The primary aim of this paper is to clarify some of the general premises and presuppositions organizing our discussions of "traditional dwellings and settlements." It analyzes important qualifying terms such as traditional, modernity, culture and colonial/post-colonial, which are often used to specify or elaborate on technical concerns. The current importance of these terms owes much to the lasting impact of the colonial rupture. The terms embody an imbalance of knowledge that continues to allow the West to construct itself in reference to an "other" non-West, and so maintain control over it. As part of this process, architects may construct tradition as "other" to maintain the primacy of certain cultural paradigms. The analysis is meant to show how ordering and organizing terms and metaphors provide the means to wipe out, obscure or illuminate different representations of reality. A more open usage of terms and a greater awareness of their implicit positionality would allow us to sharpen the focus of our objectives and avoid the placelessness and timelessness which frequently characterize academic discussions.

Over twenty years ago when working in India I was once asked, by an American visitor, in the company of an Indian colleague, what I was doing there. My response, "I work for the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, but am paid by the U.K. Ministry of Overseas Development" prompted the quip from my Indian friend, "Whose development?"

Apart from the insular and watery space in which my comment had placed me, the not-so-rhetorical question from my Indian colleague had positioned both of us — him, me, India, and the U.K. — in a global representation of competing
civilizational values, like a ball of wool with the knitting needles, as the temporal vectors, protruding through in a variety of directions. In short, how the world looks depends not only on where I stand, but where I’m standing. This is partly what I mean by position. One aim of this paper then will be to try and draw attention to both the placelessness and timelessness which frequently characterize our academic discussions.

What I shall attempt is not to write about the subject of dwellings, settlements, and their relationship to tradition, development, and ecology — the focus of the 1992 TASTE conference — but rather to address the terms, language, images, and concepts in which that debate has constituted. In other words, within the context of a number of discourses about architecture and the built environment, I want to address that one which circulates around what have been called “traditional dwellings and settlements.”

I want to ask a number of questions: what is this particular debate/discourse about; how is it constructed; on what assumptions does it rest; where does it take place; who and what sustains it; and, especially, why does it circulate at this particular time? And I shall do this with the following interrelated assumptions in mind: first, on the assumption that knowledge is power, and that those with power in the academy, the media, the publishing industry, in specific institutions and regions of the world, establish and mobilize support for particular intellectual paradigms; second, on the assumption that once a set of conceptualizations and paradigms are established, they become the dominant prisms or metaphors through which a different kind of social and intellectual reality is constructed; third, on the assumption that with these definitions of reality, and particular forms of cultural knowledge, specific professional practices and policies are developed; which, fourth, begin to shape the social and material world. This process can be summarized as a progression from concept to discourse to policy to action.

**KEYWORDS**

Let me begin by examining the organizing structure of the conference, including both the main title and the session titles. I want to look at some of the most important keywords in the titles which are being used to organize and mobilize the discussions. Then, having put them in four different categories, I will consider them in more detail. By clarifying some of the premises and presuppositions of our debates, we may be able to sharpen the focus of our objectives.

The first set of terms consists of labels which, though by no means unambiguous, are probably the least controversial. These are the terms which capture and identify, for scholars and practitioners alike, particular parts of the social and material world: terms like dwellings, settlements, habitat, buildings, technology, resettlements, environments, housing, as well as extensions of these such as house form and settlement pattern.

Only one or two comments are warranted here. One is that despite the large number of architects attending the conference, the word architecture is largely absent, implying maybe that architecture is anathema to tradition. The other is the use of the term dwelling rather than house. What no doubt prompts this use is the need to find a generic term to cover all forms of dwelling (from apartment to tent), though we might recognize in passing that “dwelling” (from “dwell,” to stay, reside in), with its connotations of stability and permanence, has a different set of referents than “house,” which (as in warehouse, jailhouse, or slaughterhouse) serves rather to contain a function, or to keep things in. The fact that these older, even medieval, terms like dwelling, or abode — the place where people stay — have been replaced in contemporary international English by house — the place where things are stored — perhaps provides an insight into both the mobility (insecurity?) and practices of accumulation which characterize late-twentieth-century, free-market Western life.

