fig. 4.18: Existing Cottage in Vasantapuram
Courtesy: Adyar Library and Research Centre
Fig. 4.19: H. Clapham Lander, Plan of Homesgarth, Letchworth, 1909
Fig. 4.20: Kora & Bhatt, B-Type Cottage, Juhu, c. 1926 (author’s photograph)

Fig. 4.21: Kora & Bhatt, Masonic Temple, Juhu, 1926 (author’s photograph)

Fig. 4.22: Kora & Bhatt, Masonic Temple, Juhu, 1926 (author’s photograph)
Fig. 4.23: *Advance! Australia* (Courtesy: National Library of Australia). The page on the left is from the September 1927 review of the Mahony-Griffin designed subdivision of Castlecrag. The page on the right is the cover of the May 1, 1928 issue.
“Building for Nature”

In the preceding sections we took stock of the Theosophical Society’s engagement with the Garden City, noting in particular how various sorts of spatially mediated social distinctions formed the basis of novel forms of cooperative living. It was in the context of this two-decade long inquiry into the physical setting of moral relations between unlike peoples that the Theosophical Society identified the Mahony-Griffin subdivision of Castlecrag as a welcome departure from the norms of “orthodox suburbia”. Let me conclude by turning our attention to Mahony’s and Griffin’s own appraisal of the Garden City, beginning with the voice Griffin gave to their criticisms of contemporary town planning within the discursive space of the Theosophical Society’s engagement with Ebenezer Howard’s concept. For it is in Mahony’s and Griffin’s critical engagement with the Garden City movement that we find their most explicit enunciation of the neighbor as a new kind of moral subject.

The inaugural issue of *Advance! Australia* (July 1926) had included the Theosophists’ first favorable review of Castlecrag, identifying it as one amongst an array of initiatives that shared in the Theosophical Society’s goal of affirming the value of universal brotherhood. The September 1927 issue of *Advance! Australia* echoed this sentiment in labored prose, claiming that any attempt to insult the designers and residents of Castlecrag as ‘cranks’ would be welcomed as evidence of their flight from “Suburbia, as we know it, [which] is individualistic.”

In March 1928, Walter Burley Griffin contributed an article to *Advance! Australia*, which was summarized as supplementing the previously published narrative on “the experiment being tried out on the shore of Sydney Harbour, where a community of idealists are inhabiting a distinctive type of dwelling designed to simplify and beautify life.”

article is less a manifesto for ascetic living and more a genealogical essay on modern intellectual curiosity. Griffin instinctively declares that the results of scientific investigations over the preceding three hundred years had made humans “more and more mentally conceited, individually detached from the world”, as well as from our own sub-conscious mental states, from a conception of individuality as responsibility to human and non-human others—which Griffin cryptically refers to as “the common universal mind”—and “from religion and art in which the emotions play as great a part as the intellect.”

These remarks are made with sufficient scruple so as not to attribute these various forms of detachment to discoveries within science. Griffin is not claiming that, as moderns, we feel a sense of loss or disappointment in learning that religion and art are merely insufficient and unscientific answers to questions that properly belong to the sciences. His rather more refined claim is that an inescapable dimension of being modern is to strive for self-sufficiency; to conceive of the self as the exclusive locus of all meaning. Griffin presents the contrast between Renaissance and Medieval European architecture as evidence that this conception of the self began to take shape prior to the advent of modern science, and within multiple cultural arenas.

Griffin vividly portrays restlessness and malaise as twin psychological states that necessarily accompany the pursuit of self-sufficiency as the paramount goal of human existence:

In a world dominated by individual curiosity, success and arrogance, the marvels of inorganic and organic creation are being ruthlessly converted into transitory expedients of personal aggrandisment and physical stimuli, and the upshot of such a process must be a quarried world of rank weeds and domestic pests on the one hand, and on the other hand a few useful but diseased, dependent, degenerate plants and animals tamed and cowed.

