The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Global View

GAIL SATLER, *New College of Hofstra University*

This paper considers a version of architectural globalization that gives voice to other than the dominant order or perspective. Analyzing the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright as global in this way and considering how he incorporated Eastern as well as Western philosophies of building in his work, provides deeper insight into his Organic architecture. In addition, such an analysis makes available an alternative understanding of what global architecture can be. The analytic paradigm in use here considers other architecture as well as other aspects of culture.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ARCHITECTURE GIVES VOICE TO A MULTIPLICITY of philosophies and techniques—that is, when design and building shifts from a global view that evicts or subsumes other forms to one that embodies the essential roles played by these, and in doing so elevates the status of *"other"* cultures? What are the differences in how we conceive and understand space using these two paradigms? Finally, how is the inhabitant conceived and inscribed in each type of architectural form? These are the central questions of this article.

Introduction

For the past 10 years or so, a new or renewed interest in Asia and the Pacific Rim has manifested in areas ranging from medicine, stress reduction, literature, cooking techniques and cuisine, educational programs, and economics. This is fortuitous because looking to the East enlightens and enhances Western ways of living and thinking—potentially revealing areas of commonality as well as difference—when we provide a framework that gives equal voice to non-Western views rather than one that reshapes, disregards, or subsumes these perspectives and their essential and often unique features.

When Bill Moyers traveled to China to research his book, *Healing and the Mind*, he observed "China afforded me with a culture whose model of human health was so different from ours my questions could not be answered from within its frame of reference. When the regulation of *chi*, or vital energy, is the object of medicine, questions about mind and body make no sense."[1]

The same can be said of so-called nontraditional architecture, which also must be examined from a very different frame of reference. In most existing analyses, we find the Western "eye" or traditional frameworks being imposed on Eastern forms so that their intention and structure are, at best, rendered *other* or *complementary*; their meanings are dismissed as less significant and are evicted or subsumed into more familiar and therefore understandable frameworks. The result is a devaluation of this form. This is what dominant corporate economies have done to other economies in global cities.[2] This is what Western medicine has up to quite recently done to Eastern treatments, as Moyers alludes. And, in essence, this is what existing sociological analyses have done to nontraditional architecture. A more useful analytic paradigm for reading nontraditional architectural forms can be provided—one found in the works of Frank Lloyd Wright. It is a paradigm that emerges from the work itself and successfully joins and gives voice to Eastern and Western architectural and interactional philosophies. Just as the evolution of Wright's work demonstrates how a coexistence of diverse philosophies is not only possible but necessary for what he calls Organic architecture, so too can an analytic paradigm become a useful tool for generating and responding to social and economic issues involving built forms inscribed in global sites and the behaviors that occur within them. This opens up architecture of other less dominant cultures to a more provocative and useful status. The architectural landscape becomes one of contestation rather than absorption.[3] This paradigm also offers a more interesting definition of *globalization*—one that understands the essential need to preserve and respect diversity as well as house seemingly disparate philosophies of space, people, and their interactions with and within the built form. The paradigm recognizes other cultures to be as essential to the existence of the dominant form and it considers whether, at some point, all the marginal cultures carry enough weight to transform the center—eventually shifting the center of that space from where only the dominant form can be viewed to where cultures meet and contest, rather than absorb or are absorbed. That is an architectural (and social) terrain that one could call global in the deepest sense of the term.

Reading Wright from the Left: Taking a Global View

The influence of non-Western philosophies on Wright's work, especially Japanese and Native American philosophies, is acknowledged by most who analyze his work, although its impact is not easily agreed upon.[4] Wright himself wavered as to the exact nature of the influences of the philosophies of these cultures on his work. He freely acknowledged an important philosophical debt to the Japanese print art, yet at the same time he insisted that neither the art nor the architecture of Japan had any direct formal influence on his work. Wright steadfastly maintained that what he found in Japanese culture was not the inspiration (which many suspected) but