My principal focus, however, is on a second set of terms, concepts and categories — namely, those with which we specify or elaborate our discussion of dwellings and settlements: terms such as tradition, culture, vernacular, modern/ity, development, progress, heritage, post-colonial, contemporary. What I would suggest is that all these terms and concepts are much more slippery, much more controversial, much less fixed than the first set, and, when associated with them, have a destabilizing effect. Far more than our first set, their meaning depends on our positionality — not only in geographic space and historic time, but also on our social and political locations. Our position in this regard contributes to the practices which produce particular forms of discourse. Let me begin by reverting once more to the central idea of tradition/al.

Before doing so, however, I shall conclude my verbal packaging by explaining my third and fourth categories.

My third set of terms and concepts are those (often verbs) which, in fact, act upon the other two sets and reflect what the conference is presumably about: terms like interpretation, meaning, representation, rethinking, theory. The fourth set (fewer in number) relate less to processes of cognition (“learning from the vernacular,” “interpreting traditional habitat”) than to forms of action — preservation, conservation, strate-
gies for tourism and development and image creation. Considered together, the four sets of terms may be linked to the four sets of assumptions I mentioned earlier, i.e., concepts — discourses — policy — action.

TRADITION

I shall start by addressing "tradition," not by attempting to say what its "true" meaning actually is, but rather, to see how the term traditional has been represented, and how it has been mobilized, by whom, about what, and for what purposes.

Here, Amos Rapoport's table is both valuable and telling (FIG. 1). In an attempt "to derive a set of descriptors about which there seems to be agreement," Rapoport has undertaken a content analysis of various literature and come up with a table which classifies the attributes of tradition into five categories. What is clear from virtually all the items in these categories is that traditional (like modern, which I shall address later) is defined in difference, and difference is here defined less diachronically, in relation to the society of one's self, than synchronically, in relation to the lives, societies and cultures of others. The large majority of attributes by which traditional is conceptualized, according to these findings, is what the writer or speaker — the authorial self — is not. Just as Simone de Beauvoir makes the point that women have been constructed as others to men's selves, traditional is understood as non-Western, non-European, pre-contact, pre-colonial, indigenous, nonmodern. All of these attributes, incidentally, underline the significance of the colonial rupture in constructing the notion of the traditional as well as the continuing dominance of the West in constructing categories of thought.

(We might add, in parenthesis, that were we to adopt a position in political economy, terms such as "not market oriented," "nonconsumerist," "low specialization," "low differentiation," etc., could obviously be given specific explanations in relation to the economics of capitalism.)

In other words, defining the identity and attributes of the "traditional" Other has as much, or more, to do with defining the identity of the "nontraditional" Self. Yet curiously, Rapoport neither addresses his own position as critic nor the position of the authorial subjects on which he draws.

A similar problem is posed by the geographical origins of the contributors to the 1992 conference. Although some two thirds of the paper contributors are apparently based in institutions in Western Europe and North America (though not necessarily originating from these parts of the world), about 90 percent of the papers are about areas of the world other than Western Europe or North America. Apart from some fifteen papers on (generally) rural regions of European states such as Italy, Norway, France, Ireland, Portugal, etc., "tradition" doesn't seem to exist in Western Europe or North America to anything like the extent it does in Africa, India, Southeast Asia, or the Pacific. Coming as I originally do from what many American or European observers frequently consider to be one of the most "traditional" countries in Europe (if not the world), I'm naturally somewhat surprised by this.

And while about half of the papers are apparently by participants writing on "traditional" buildings and development in relation to their own societies, the other half are produced by authors writing about someone else's. With a handful of exceptions, in this latter category we would recognize that these are mainly Western scholars (American, French, British, Italian, etc.) writing on the "non-Western" world.

What, then, is the meaning of this knowledge which is being constructed? How can we examine the situatedness of our own knowledge? Above all, how do we explain both the invention of this knowledge and its proliferation over the last two decades?

My first explanation would be that the representation of geographically and socially other societies as traditional is, like the discipline of anthropology itself, built on the historically constructed divide of Western and non-Western societies. Indeed, if we care to deploy another, relatively new conceptual construction to further illuminate this process — namely, that of "globalization," which Roland Robertson has devised to describe "the compression of the world," "the consciousness of the world as a whole," and "the process by which the world becomes a single place" — then anthropology was only possible at a particular ("unfinished") stage in the globalization process. Anthropology, understood as the study of "traditional" societies, was enabled by the colonial confrontation, just as its continued pursuit is enabled by an imbalance in global power. And, just as anthropologists maintain their identity (not to mention their professional status and employment) by constructing weaker communities as other, so we, as Western scholars, produce our identities and professional practice by representing other societies as traditional.

