

Critical Vernacularism: The Subversion of Universalizing Trends in Architecture¹

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INTRODUCTION

In 1978, three decades after independence, Sri Lankan leaders moved the seat of government from the former colonial capital, Colombo, to a former indigenous seat of power nearby. Abandoning the neo-classical architecture of the colonial Parliament House, the new parliamentary complex was constructed in a "vernacular" form of architecture that appears to be continuing from an indigenous past and belonging to Sri Lanka. The prelude to this, however, was the emergence of what we might call critical vernacularism as the most prominent design trend in the 1970s, a trend which radically transformed the constitution of the Sri Lankan field of architecture. It was, therefore, not an accident that Geoffrey Bawa, a leading architect of this tendency, was commissioned by the government to design the most prestigious project of "national architecture," the national parliamentary complex.

The development of place and community specific architectural designs is not limited to Sri Lanka, nor to this period. However, a consciousness of "the world becoming a single place," exacerbating a concern with identity among different states and ethnic groups, and resulting in decisions to address these problems, has intensified over the last two decades.² The discourse on critical regionalism represents one intellectual attempt to come to terms with such developments in the European and US fields of architecture.³

What I focus on is, however, an architectural discourse that critiques the general and universal approach to culture and architecture adopted in colonial and modernist practices by evoking spaces and symbols indigenous to a particular society, especially after colonialism. In this paper, I shall take Sri Lankan critical vernacularism as an example of this much more widespread phenomenon, explore the way it was constituted, and the architectural design it replaced. Since it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss each of the practices that constitute the broad field of critical vernacular architecture, I shall focus my discussion on Bawa's work.

THE COLONIAL STRUCTURE OF ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTION

Architecture--understood as a professionalized discipline of building design, practiced by specially-trained architects employed and paid by clients-- was largely institutionalized in the nation states of western Europe and the USA in the nineteenth century. Such institutionalized architecture provided for the requirements of both industrial and colonial societies, and particularly, as it had done for centuries, for the constitution of a realm of high culture. Architecture in this sense was constructed and reified in the imperial metropolises, in this case, Britain, often marginalizing a vast array of other building and design methods that operated both inside as well as outside this Western cultural domain.

In colonial Ceylon,⁴ official government construction activity was monopolized by a particular group of government departments, lead by the Public Works Department, which I shall refer to as the PWD. The PWD also institutionalized the distinct ways in which official built culture was to be produced. This colonial project was not only responsible for a whole range of "new" spaces that were completely alien to the colonized --such as a road network, new institutional buildings like barracks, courts, prisons, and hospitals, as well as tennis courts and cricket grounds-- but also aimed at producing new subjects within these, such as prison guards and prisoners, tennis and cricket players. For the Ceylonese, therefore, space was at once both defamiliarized and dehistoricized; yet at the same time, it was also historicized and familiarized for the colonizers, and subsequently, also for the Ceylonese elite and technocrats who were also produced within this structure.

In many respects, the construction of a new built environment and culture operated at the "international" level of the British Empire, linking the imperial metropole and the colonies, since the PWD and other departments of the colonial state in Ceylon involved in the design and construction of buildings and structures were simultaneously constituent elements in the larger administration of the Empire. The colonial system therefore replaced former Lankan sys-

terms of producing its built environment, which had largely been confined to its individual kingdoms, by a larger one that was empire-wide.⁵ Moreover, architecture produced by the PWD was primarily representative of the Empire and the colonial power of Britain rather than the indigenous culture of the colony.⁶ Neo-classical buildings such as the Parliament of Ceylon, and the Town Hall of Colombo, built in the early twentieth century, can also be seen in other British colonies and dominions such as India and Canada. We must not, however, fix this in what linguists call a binary opposition of metropole-colony as these new spaces were part of a "colonial third culture," which Anthony King defines as "the European colonial culture which resulted from the transformation of metropolitan cultural institutions as they came into contact with the culture of the indigenous society."⁷