Journal of Architectural Education, pp. 15–24

merely confirmation of many of his own "organic" ideals.[5] Indeed, Wright's own words were sometimes confusing and contradictory. In *The Natural House* Wright reflected on influences and inferences of the East, stating, "I suppose it is true that when we speak of organic architecture, we are speaking of something that is more Oriental than Western . . . [M]y work *is*, in that deeper philosophical sense, Oriental. These ideals have not been common to the whole people of the Orient; but there was Laotse, for instance. The Orientals must have had a sense of it, whatever may have been their consideration for it, and they instinctively built that way. Their instinct was right."[6]

In *A Testament*, Wright wrote, "The *Ukiyoe* and the *Momoyama*, Japanese architecture and gardening, confirmed my own feeling for more work and delighted me, as did Japanese civilization which seemed so freshly and completely of the soil and organic."[7]

Wright most readily acknowledged that he discovered the notion of "the space within to be lived in," as manifested in his architecture, in the art and philosophy of the Orient, particularly in Japanese art. In *An Autobiography* he wrote, "[E]ver since I discovered the print, Japan had appealed to me as the most nature-inspired country on earth. Later, I found that Japanese art and architecture really did have organic character. Their art was nearer to the earth and a more indigenous product of the natural condition of life and work, therefore more nearly modern as I saw it, than any European civilization alive or dead."[8]

In a similar vein, he wrote in *A Testament*, "These [Japanese] prints I have collected with extravagant devotion and shameful avidity, and sat long at the inspiring series of Hokusai and Hiroshige; learned much from Korin, Kenzan, Sotatz, and always the primitives."[9]

Wright was, however, quick to deny these influences as being the source of his understanding of organic space or architecture. In a subdued tone he commented, "The idea of Organic architecture—that the reality of the building lies in the space within to be lived in—the feeling that we must not enclose . . . is not alone Oriental. Democracy, proclaiming the integrity of the individual per se, had the feeling if not the words."[10]

For Wright, this new sense of space (and within that sense of space the ways in which the body is inscribed by that space), was first understood after the construction of the Larkin Building (1904), and first truly realized with Unity Temple (1906). Reflecting on these two works Wright observed, "When building Unity Temple at Oak Park and the Larkin Building in Buffalo, I was making the first great protest I knew anything about against the building coming up on you from the outside as enclosure. . . . When pretty puffed up . . . I received a little book by Okakura Kakuzo, entitled *The Book of Tea*. . . . Reading it, I came across this sentence: "The reality of a room was to be found in the space enclosed by the roof and walls, not in the roof and walls themselves. Well, there I was. Instead of being the cake I was not even the dough."[11]

Since a general awareness of Japanese art was fairly widespread among upper-middle-class Americans at the close of the nineteenth century, the question becomes whether Wright's interpretation of these was different from the popular norm. Anthropologist Edward Hall describes the distinction between Eastern and Western perspectives, stating, "In the West we are taught to perceive and react to arrangements of objects and to think of the spaces as empty. The Japanese give meaning to spaces, their shape, and the arrangements of the shape."[12]

What ties Wright's work to and distinguishes it from Eastern ones resides in Wright's ability to apply the principles of the philosophies of these cultures to the values, attitudes, materials, techniques, and needs of his time and culture—early twentieth-century America. Historically Wright has been seen as both a product of the nineteenth century's search for a new, genuinely American architecture, in the direct line of H.H. Richardson and Louis Sullivan, and as a transitional figure linking the Arts and Crafts movement with the birth of modernism.[13] While these perceptions have helped to place Wright in a wider perspective, they fail to do him justice as a creative person in his own right. Yet, to treat Wright as entirely self-made, oblivious to all external influences except nature itself, places him beyond the reach of those who could learn from his example.[14]

Of interest, then, is what and how Wright learned from these other cultures, and how he integrated, transformed, and remade what he observed. Wright's process moved away from the conventional Western versions of space to this Eastern version, and his work logically emerged from conceptions of space that had indeed come before *and* from within architecture. This shift allows other than the dominant culture to be seen as essential to the building's identity. This reveals how organic architecture, as Wright understood it, was one where contestation rather than absorption created "the space within to be lived in" and cross-cultural regeneration. Wright's organic architecture provides a window into the impact the exchange of ideas between distant cultures can have. This is not, however, to imply simple imitation; rather, herein lies the notion that creativity stems from an original viewpoint and a profound understanding of one's own culture and of the process of globalization. The designs of Frank Lloyd Wright are among the greatest examples of this phenomenon.