My second explanation for these developments I would describe as a political economy of cultural production, and it has to do with the politics of representation.

Buildings and spaces are, in the first instance, representations of someone's social reality; in this sense, they are themselves texts to be read. At a different level, however, written and
### NATURE OF GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Non-Western Non-European Indigenous Pre-contact Pre-colonial Grass-roots Vernacular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Preliterate (hence oral) Non-literate Working by example Depending on socialisation and enculturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Group oriented Strong group identity Non-individualistic Little individual freedom Anonymous Little individual motivation Egalitarian Affectivity Consensus Community Strong social bonding Homogenous Few constituent parts Constituent parts highly coincident Membership and boundaries of group very persistent and coincident Accepting hierarchy Low conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Pervasive religiosity Ritualistic (ritual important) Magical beliefs Strongly “symbolic” Sacred relationship to the land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Rationality non primary Non-rationalistic Unquestioning Non-critical Emphasis on accumulated wisdom and experience Non-empirical science Non-reflective Self-evident “Natural” way of doing things Things as given</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TEMPORAL

| Old Of the past Accepting the past Respecting the past The past “substantively present” Non-modern Contrasting with modernity Past orientation Non future-orientation |

### CONTINUITY

| Emphasizing continuity Providing continuity Feeling connected with the past Linking past and present Linked across generations Conservative Persistent Recurrent Repetitive Constant action Respect for past patterns Reproducing past patterns Guided by past patterns Habitual Received models Replacing particular things, not patterns or models. |

### CHANGE

| Slow change Slow growth (population, economy, etc.) Enduring Long lasting Low novelty Slow obsolescence Constancy (vs. change) No deliberate or |

### ECONOMY/TECHNOLOGY

| Preindustrial Limited material resources Conservative/prudent use of resources Not “economically rational” Emphasis on “non-productive activities” Not market oriented Land seen in terms of social relations Non-hedonistic Non-consumerist Accepting of resource, reward “income,” etc., distribution Non-technological Slow technological growth Diffuse knowledge and skills Dispersed modes of production Low specialization (in work, activities, behavior, etc.) Low differentiation |

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printed texts about buildings and spaces — discourses and
treatises which attribute meaning and interpretation (the
books and journals which fill our shops and libraries) — also
make claims to represent a social and spatial reality, though
these interpretations and “readings” may be contested by
those on whose behalf they speak.

What we have seen in the last two decades (and, in the longer
term, two centuries) is not only a vast proliferation of such
printed texts, but a huge expansion in the production of
knowledge in terms of academic positions, researchers, insti-
tutions and publishing, especially (but not only) in the
Western academy and publishing industry. In one reading,
this emerges from the process of globalization which, in
Robertson’s view, has resulted in “an exacerbation of civiliza-
tional, societal and ethnic self-consciousness.”

In another, more politicized interpretation, it is part of a
growing international division of labor in which, in the core
postindustrial countries of the world economy, there is an
increasingly massive investment in the culture industries.1
This includes education, publishing, conventions, museums
and the media, but it is also linked to the expansion of travel
and cultural tourism, in which the expansion of culture,
cultural meaning, and its theorization have expanded expo-
nentially. The urban economy of Paris, for example, like that
of other world cities such as London or New York, now rests,
among other things, on hosting the largest number of inter-
national conventions annually of all major world cities.

**KNOWLEDGE AND PLACE**

This is not the place to elaborate at greater length on both the
merits and the lacuna in the extensive epistemological de-
bates, and paradigm changes, which have gone on under the
umbrellas of postmodernism, poststructuralism, and cultural
theory generally. Clearly, the internal critique emerging from
philosophy and literary theory of “the rhetoric and language
of the social sciences” has brought about a destabilization of
some of their most basic beliefs and practices.6 For example,
the very process of generalization, which, in facilitating
abstraction, is basic to theory, has itself been criticized as
failing to take account of the centrality of meaning to human
experience. Generalization, states Lila Abu-Lughod, is “inevi-
tably a language of power applied to people who stand apart
from, and outside of what is being described. Generalization
produces effects of homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness,
flattening out differences among people in a community.” It
is for these reasons that she suggests paying attention in our
accounts to the “narrative ethnographies of the particular.”7

Yet there is a real danger here of throwing out the baby with
the bath water. There are indeed real structures of economic,
political, cultural and intellectual power in the world which
privilege the circulation of some intellectual discourses over
others, in some economic and social spaces rather than others.
And these are linked to questions of access to and control of the
media, channels of communication, and publishing outlets.
My skepticism about some of the recent theoretical debates in
cultural and literary theory stems not from the illuminosity of
their content but from the absence of attention paid to the
material and cultural conditions of their production.

