Editor’s Note

January 2010 marked the formal transition of IASTE administrations into its new structure. Mark Gillem of the University of Oregon has taken over as IASTE Director, aided by a very competent Executive Board constituted of Hesham Abdelfatah and Heba Ahmed of Cairo University, Duanfang Lu of the University of Sydney, Mrinalini Rajagopalan of the University of Pittsburgh, Ipek Tureli of Brown University, and Montira Horayangura Unakul of UNESCO, Bangkok. They have all been involved in IASTE for at least a decade, and I wish them all the best of luck as they take over the management of the association and its conferences.

This issue of TDSR opens with Joseph Godlewski’s special article examining Rem Koolhaas’s academic production on the city of Lagos, Nigeria. By closely reading two documentary films on the architect’s work in the African metropolis, he reveals the ways in which that work ultimately confounds any understanding of Lagos’s dynamism, conforming to the tradition of Orientalist readings of the “dark continent.” We then turn from the megacity to the more intimate confines of the New England village, as B.D. Wortham-Galvin interrogates the mythologies of place that contribute to constructed notions of heritage. Her article positions the New England village as integral to the production of a sense of national identity in America. This mythology, which was invented as part of the nineteenth-century colonial revival, remains a powerful generator of built form and narrative content.

The theme of heritage is again at the center of Luna Khirfan’s investigation of preservation policies and practices in Aleppo, Syria, and Acre, Israel. Her article examines linkages between documentation and management policies as an outgrowth of international conventions. In regard to the preservation of heritage sites as living places, she points out, the choice of documentation methods may on occasion even lead to outcomes counter to initial planning goals. Next comes an article by Chee-Kien Lai that draws critical connections between the colonial project and contemporary open spaces in Singapore and Malaysia. Lai uses the padang form to examine how spectatorship of government institutions was essential to colonial urbanism. He then examines how revisitations and subversions of these practices have circulated through subsequent national, and now “post-national,” cityscapes. In our last article, Mona Damluji reveals how the spatial dynamics of sectarian-based segregation in contemporary Baghdad have resulted in part from the U.S.-initiated political restructuring of Iraq following the 2003 invasion. She argues that continued military occupation has produced spaces that only further internal conflicts between Shi’a and Sunni residents, thus prolonging and problematizing the prospect of peaceful accord and reconciliation.

In the next month, IASTE members will receive the poster for our upcoming conference in Beirut. The program for this exciting December event is already available on the IASTE website. We hope to see you all there.

Nezar AlSayyad