DIAGRAM 1. Derivation of Organic Architecture[15]

The way of life	Hierarchy of space	Wright's view
Stanza 1 Thirty spokes converge upon a single nut. It is only the hole in the center that the use of the car hinges. (*Ho-o-den/Wm. Winslow residence*)	**Tectonic** Point of intersection = focal point and strength	**First dimension** *Horizontality*
Stanza 2 We make a vessel from a lump of clay. It is the empty space within the vessel that makes it useful. (*Temple of Higashi Hongan-ji/Robie House*)	**Stereotectonic a** Form follows function.	**Second dimension** *Decentralization*
Stanza 3 We make doors and windows for a room. But it is these empty spaces that make a room livable. (*Nikko tosho-gu/Johnson Administration Building*)	**Stereotectonic b** Need for other is seen in order to provide unity. Boundary defines space.	**Third dimension** *Depth*
Stanza 4 Thus while the tangible has its advantages, it is the intangible that makes it useful. (*Nikko Taiyu-in-byo/Unity Temple*)	**Organic/global** Synthesis of dominant and "other" cultures; boundary line gives way to borderlands; dominant and other cultures are valued, giving life to form and space.	**Fourth dimension** *Character* Space within to be lived in

As we approach the twenty-first century, problems of intercultural contact are of renewed importance and concern. Wright's work can thus make a contribution to an understanding of these processes when they are read and analyzed within this context. Wright's work will be viewed through Eastern and Western perspectives as well as through his own accounting of the progression of architecture from the first dimension to the fourth dimension (to organic architecture) as a way of exemplifying his unique and global architectural landscape (see Diagram 1).

The diagram attempts to illustrate how Wright merged Eastern and Western architectural traditions to produce his organic architecture using Laotse's concept of the void, depicted in the poem, "The Way of Life" and Western architectural forms for building. Wright often made reference to Laotse and his writings, especially "The Way of Life," in his writings and addresses. Wright often frequently made reference to Western architectural traditions of ancient as well as more modern civilizations and cultures, noting what each lacked from the standpoint of what would constitute *living (organic)* architecture and more specifically architecture for modern society. "The Hierarchy of Space," loosely suggested in Cornelius van de Ven's *Space in Architecture*, offers a way to conceive the development of Western architecture as Wright described it and as it parallels the stanzas of Laotse's "The Way of Life." The synthesis of, and at times the contestation, of Laotse's stanzas and van de Ven's delineation of (Western) architecture made up the dimensions of architecture for Wright, culminating in the fourth dimension—organic architecture. Each stanza relates to a *particular* perception of space and form that encloses it.

Stanza 1 of "The Way of Life" represents, perhaps, the most absolute and classical notion of space, which is best displayed in the architecture of ancient Greece. The Platonic view asserts that space, or air, was one of the basic elements of earth, and therefore real. The focus of architecture here is its encasement of space. This is what makes it real. The centralization or agglomeration of space and the limitation of how space can be seen and experienced is the most important consequence of this view. We focus on what surrounds the space rather than the space itself. That is, the classical view creates an exclusionary stance for viewing both building and interaction. In order to see or understand space here, we have to locate a single focal point. Laotse calls it "the center," and indeed it is central, since the source of power, strength, and meaning all apparently emerge from that singular point. In Greek and other classical architecture the eye is drawn to a central point. Space is what is inside the forms—the interior (distinct from the exterior). This interior is enveloped and dominated by the form. What is ignored or forgotten is that the center is the focal point because of the convergence of all parts to that point. So, in fact, all parts are forgotten or absorbed into the larger whole. What is inside the form is also defined by that form. What remains—the outside—is perceived to be formless, chaotic, or unintelligible, but it is also, in a way, defined by the form

that encloses. The space stands alone—empty and devoid of life. Wright once noted, "The word 'organic' does not, cannot apply to so-called classic architecture in any form whatsoever. Greek architecture knew it—not at all!"[16] While space was created and provided for its inhabitants, it is a form that also dominates them as well.