The uneven distribution of knowledge poses two questions.
The first concerns the relation of knowledge to place, the
populations who live there, and, especially, the specific groups
of people to whom its outcomes are thought to apply. There
is an assumption (perhaps best represented by the increasingly
frequent phenomenon of the international conference) that by
putting more and more experts together, from more and more
places — or by reading more and more books, combining
more and more viewpoints — a more universal kind of truth
or wisdom will emerge. While that may or may not be the case
for the people participating in that process, it certainly does
not apply to the people on whom this truth or wisdom is
exercised. There is not only a history of knowledge to take into
account (what comes to be known and when), and a sociology
of knowledge (who, and what groups of people are producing
it, who for, and for what purposes), but also a geography of
knowledge (where it is being produced, why, and how “non-
local” knowledge is interpreted in specific contexts).

Regarding the uneven distribution of knowledge, the second
question concerns the nature of the knowledge produced and
the processes involved in its production. I recall some years
ago reading a book review which began, “Sociological research
these days seems to consist of sitting down at a desk on which
there are another twenty books on sociology.” I am not
thinking here of the narrower, disciplinary question of some-
thing in the social sciences called “empirical research.” I am
concerned, rather, with the nature of the sources, the social
processes and practices which contribute to the making of
knowledge. This includes the importance of the oral as well
as the literary; the heard and seen as well the read; the felt and
intuited as well as the scientifically “discovered”; the nature
of the “evidence” and the different parts of the social, political
and geographical world from which it comes; the location
and mobility (or lack of it) of the producer; and the
transmittability of the knowledge, not just between different
academic disciplines (the problem of so-called inter- or trans-
disciplinarity), but the very accessibility of that knowledge
outside those disciplines.
According to Hobsbawm, "invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. The object and characteristic of traditions, including invented ones, is invariance." We should, according to these authors, expect the invention of traditions "to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which old traditions had been designed ... or when such old traditions ... no longer prove sufficiently adaptable or flexible." In our case, however, the traditions are being invented globally; Western scholarship has defined itself in relation to the "non-West" in the manner of the Occident in relation to the Orient. As Edward Said suggests, the representations bear as much on the representer's world as on who or what is represented.

MODERNITY

The obvious Other in relation to which tradition is defined is modernity. Yet the temporality and spatiality of the modern, and modernity, is the most problematic of all.

Modern, according to contemporary English dictionaries means "characteristic of the present or recent times, as distinguished from the more remote past." As I have discussed elsewhere, just to destabilize our ideas about the modern, let me say that the first recorded use of modern is in 1585; modernist, in 1588. Modernity, meaning the quality or character of being modern, is identified in 1627, and modernize and modernism are in use by the first half of the eighteenth century. Modernization comes along in 1770. Raymond Williams makes the point that for the earlier use of the terms modern and modernize the sense is unfavorable, i.e., that the alteration or change implied needed to be justified. Only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did modern acquire a positive connotation, meaning improved or efficient. Hence, whereas modern now generally holds positive connotations (though not always, as with modern problems), contemporary is a more neutral term.

The etymology of modern suggests the word derives from the Latin modus, meaning "measure" — which prompts a useful thought: if we adopt Williams' notion that the connotations of modern are positive, by what and whose criteria is cultural modernity measured? How do we know which is a modern city? Or which is the most modern city? Who is doing the measuring? Are they male or female? Black, brown or white? Ex-President Reagan or the late Ayotollah Khomenei?

Yet the term modern, partly because of its linguistic origin in English (and later, American English) and the subsequent linguistic imperialism of colonial and international English, has become unproblematically associated with the West, to use a spatial metaphor (and we should note that this is an economic, political, moral and philosophical comparison as well). Thus, as I have mentioned, from being first a term of abuse and then of commendation, the abstract metaphor modern was appropriated and given, between the late-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, a very distinct and particular materialization, not only in Western literature, music and the arts, but in architecture and urban design.