Put differently, by mistakenly thinking of value as a subjective projection on to the material world, we moderns are unable to conceive of elements of the world that we deem to have no use

94. Ibid, 124.
95. Ibid.
or that lie outside our rational calculations as anything but “weeds” and “pests”. Griffin’s critique of an anthropocentric conception of world—implicit in his very title which asks the reader to contemplate the possibility of building activity being directed for nature rather than for the satisfaction of human goals—is reminiscent of phrases in Thoreau’s 1862 essay “Walking: “in Wildness is the preservation of the World...Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him.” 96 There is also an affinity between Thoreau’s reflections on the fruitlessness of seeking solace in transient distractions and Griffin’s observations on the same subject. Here is Thoreau in his chapter on “Economy” from Walden (1854): “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation...A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind.” 97 And here is Griffin:

The people of to-day are uneasy, straining at their limitations, whether or not they realize that those restrictions are self-imposed on their natural activities. Satisfaction dependent on external stimuli, such as movies, jazz, speedways and aerobatics, is bound to be shortlived; these betray a craving for emotional satisfaction which can never be attained except through feelings in sympathy with, rather than opposed to, practical needs and experience. 98

A way to sum up these observations would be to say that Griffin does not subscribe to a certain Burkean view of the sublime as a psychological place from which danger might seem delightful, and from which we might perceive the existence of higher beings. More generally, Griffin does not diagnose the absence of God from a world dominated by modern science as the source of our restlessness and malaise as moderns. Rather, our persistent sense of alienation emanates from a philosophical construct that touches upon our politics, our cultural and intellectual pursuits, and on our daily lives in the most unexceptional of ways. At its most rudimentary level, this construct tenuously insists that human agency consists solely in acts of individual volition and that the

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external world is something we can instrumentally control—a fallacy that is mocked with specific reference to the British Garden City movement in Marion Mahony’s Magic of America: “so important to the Briton is the functioning of his will that his appreciation of nature finds its greatest scope in gardens, even to ‘Garden’ cities.”99

Given these philosophical stakes, Griffin considers what it would take to retain the gains of modern intellectual curiosity without continuing to misconstrue the very character of our agency and its relation to the world around us. One possibility is that detached scientific inquiry could yield new discoveries on our psychological makeup that would not only offer new insight into the human subject as an object of knowledge, but also invite us to redefine the epistemology of our scientific claims: “I anticipate...the pioneering spirits that have evolved physical science [will] turn back, perhaps by way of psychological experiments, to the great mental substratum of mankind which underlies the individual conscious intellect.”100 Another possibility that Griffin expresses an openness to is the formation of a new “practical religion, compatible with modern objective science, taking into account without the prop of external agencies mankind’s vast subjective activities, desires and needs.”101

Griffin’s own preferred solution to the challenge of retaining the material as well as intellectual gains of making causal predictions (the hallmark of the scientific method) without the accompanying theoretical confusion about the site of human agency, and without ascribing the external constitution of our sense of self (which Griffin describes as our “vast subjective activities, desires and needs”) to a supernatural entity like God, is to provide people with examples to live by. Griffin’s contention is that if our daily lives are set in communities that are

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101. Ibid, 125.
simultaneously tight-knit and ecumenical, then we will be able to recognize the normative and
evaluative aspects of our responsiveness in the world. We will be able to do so in the most
quotidian of circumstances, without recourse to scientistic claims about norms, and without
recourse to other-worldly claims about punishment and reward in the afterlife.

Griffin’s name for the type of community in which we would find examples to live by is
the ‘neighborhood’—an element of urban life that he finds missing even in the regime of
decentralized local government instituted in Britain and Australia at the beginning of the 20th
century. Although Griffin sees tribal and village communities as the points of origin for
contemporary civilization, his call is not to revert to some primordial form of existence. Instead,
it is to design modern spaces that mediate supra-familial social relations:

In tribal or village communities, from which all civilization has arisen, there were essential
intermediate social units between the family and collective industry. At least there was the
neighbourhood of a few families with many interests in common and also the domestic
community of some two thousand persons all well known to each other. These were the
relationships that provided natural standards of conduct, easy and varied ways of emulation
and encouragement to free expression, and the growth of independent thinking as well as
healthy outdoor living and human contact. The physical basis out of which these qualities
have grown in the past is lacking in modern cities, and so is the human product wanting and
degenerate...Effort is being made in some parts of some cities to overcome this fatal
deficiency...by making available common properties and common spaces^2