There are many ways of reading the implications of a unidimensional version of space as depicted through classical architecture—a version that perceives that the whole as defined where the points converge. For now we can consider how classical architecture views connection and strength through the notion of power—that is, as power applies to the possible relationship between a dominant culture and other cultures within a particular place. If the whole becomes defined where the points converge, then in these structures we need to look to the corners. That means the real center (and source of strength and definition) is to be found at those points—at the walls that keep things in and/or out. We look to the center as the space, but this is misleading since according to this type of architecture, space is the result of its perimeters. The center, then, is a place that is imposed or presupposed on the structure and those who inhabit or view it rather than a place that emerges as a valid expression or outcome of the structure's use. The center is distinct from center or locus of primary use. This is why when we look to the space inside these structures—to the imposed center—we find it to be lifeless. We are inside the structure, but we rely on the walls for our definition, strength, and individual and collective identities. We are made to believe the strength has to lie at these points and that our solidarity comes from our relationship to the wall, that is, who is inside and who is outside it. The notion of building based on generating points of intersection or on focal points has come to be the hallmark of classical architecture. This approach laid the groundwork for the post and beam form of construction—the form of building that dominated architecture for centuries. In many ways, this perception of strength still underlies many instances of building today.

The William Winslow residence (1893–94), Wright's first independent commission, set the standard for the Prairie School style. This house gives the appearance of a self-contained free-standing classical block. The house rests on a projecting stone water table, that Wright compared to the stylobate of a Greek temple.[17] While the plan of the Winslow house was laid out in equally classical and formal principles, it also drew from the Central Hall plan of the Japanese Ho-o-den. Both the Ho-o-den and early Prairie houses had essentially one big room or communal space serving several different functions. In the Winslow house the fireplace becomes the interior focus and acts as a pivot for the spatial composition. The house is divided into a series of horizontal layers marked by changes in material, expressing differences in function. Wright believed a house had to signify comfort and the idea of shelter. "The horizontal line," he wrote, "is the line of domesticity."[18] In the Winslow house, for the first time in his work, that sense of shelter in the look of the building was infused with every aspect of the design,[19] in part inspired by the aesthetic and the program of the Ho-o-den.

Styles of architecture that utilize this premise and technique for building created a particular version of inhabitant as well. Here the role of inhabitants is subsumed into the function or use of the structure, which would presumably determine form, so that "form follows function." As will be seen, however, this version of use is also predetermined before and without input of those who actually use the structure. Just as "center" is imposed in such building, so is its use. We see this version of use in *Stanza 2* of "The Way of Life." Here space is defined in a less universal way. The idea of form is simply that which encloses and that space is what is created as a consequence of one notion of style now appears to be replaced with a seemingly more relativistic or contextual notion of how space and form are to be connected through use. Space as *stereotectonic* (*a* and then *b*) becomes defined, assessed, and experienced in terms of its adherence to the idea that it was built to serve a singular and apparently noncontested purpose. In this view, the dominant building form also now incorporates the dominant notion of functions and activities. Space here not only tells us what to do, but how and where to do it. Here we see the utilization of the "form follows function" rule taken most literally and absolutely. While the first stage of the stereotectonic form moves away from the absolute idea that what and who is inside is valued and important and what and who is outside was devalued or less significant, it still requires reverence to ancient or more classical building forms. For example, in assessing designs for banks in the United States, Wright observed, "A bank depends upon false and useless columns for credit," instead of following the urges of the modern age, which suggested that "a bank look like a bank—bad though a bank might become."[20]

This comment alludes to the inability or disinterest of early functionalists to move beyond the classics for a sense of what form means and how it should look. Style as well as form are still heavily dictated by the classic notion of space. That is, architecture is still unidimensional and uniform. Even though architects building in this way claim to be relying on use for their inspiration and definition, how use was seen still relies on a classic (tectonic) version of what would be best. That is, a bank should look like a bank; a hospital should look like a hospital, and so on. We still have a perception of space that is absolute, static, and predetermined outside of the parameters of its users.