The so-called "modern city" was not just characteristic of "present or recent times." Whether this form of urbanism could more perceptively be labelled, not according to some timeless, spaceless, placeless, and in the end, quite meaningless concept of the present, but according rather to its place of origin (Europe), the mode of production which sustained it (late capitalism), the technology, energy base, and materials (high-energy cement) it generated — or the social, sexual, ethnic, and racial division of labor it established (the first international division of labor) — is a question we might ask. Nonetheless, the notion of the modern was firmly and powerfully fixed in the West, and then conveyed to other parts of the world through the uneven relationship of colonialism.

Thus, in the West the modern city did not mean "as of the present, now" in India or Africa, but in Paris or New York. And, as Homi Bhabha has pointed out, this notion of modern and modernity was not only Western, it was also white.

Thus, a very particular and situated notion of modernity belonging to a particular phase, and time, of European and American civilization (and capitalism) was conveyed to the formally and informally colonized world.

My argument, therefore, stresses the essential spatialization of this Eurocentric concept of modernity; but what about what Bhabha calls its "ambivalent temporality"? Modernity, if it means "as of the present, now," not only exists everywhere (even though it may be described in different languages), but it exists at different times. Bhabha questions both the spatialization of modernity as well as its temporality. His particular criticism is directed at "the ethnocentric limitations of Foucault's spatial sign of modernity, based as it is on a Eurocentric focus on the Enlightenment, and French Revolution," yet without reference to the colonial space of San
suggesting that this was necessarily the order of proceeding.

Like Bhabha, I have also argued that the real emergence of modernity, as an ideology of beginning, of modernity as the new, is in colonial, not metropolitan space. For, if we take 1993 (rather than 1893) as the "now" of modernity, a modernity judged not by some Eurocentric conceptions of literature, painting or architecture but by the reality of the internationalization of production, or on the existence in one or more cities of representatives of ethnicities and peoples from most parts of the world, and ask, on these criteria, where was what today we might call the first "modern," "multicultural city," the answer is certainly not London, Los Angeles or New York, but probably Rio, Calcutta or Cairo. Clearly, I am not speaking here of some kind of technological or architectural modernity but of a social and cultural modernity. The question therefore is not only whose version of modernity we're working with, but when that version comes to be fixed.

THE COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL

I want to move now to another dyadic set of terms used at the IASTE conference: colonial and post-colonial. To begin with, I would like to use them to illustrate another descriptive and analytical problem — that is, being imprisoned by binary constructs (traditional/nontraditional, modern/pre-modern, Self/Other). No one has expressed this critique better than Arjun Appadurai: "Some others are more other than other others." We might adapt this to "some colonials are more colonial than other colonials," or even, "some post-colonial phenomena are less post-colonial than other post-colonial phenomena."

The structural characteristics of colonialism and the historical/geographical instances of its occurrence are a prime example of the combination of the general and universal with the local and particular — a fundamental epistemological practice that governs every statement of our everyday lives, yet with a range of instances in between. The need to identify the commonalities of colonial experience, within appropriate comparative parameters, is as essential as looking at the other side of the coin, the idiosyncrasies of the particular instance. And educated as I originally was as an historian, I am not suggesting that this is necessarily the order of proceeding.

Yet, as Nicholas Dirks has written, colonialism was "neither monolithic nor unchanging through history," (and) "any attempt to make a systematic statement about the colonial project runs the risk of denying the fundamental historicity of colonialism, as well as conflating cause and effect."

Similarly with the state of "post-colonialism," a conceptualization that has recently sustained some heavy criticism. In the first instance, by constructing indigenous histories as precolonial, colonial and post-colonial, we simultaneously marginalize the agency of indigenous voices as well as reinscribe their histories in an imperial present. Moreover, by depoliticizing the contemporary situation, the concept of post-colonial fails to acknowledge the neocolonial systems of dependency embedded in contemporary global capitalism.

We might add that post-colonialism also fails to distinguish the post-colonial situations of dominant white majorities in, for example, Canada or Australia (with their still-colonized indigenous peoples), from post-colonial contexts elsewhere (Nigeria or Algeria) where the colonists have (supposedly) left. We might also add that post-colonial implies that the critic can determine a point of origin, a founding moment, when the Other was free of outside influence.

In brief, the concept demonstrates very clearly one of the main points I wish to make in this paper: that the ordering and organizing terms and metaphors we use provide the means with which we either wipe out, obscure or illuminate different representations of reality. To use a homely American metaphor, whatever intellectual mix we pour into the prefigured division of the waffle iron, the result will always be a waffle (and not a crepe).

CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

I shall dispense somewhat more quickly with two other constructions that figure in the conference proceedings, equally generated first by the historical realities of colonialism, and subsequently by the neocolonial expansion of global capitalism.

Culture, to cite Williams once more, is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. First identified in English in the early fifteenth century, its use refers to specific and variable cultures of different nations and periods, and as specific and variable cultures of social and economic groups within a nation, is one which arises from the expansion of Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. Likewise, the heyday of its deployment, in the century of anthropology’s principal encounter with the Other (between 1870 and 1970), is now in decline, and not only because of the recognition of the colonial conditions of its production.

As Lila Abu-Lughod suggests, culture is very important to anthropology because the anthropological distinction between Self and Other rests on it. "As a professional discourse
that elaborates on the meaning of culture as a way of explaining difference," she writes, "anthropology helps to construct, produce and maintain that difference. Anthropological discourse gives cultural difference (and the separation between groups of people it implies) the air of the self-evident." It operates, she suggests, like race used to operate. Despite its anti-essentialist intent, the culture concept retains some of the tendencies to freeze differences possessed by concepts such as race. The precise danger of the culture concept is that it may rest on essential ideas. Thus, just as "natives" become a figment of the anthropological imagination, so also might traditional dwellings. What this points to is the complicity of anthropology (and architecture) in a continued incarceration of non-Western peoples in time and place. Cultural theories overemphasize coherence; as she points out, culture—shadowed by coherence, timelessness and discreteness—is the prime anthropological tool for making Other. Yet difference is a relationship of power through which, in constructing other cultures, we also construct ourselves. As much recent critical writing in anthropology has concluded, the making of culture results from the discourse between the author, the subjects, and the text: the anthropologist makes the culture, and the culture makes the anthropologist. It is the larger agenda of European expansion which determines the ethnographer's own material relationship to the group under study.  

**DEVELOPMENT**

Nor, indeed, can development be separated from colonialism—it is, in the words of Dirks, another of colonialism's most dramatic legacies. If tradition (despite my attempts to reposition us) nevertheless locates us firmly in (and I use the phrase deliberately) the non-Western world, development serves to confirm we are in the right place. Yet development—perhaps the most recent of the concepts I am considering (stemming in its present use from the postwar period of the late 1940s)—was also discussed a century ago by Max Weber. Weber pointed out that, "Processes of economic development are in the final analysis also power struggles, and the ultimate and decisive interests at whose service economic policy must place itself, are the interests of national power, where these interests are in question."  

Yet the notion of development in its modern sense depends on two prerequisites: the development of the state, and the development of what Wallerstein calls the inter-state system. In the so-called non-Western world, the state emerges directly from the colonial regime and the idea that, to cite Dirks, the state monitors production, collects revenue, assembles data, and manages the economy. Meanwhile, the inter-state system emerges from the inter-state processes and budgets of the IME, the World Bank, and the annual "development review." Development, therefore, is linked to the growth of the modern state, the processes of colonial rule, and the commitment to economic progress. It has become "such a secure category of the modern that it has disguised its colonial roots, as well as its total dependence on state centralized power and the hegemony of the West."  

As for the "cultural ecology" that the 1992 conference addresses, all these concepts simply reflect our own global hegemony. If culture is a hegemonic term invented by the West to understand and also control its others, then ecology is the interactive space in which it operates. Thus, the notion of tradition as applied to buildings is constructed not only temporally but also spatially from our own, essentially global position, which assumes a knowledge of many architectures, many Others (or cultures), and a hegemonic overview. The question is how much reference it pays to the positionalities of those Others themselves.  

**IN CONCLUSION**

In questioning some of the presuppositions behind the language, images and categories which we use to organize our debates, I have been attempting to divest the terms of the stereotypical meanings associated with them. It is now part of conventional wisdom that the binary binoculars with which we have viewed the world (First World/Third World, East/West, traditional/modern) are increasingly obsolescent; these are the "disappearing dichotomies." "Spatial compression," "the deterritorialization of cultures," and "the emergence of global ethnoscapes" are phrases which now foreground different kinds of representation. For some, to be modern these days is to be traditional; for others, to be traditional is to be modern. The translation of these terms into forms (and norms) of architectural practice is, as I have suggested above, a matter of power, knowledge and place. This is why my article is titled "The Politics of Position." The answers I shall leave to the architects.
REFERENCE NOTES

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4. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
20. Williams, Keywords, p.87.
22. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
28. Appadurai, "Global Ethnoscapes."