Furthermore, the imperial metropole monopolized the production and circulation of knowledge in the realm of architecture. Until the 1940s, military officers, planners, and architects who undertook design and construction functions were largely Europeans who came and brought "appropriate" knowledge from Britain.⁸ This system was gradually supplemented by recruiting compliant Ceylonese, training them in the metropole, and selecting the most competent through exacting examinations. The design activity was thus decentralized to the colonies, but the production of architectural knowledge was monopolized by academic and professional institutions in the metropole. These Ceylonese architects, educated and trained through a curriculum directed at producing professional members for the Royal Institute of British Architects, were more suited to work and design in Britain than Ceylon.⁹

This system reproduced the colonial structure of dominance and dependence in the plane of knowledge, in which the metropolitan center depicted the "developed society" as a model which the society in the "undeveloped colonial periphery would inevitably follow."¹⁰ Sociologist Susantha Goonatilake has argued that so-called significant knowledge assertions in the dependent periphery result from the diffusion of ideas from the center; the basic core knowledge grows largely in the West and is transferred to the developing countries." In this context, the production of "meaningful architecture" in the periphery was confined to the process of mimicking Western buildings and architectural styles. The centralized production of architectural knowledge, just as the production of architecture itself, tended not only to universalize the landscape across the Empire, but also to obscure indigenous cultural expression.¹² This process was continued by the architectural modernists --employed by immediately postcolonial independent nations such as India or, earlier, Brazil-- on a broader world scale.¹³

Colonial regime did not completely eradicate all former Lankan social structures, but also subjugated and incorporated some of those into the larger imperial system.¹⁴ Despite the colonialist drive to control the production and distribution of architectural knowledge, the colonial regime was incapable of subjugating or suppressing all other building

methods, for example, those producing peasant dwelling forms and religious architecture. Although old royal prohibitions, such as those forbidding the use of burnt clay tiles as a roofing material, were ignored by the colonial rulers, the economically marginal existence of villagers within the newly instituted market-economy prevented them from imitating the trends of the city in modernizing their dwelling houses. Moreover, under new building regulations, their building practices were often marginalized as "sub-standard," and as "traditional" under the new ideology of "modernization." The line of mimicry of indigenes following the built forms produced in the metropole (>> metropole >>> colonial capital >> cities > villages) was thus never complete.

As in other colonies, Lankan religions --Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam-- lost the moral authority as well as the political and ideological persuasiveness they had held within the pre-colonial society. Yet different forms of Christianity introduced by the colonial powers were unable to replace Lankan religions, and today, Christians constitute only about five per cent of the Sri Lankan population. Traditional Lankan religious institutions and their architectural practices, including the design of temples, survived the hostile conditions of colonialism.¹⁵ The continuation of these traditions, therefore, sustained forms for future aspirations and development, as well as nodes for future subversions of the colonial and modernist universalization.

THE POSTCOLONIAL LANGUAGE OF SUBVERSION

Despite independence in 1948, neither the PWD type state-run department structure through which design and construction activity was carried out, nor its dependence on Western knowledge, changed very much.¹⁶ The critical discourse, however, emerged from outside this structure. Geoffrey Bawa, his partner, Ulrik Plesner, and many others who were engaged in developing architectural designs more appropriate to Sri Lanka largely practiced independently outside the post-colonial, proto-PWD structure. By the 1980s, however, government departments had also been influenced by this vernacularism, and many of them had developed their own variations. Critical vernacularism, therefore, eventually subverted the colonial and modernist universalization of the built environment, countering the exclusion and marginalization of indigenous building practices by this post-colonial structure of architectural production.