Far from presupposing a commonality of community, the modern regime of common property was
to be constitutive of a level of sociality that simply did not exist otherwise. This notion of common
property as constitutive of supra-familial sociality, rather than simply instituted by it, is distinct
from the antecedent Christian notion of land as a gift from God that rightfully had to be shared
between all God’s creatures—a notion that is palpable in the writings of the 19th century
economic thinker Henry George, which Mahony and Griffin knew, as well as in the schemes of

102. Ibid, 128.
North America communitarian sects that Mahony and Griffin may or may not have had direct knowledge of.\textsuperscript{103}

Another way to put this would be to say that by delineating common property as a regime that encompasses self-governance as well as the governance of our relations with others, Griffin produces common property as a site of \textit{transcendence} that is entirely immanent and within modern secularity. As the passage quoted above posits, common property makes it possible for us to view and evaluate multiple ways of being in the world. And it is from this stance that we develop an understanding of how normative meaning exists in our relations with others (including non-human others). Once we realize that that meaning cannot be understood as a subjective fantasy that we project on to the world, we exit (or transcend) the "self-imposed" restrictions that have accrued over time with our ever-increasing pursuit of self-sufficiency to the exclusion of all other possible goals.\textsuperscript{104} Crucially, this transcendence does not require us to believe in the existence of God or any supernatural entity, and it does not require us to imagine meaning as having a sacred (or transcendental) source. It simply occurs in the course of daily life set in communities where neighbors, sharing spaces and bound together by rules of conduct, learn to view the world as a place we inhabit with others.

In 1947, the American architect William Gray Purcell was perplexed by Marion Mahony’s typescript for Magic of America. A few years younger than Mahony and Griffin, Purcell had been a disciple of Louis Sullivan and one of the few Chicago architects that Mahony and Griffin had consistently remained in contact with while they pursued their global practice. Already retired for health reasons, Purcell found himself struggling with how to respond to Mahony’s request for comments on the draft text she had sent him. In a private letter to the architectural historian (and creator of the Avery Architectural Index) Talbot Hamlin, Purcell described the predicament he found himself in: “There is a significant story to be told here, and I hope to put some of it to paper—to help Marion all I can. However able an architect, she is no writer of books—the text is simply distressing, and she wants me to tell her!” Hamlin, who had already seen a copy of the text, wrote back to Purcell concurring with his assessment:

I had been, frankly, at sea with regard as to what to advise [Mahony]. Obviously, as you say the text is impossible...The Avery Library [at Columbia University] is extremely happy to have the Griffin drawings which are superb documents of the true creativeness of mid-America and will form a beautiful supplement to our small but choice collection of Sullivan materials.

Eventually Purcell summoned the courage to respond to Mahony’s request for comments, informing her that the book’s inclusion of personal and professional correspondence, as well as the inclusion of extensive commentary on philosophical and religious subjects distracted from the goal of conveying the significance of Walter Burley Griffin’s oeuvre:

The text should analyse and explain Walter’s aesthetics and objectives and clearly relate this to the changing architectural world of his day...You are a great artist in the graphic and building arts but you haven’t built a structure in literature with rooms and a roof for your reader.”

Despite engaging the globalizing vocabularies of international socialism, anarchism, liberal universalism, and modern occultism, Mahony’s attempt to theorize globality was not recognized as such by Purcell and Hamlin. For Purcell, the “room” for discussing philosophical concepts was architectural form. It was only by locating Griffin’s formal accomplishments in relation to the dominant formal trends of his period as well as his immediate past, that the reader of Magic of America could appreciate his historical significance. For Hamlin, Mahony’s renderings (which he referred to as “the Griffin drawings”) constituted part of the record of the American mid-west’s contribution to the history of architecture. Text that did not support this thesis was simply “impossible”.