The critical vernacularists contested the totalizing thrust of architectural modernism and the continuation of colonial norms. Architectural historian Lawrence Vale observes that "Bawa's capitol complex stands squarely between the abstract universalism of high modernism and the literal localism."¹⁷ For Shanthi Jayawardane,

[Bawa's work] implied a sharp break with the then modes of the "international style" which were reaching a high point in neo-colonial fluency around [the]

1950s and 60s, best displayed perhaps in the arrogant extravagance of Brasilia and Chandigarh.¹⁸

At the national level, the eclectic language of critical vernacular architecture has developed a common representation across diverse social and cultural groups. It employed a broad ensemble of spatial and symbolic elements, familiar to Sri Lankans, to construct what Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe call an *equivalence*,¹⁹ across ethnic, linguistic, and religious cultural identities.

Let us turn our attention to the language of this subversion. The "innovators" of critical vernacular practice, particularly Plesner, were apprehensive about the disarray in post-colonial architecture caused by the colonial and modernist imposition of, and the Sri Lankan desire to imitate, Western building forms and elements, which they had no cultural and economic competence to internalize. In Plesner's words:

Architecturally speaking, the country suffered from post-colonial self-denigration ... Some people enthusiastically believed in things like "American Style" and vinyl floors... Most of the new buildings were a reflection of Western ways, climatically unsuitable and visually indifferent... On my part, it was a process of first clearing away the shabby asbestos roofing, the bare bulb lighting, the disastrous flat roofs, the imported rubbish, the slimy black mouldy walls without drip ledges, the admiration for the second rate from Europe.²⁰

Instead of simply restoring this modernist built environment, these architects looked towards alternatives. Clearing away the colonial and modernist "mess" was accompanied by the re-introduction of traditional building elements and spaces, particularly roof forms and the veranda. The Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonials in Ceylon had also adapted visually dominant roofs with wide overhangs --with modifications such as the introduction of half-round clay tiles-- in their residential buildings. The roofs of the main British colonial institutional buildings were, however, concealed behind dominant and decorated walls that rose above the eaves line, generic to British architectural styles known as Georgian and Neo-Classical. The issue, however, is not limited to a climatic awareness, that the monsoons can destroy exposed walls and the dampness create "slimy black molds" on them, since there are many design methods in the modern world to enhance the climatic performance of a building. Rather the reintroduction of the roof in a proto-traditional character was a cultural one; a conscious selection by Bawa and Plesner, not only to combat climatic problems, but also to do so by deploying an indigenous architectural language. Bawa claims:

One unchanging element of all buildings is the roof - protective, emphatic and all important - governing the aesthetic, whatever period, whatever place. Often a building is only a roof, columns and floors - the roof

dominant, shielding, giving the contentment of shelter ... the roof, its shape, texture and proportion is the strongest visual factor.²¹

Similarly, verandas and internal courtyards are not the only solution to the problems of heat and ventilation. For example, air-conditioning is used for such purposes in many buildings in Colombo. Again, for critical vernacularists, verandas and courtyards were culturally desirable. The reintroduction of these elements was, therefore, not mere climatic and functional but also a matter of cultural politics and representation.

The new language advanced a cross-cultural accommodation, reproducing more familiar space for indigenous cultural practices. Bawa and Plesner's selection of cross-culturally familiar building elements, such as the roof and veranda, was deliberate, because they were not the only available historic references. Most intimate religious architectures, for example, highlight more of a difference than a commonality. Buddhist *stupas* (and *vadadages*), *sikhara* type masonry roofs of Hindu *kovils*, Islamic bulbous domes, and the facades of Christian churches articulate their distinctiveness. By contrast, the building type with a rectangular or square plan, extended veranda, and pitched roof is the most commonly used form by all Sri Lankan social and cultural groups.²² Cultural differences among Sri Lankans are rather built into the internal spaces than the external forms of their regular houses.²³ As Vale suggests: "Bawa could begin by working with roofs, not necessarily choosing sides in so doing."²⁴

Critical vernacularists have not limited themselves to drawing solely on Lankan historic forms, and, therefore, have not attempted to recreate history. The hybridization of built forms over centuries through contacts, exchanges, and subjection, has made the field of post-colonial architecture very complex. Between the two poles of highly prestigious colonial buildings (for example, the old Parliament) and Lankan peasant dwelling houses was a wide array of hybridized built forms which included colonial bungalows and (new) middle class housing.²⁵ Bawa states:

I like to regard all past and present good architecture in Sri Lanka as just that --good Sri Lankan architecture-- for this is what it is, not narrowly classified as Indian, Portuguese or Dutch, early Singhalese or Kandyan or British colonial, for all the good examples of these periods have taken the country itself into account.²⁶

The efficacy of an eclectic formation like the critical vernacular architecture of Sri Lanka depends on the composition, as much as on the selection of elements and their development. These architects have avoided a collage of direct historic quotations, as with architectural postmodernism in the West, or in the case of Papua New Guinea's new Parliament.²⁷ They have not attempted to capture and represent all cultures with a single image, or a series of

images each representing a component culture, but have produced an architecture that is specific and acceptable for Sri Lankans. As Vale argues, the Sri Lankan Parliament building is inclusive in its approach to history without descending into a caricature or pastiche; the articulation sought to capitalize upon the elements, traditions, and cultures without trivializing them or rendering them incomprehensibly abstruse.²⁸ In this sense, instead of being historically defined ethnic or religious built forms, what Bawa and Plesner produced was a particular type of "nationally" relevant architecture within a post-independent context.

CRITICAL VERNACULARISM

In a broader context, critical vernacular tendency is apparent in the designs of, among others, the late Hassan Fathy of Egypt and Charles Correa of India, as well as in building complexes such the *Citra Niaga* of Samarinda and Sukarno-Hata airport of Djakarta, both in Indonesia.²⁹ As other post-colonial architects, immediately after returning home, these architects practiced so-called modern architecture. Yet they are examples of those architects who increasingly became conscious of the incompatibility of such an architecture within the societies in which they practiced. Hence, they gradually incorporated elements of indigenous and historic spaces, architectural elements, building methods, and materials in developing their approach to design. These decisions may well have begun in the interests of developing an appropriate architectural style, yet what they finally produced was profoundly different from a mere style.

Critical vernacularism can also be distinguished from three other contemporary architectural practices. One is the provision of organized support by institutions based in the dominant core states of the modern world-system for the development of culture specific and place specific architecture. The Aga Khan Awards for Islamic Architecture (Aga Khan Program), begun in 1976, and based at Harvard-MIT, is by far the best example. According to Serge Santelli, the object of this program has been,

first, to promote a modern architecture which relies upon the most advanced technologies and materials - -but at the same time, integrating the fundamental principles of Islamic Architecture; second, to defend cultural identities of Muslim populations and protect their threatened cultural heritage.³⁰

While supporting "Islamic Architecture," the program has also assumed the role of being "spokesperson" for Islamic culture and architecture worldwide, its paternalism expanded to the broader Third World architecture through the journal, *Mimar*. Paternalism and the encouragement of indigenous architecture has not been limited to this program. Although not an organized process, foreign "experts" have also been influential in promoting the revival of indigenous design and construction.³¹

The second type is the architecture of touristic commer-

cialization. Here, I am referring to modern hotel complexes designed for the visual and spatial consumption of tourists in the cultural styles of the "natives," along with standard modern comforts. This is particularly evident in the proto-vernacular tourist complexes in places like Bali and Thailand.

The third --the "cultural contextualization" of the non-indigenous presence-- can be found, for example, in the US embassies in Kuala Lumpur, Dhakka, and Colombo, built in a "place specific style." A critique of that in Colombo notes,

The aggressive American image is enhanced by the importance the roof has gained in the total expression of the building. ... This tendency, obviously its way of responding to the cultural context, is what gives the American Embassy Building its distinctive character. The choice of the tile roof (of course neater, more slick and macho than the Sri Lankan counterpart), the extensive use of timber (despite poor protection it receives from the pulled out roof) add to this attempt to cross the Sri Lankan lion with the Statue of Liberty.³²

This new tendency of the world-hegemon, the USA, representing itself in a "style" indigenous to the place yet still protecting the identity of its own authority, is contrasted by the same writer as America projecting the image of "being a Roman while in Rome" as opposed to the British attitude of "being British to the boot laces, wherever you are," represented by the British embassy, on the next lot.

The culture of critical vernacularism is, however, contemporary, the result of a consciousness of the inappropriateness of "modern architecture" in a culturally different, extra-European, post-colonial site, in the periphery of the world-system. This is evident in Fathy's book titles, *Architecture for the Poor*, and *Natural Energy and Vernacular Architecture*. Although the inappropriateness of his earlier "modernist" designs were signalled by the shortage of steel and cement during the Second World War,³³ Fathy clearly notes his consciousness of the significance of the issues of difference and identity in architecture,

until the collapse of cultural frontiers in the last century, there were all over the world distinctive local shapes and details in architecture, and the buildings of every locality were the beautiful children of a happy marriage between the imagination of the people and demands of their countryside. ... I like to suppose simply that certain shapes take a people's fancy, and that they make use of them in a variety of contexts, perhaps rejecting the unsuitable applications, but evolving a colorful and emphatic visual image of their own that suits perfectly their character and their homeland. No one could mistake the curve of a Persian dome and arch for the curve of a Syrian arch [the signature].³⁴

Yet he found that this signature was missing in modern Egypt.

The consciousness of the cultural context of design was not limited to well known architects. The open pavilions of *Citra Niaga* and Sukarno-Hata airport in Indonesia, and

much contemporary building, for example, in India, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka, illustrates that this trend is a relatively widespread phenomenon. The Yemenese government wrapped the West German built glass and steel airport with traditional Yemeni stonework, complete with decorative motifs.³⁵ According to the prominent Indian architect, Charles Correa, for example, "we simply cannot squander the kind of resources required to air condition a glass tower under a tropical sun."³⁶ Peter Scriver finds in these trends a "cultural revolt against modern technology -- specifically the technological rationalism associated with the modern industrial complex of Western civilization."³⁷

What I have focussed on is, however, a particular architectural development that had begun to emerge in the so-called "post-colonial" period, from the 1950s, and especially, the 1970s. The rise of critical vernacular architecture here has been more in response to cultural and historic rather than economic and stylistic transformations. Here I would contrast critical vernaculars which emerged within post-colonial states as responses to cultural problems generated by colonialism and modern architecture, with postmodern architecture which developed in "post-industrial" cities largely as a response to declining economic fortunes. Compared to the restructuring of the village and Buddhism in nineteenth century Ceylon in order to operate within a colonial society, this architecture does not claim any direct continuity with the past nor any authenticity.

Instead, it uses indigenous spatial elements, architectural details, and construction methods to spatially construct contemporary institutions and functions. As with the transformation of national space and landscapes, the production of a critical vernacular architecture can also be seen as a way of familiarizing society and space for the local inhabitants of where it takes place. Hence, this is in no way a "vernacular architecture" nor an architectural style constructed by borrowing elements from a historic architectural vocabulary to provide visual signs.³⁸ What this phenomenon represents is the conscious or unconscious construction of a historic continuity in societies where the trajectory of history has been ruptured by colonialism, or European cultural hegemony. It is in this wider context that Sri Lankan and other critical vernacular practices can most usefully be addressed.

NOTES

¹ The arguments outlined in this paper are based on my dissertation, *Decolonizing Ceylon: Society and Space in Sri Lanka* (Binghamton University, 1994).

² See Roland Robertson, "Globalization Theory and Civilizational Analysis," *Comparative Civilization Review* 17 (1987): 20-30; "Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept," *Theory Culture and Society* 7 (June 1990): 15-30; "Social Theory, Cultural Relativity and the Problem of Globality," in *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. Anthony D. King: 69-90 (Binghamton, NY: Department of Art History, State University of New York at Binghamton, and London: Macmillan Education Service, 1991); *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992).