For Mahony, however, the historical significance of her work was its intervention in cultural and political debates over the future of empire, as she made clear in her reply to Purcell’s comments on the draft text. Thanking Purcell for his suggestions and assuring him that she wanted him to “rip snort” through the text if he thought that would make it publishable, Mahony made the following admission and assertion:

Perhaps I am wrong but my idea is that comparatively nobody reads architectural books...Neither does the name Griffin mean anything to anybody now. But people are interested in India and Australia but their ideas about them are completely wrong. This ignorance on the part of Americans bids fair to bring about another war even in 2 Or 3 decades. The word democracy as flung about now has no meaning at all.4

After inquiring if Purcell’s wife had read the text, Mahony added this parenthetical remark,

(by the way isn’t Gandi a miracle, suggesting that the minority leader, the Moslem Jinna, be made the first president of India. I would like to be able to send him a copy of this 1st. volume plus a letter. Perhaps he is the one man in the world who could comprehend.)5

Mahony and Griffin, like other Americans, admired M.K. Gandhi’s politics, and, as we saw in the last chapter, a comparison of their ethics reveals important parallels and shared precursors.

4. Letter from Marion Mahony to William Gray Purcell dated April 10, 1947, Box.FF 1.26, Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin Collection, Acc. No. 2001.4, Ryerson and Burnham Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago. 5. Ibid.
Mahony had probably learned of Gandhi’s suggestion from that morning’s Chicago Daily Tribune. The New York Times quoted Gandhi’s statement on the subject in a little more detail the same day:

I should be glad if Jinnah became the first President of the Indian Republic...I tell all Moslems that Pakistan can never be got through force or threats. By agreement and common consent, however, the whole of India can be handed over to the Moslems.

It is unclear if Mahony was aware of the details of Gandhi’s remarks, or if she simply knew that he supported the idea of making M.A. Jinnah independent India’s first president as the Tribune had reported. Gandhi’s persistent claim that the goal of anti-imperialism was for disparate colonized subjects to form moral bonds amongst one another—rather than to merely oppose foreign rule in order to form a nation-state on majoritarian lines—resonated with what I have called Mahony’s and Griffin’s global moral-politics. At a minimum, we should read Mahony’s parenthetical remark to Purcell as evidence of the audience that she sought for Magic of America. That Mahony wanted her work to be interpreted as part of the 20th century struggle against imperialism was underscored a few lines later in her letter to Purcell: “So far as the texts are concerned really the one idea I want to put over is the rottenness of the empires”.

The previous chapters of this dissertation have sought to analyze and historicize the global formulation of community that Mahony and Griffin proposed as an alternative to the parochial notions of community that had been structured by 19th century colonialisms. Chapter 1 situated Mahony’s definition of democracy, as a habit of mind, in relation to theoretical and historical texts from the first half of the 20th century that had claimed an “organic” link between American architecture and the political doctrines of democracy, and located the philosophical

motivations for Mahony’s global thinking on democracy within a critique of the mentalities fostered by modern natural science. Chapter 2 examined the conceptual framework that Mahony prescribed as necessary for seeing the democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity as completely compatible with one another on a global scale. Chapter 3 revealed how Mahony and Griffin brought into being a global formulation of community through the design of common property at Castlecrag, a residential suburb along Sydney’s Middle Harbour. Chapter 4 argued that Mahony’s and Griffin’s imagining of the neighbor as a new kind of global moral subject was unmistakably shaped by a transnational discourse on cooperative living that sought to offer an alternative to international socialism even as it was energized by the lexicon and practices of English utopian socialism of the 1880s.

Offering the first sustained analysis of Marion Mahony’s and Walter Burley Griffin’s theoretical work, this dissertation has sought to revise histories of internationalism that have focused exclusively on the transfer of architectural and planning knowledge from the ‘West’ to the ‘non-West’. In doing so, it has brought into view textual and building practices that opened up the possibility for thinking of difference as the condition of community. This was necessarily an open-ended task for Mahony and Griffin, as it must remain an open-ended and urgent task in our moment.
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