³ Alexander Tzonis and Laine Lefavre, "Why Critical Regionalism Today?" *A+U* 5 (May 1990): 23-33; *Architecture in Europe Since 1968: Memory and Invention* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992); Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism," in *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster: 16-30 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983); "Some Reflections on Postmodernism and Architecture." *ICA Postmodernism Documents 4* (1986): 26-31; *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992).

⁴ Ceylon was Sri Lanka's colonial name, changed to Sri Lanka in 1972.

⁵ According to archaeologist Senake Bandaranayake, the most common royal and religious buildings of former Lankan kingdoms derived their architectural concepts and forms from typical dwelling-houses. (Senake Bandaranayake, "Sri Lanka and Monsoon Asia: Patterns of Local and Regional Architectural Development and the Problem of the Traditional Sri Lankan Roof," in *Senerath Paranavitana Commemoration Volume* (Colombo, 1980), 40)

In addition to developing the concepts so appropriated in producing aggrandized royal and religious built forms, the stratification of the built environment so achieved was fixed through prohibition: for example, the use of more permanent roofing materials such as clay tiles and limewashing the walls were expressly forbidden without the king's permission. (See Senake Bandaranayake, "Form and Technique in Traditional Rural Housing in Sri Lanka," *ASA* 1 (1978), 10; Robert Percival, *An Account of the Island of Ceylon* (London: C. & R. Baldwin, 1803), 125; John Davy, *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and Its Inhabitants, with Travels in that Land* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821), 256; and Robert Knox, *An Historical Relation of Ceylon* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & sons, MCMXI).

⁶ Anthony King has argued that colonial architecture was not simply a reproduction of metropolitan forms, but was a specific adaptation of these to meet the climatic, resource, and other specific needs of the colonial third culture and colonial situation. (Anthony D. King, *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World-Economy* (London: Routledge, 1990), 60; See also Thomas J. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1989). Since the 1860s, when the British had largely suppressed any challenge to their authority by the colonized, they also generated hybridized built forms, (Norma Evenson, *The Indian Metropolis: A View Towards the West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 83-84) but the core elements were still exported from Britain.

⁷ Anthony D. King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment* (London: Routledge, 1976), 58.

⁸ See, for example, King, *Colonial Urban Development*; and R.K. Home, "Town Planning and Garden Cities in the British Colonial Empire 1910-1940," *Planning Perspective* 5 (1990).

⁹ Until the early 1980s, the Department of Architecture at the University of Sri Lanka collaborated with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), not only following its curriculum, but also conducting an examination for both Sri Lankan and British qualifications, which were awarded by a committee chaired by an RIBA representative who visited Sri Lanka every year.

¹⁰ The role of architecture (and also planning) in constituting the politics of domination and dependence was, however, discursively camouflaged by portraying building design as a politically neutral activity carried out by civil servants. Architects were taught what was assumed to be the "best" way to design, and for what was taken for granted as the "public good." The discourse was about constructing institutional buildings, ports, and roads for the "public." The practice was continued by the successive breed of post-colonial technocrats.

- ¹¹ Susantha Goonatilake, *Aborted Discovery: Science and Creativity in the Third World* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1984), 110-111.
- ¹² As I shall argue later, the imperial powers did not produce nations but empires.
- ¹³ See James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
- ¹⁴ See Perera, Chapter Four.
- ¹⁵ See Perera, Chapter Four; Gananath Obeyesekere, "Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon," *Modern Ceylon Studies I* (1970): 43-63; Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).
- ¹⁶ Goonatilake argues that "independence did not result in new theoretical orientations but in a shift towards broader dependence on new centers of dominance." (Goonatilake, 107)
- ¹⁷ Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 194.
- ¹⁸ Shanthi Jayawardane, "Bawa: A contribution to cultural regeneration," *Mimar* 19 (Jan-Mar 1986), 47.
- ¹⁹ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1989).
- ²⁰ Ulrik Plesner, "Ulrik Plesner," *Living Architecture* 5 (1986): 85.
- ²¹ Geoffrey Bawa, "Statement by the Architect," in *Geoffrey Bawa*, ed. Hassan-Uddin Khan (Singapore: Mimar, 1986), 16.
- ²² See Bandaranayake "Sri Lanka and Monsoon Asia" for typologies.
- ²³ See M.J.A. Rahim, "Muslim Architecture," in *An Ethnological Survey of Muslims of Sri Lanka: From Earliest Times to Independence*, eds. M.M.M. Mahroof et al. (Colombo: Sir Razik Fareed Foundation, 1986). Rahim notes, "The Islamic architecture of Sri Lanka equally reflects national characteristics and indicates that the Muslims and other communities lived in amity." (Ibid. 227) "The houses themselves are similar to those in the rest of the areas; in Jaffna for example, the houses have the characteristic "thinnaï" or verandah and the open space in the centre, the "matham." (Ibid. 229) A difference he highlights is "the already demarcated sections ... for the use of the womenfolk and the interior decor of Muslim houses." (Ibid. 229) These internal spaces thus provide a commonality among Muslim houses, simultaneously establishing a difference from others, for example, Singhalese and Tamil.
- ²⁴ Vale, 197.
- ²⁵ These hybridized buildings were produced, among other means, through the appropriation and development of indigenous built forms for colonial usages (See Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984) and decorating imported metropolitan built forms with indigenous cultural motifs. (See Evenson, 62) Here the Indo-Saracenic style developed by the British architects in India is by far the best example.
- ²⁶ Bawa, 16.
- ²⁷ See Vale, 273, 279-280.
- ²⁸ See Ibid, 194.
- Barbara Sansoni points out that Bawa's architecture "has a meaning for a Sri Lankan far and beyond any it might have to a foreigner. To Sri Lankans it represents the distillation of centuries of shared experience, and links at the first level achievement its ancient architecture to that of modern world." (Barbara Sansoni, "A Background to Geoffrey Bawa," in *Geoffrey Bawa*, ed. Hassan Uddin-Khan (Singapore: Mimar, 1986), 172-3.
- ²⁹ For an overview of these architect's work see Hassan Fathy, *Architecture of the Poor* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977); Hassan-Uddin Khan, *Charles Correa* (Singapore: Concept Media, 1987); Brian Brace Taylor, *Geoffrey Bawa* (Singapore: Concept Media, 1986); J.M. Richards, "Geoffrey Bawa" *Mimar* 19 (January-March 1986); Shanthi Jayawardane, "Bawa: A Contribution to Cultural Regeneration" *Mimar* 19 (January-March 1986); Ulrik Plesner, "Ulrik Plesner" *Living Architecture* 5 (1986): 94-97.
- ³⁰ Serge Sentelli, "The Two Traditions of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture," *Mimar* 33 (December 1989): 10-11.
- ³¹ According to Brolin, a United Nations expert in Yemen, Alain Bertaud (1970-1973), made a strong statement in directing the Yemenese attention towards the "rediscovery" of tradition by building his own house in mud at Sanaa. (Brent C. Brolin, *The Failure of Modern Architecture* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1976): 108-9) It is also important to mention John Turner who saw the significance of the dwellings constructed by so-called "urban squatters" of Lima, Peru.
- ³² Squint Eye, "The American Embassy Building, Galle Road, Colombo Three," *Sri Lanka Architect* 100 (December-February 1991): 48.
- ³³ Fathy, *Architecture for the Poor*, 5.
- ³⁴ Ibid, 19.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 109.
- ³⁶ Khan, *Charles Correa*, 12.
- ³⁷ Peter Scriver, "Arcadia or Apocalypse? Some observations on Post-Independent Urbanity and the Notion of a Third World Architecture," Presented to the International Conference on Architecture, Calcutta, November 16-20, 1990 (unpublished), 4-5.
- ³⁸ For a discussion of the use of borrowed elements stripped of their historic substance, see Mark Jarzombek, "Post-modernist Historicism: The Historian's Dilemma," in *Restructuring Architectural Theory*, eds., Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 86.