Up to this point, few if any architects sensed that a culture other than the classical ones could suggest or provide appropriate settings. Wright notes, "After all is said and done, I believe our missing native culture is due more to the lack of what constitutes a clear sense of honor than to say any adverse material conditions."[21]

So the depth or spirit of architecture has still not been realized. Stereotectonic form is flat or two-dimensional because it continues to deny the existence of the diversity of both people and their needs and wants, which are essential components in the construction and interpretation of the form to be built. A building may have been functional, but its use in no way shows concern or respect for uniqueness found among cultures, much less individuals who inhabit and use it. Architecture's functional as well as aesthetic aspects are still defined by criteria external to most cultures, and therefore outside of individual experience and definition. Architecture's functional and aesthetic meaning is subjective and dynamic and passionately moves us to see and feel the absence of the third dimension—its depth. Depth, structurally and aesthetically is, in part, derived from individual perceptions of and interactions with it. Space devoid of depth is, deadening, if not dead, because it constrains all views but the dominant one regarding what "use," "beauty," or "comfort" can be. In this form of building, ornamentation—the superficial representations of art (or fashion) and the acknowledgment of feelings and senses—becomes a substitute for depth. Such a stance provides a thoughtful and valid rendering of what is needed and appealing to users. For Wright, ornamentation was repulsive precisely because of its unfaithfulness to what it was supposed to represent—each of our identities, proclivities, and interests as well as the collective interest derived as through direct input. When architecture moved from the second to the third stage (*Stereotectonic form b*) it looked as if this concern might be addressed by architects such as Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and their contemporaries. They replaced the adherence to classic designs and ornamentation with a form of functionalism that they believed reflected the needs and tastes as well as the essence of modern and postmodern societies.

The International Style moved architecture out of the past in many important ways. For the first time, space was conceived of as dynamic—as space to be lived in—in Western architecture.

The Robie house (1908) might be viewed as the culmination of the process of abstraction and analysis begun in the Winslow house. The single room forms virtually the entire main floor of the house. The conventional image of the house is broken down into a series of intersecting, overlapping, and nearly autonomous planes. A central fireplace/stairway forms the core and focus of a space that is continuous around it. Each aspect of the earlier Prairie house that was intended to increase openness is further fragmented and articulated to enhance the effect. A heightened sense of privacy is dramatized by the hovering roof plane extending well beyond the edges of the enclosed space.[22] Wright was impressed with the dramatic roof forms of the Great Hall of the temple of Hiashi Hongan-ji in Nagoya, and it may be that the extended double eaves of the Robie house, may have been a response to the hovering roof forms he observed there.[23]

Once living in the space becomes a priority in design and building, the impact the structure has on its inhabitants—the feature that truly gives it meaning and life—is being acknowledged and utilized in design and critique. The contribution made at this stage was a shift from what would be called absolute to relative functionalism or the move to modern architecture. If we agree that the International Style did incorporate the more individual and dynamic notions of function and beauty in its designs, then such works could be described by *Stanza 3* of Laotse's poem. But while the International Style considered these issues, it still chose to respond to them from a single and central vantage point which was that of modern(ism) industrialism. A sense of the third dimension was added; however, architects still continued to focus on and produce buildings that represented the dominant culture, in this case, modern and postmodern economics, which stressed massive industry, machinery, and mass production. The logic was still grounded in eviction and absorption. Form was defined in a linear way, that is, by a boundary line.

The key to understanding the third dimension as it is represented in the International Style lies in understanding how that style chooses to interpret "livable." Livable here means one way of life or living, rendering the form and space dictatorial rather than democratic in derivation and intention. "Everyone" is synonymous with "anyone," but in a way that depersonalizes this equity or equality. Put another way, it evicts or obliterates other cultures or points of view—rendering them insignificant or less valued. In doing so, the boundary that is set up is one of exclusion, separating the dominant form from "the undefined other." We can say the boundary is represented as a line (or polemic) rather than a terrain with a complex texture of its own—one whose relationship to other forms must be taken into account for its own definition as well as for the definition of the greater whole. Furthermore, while the techne might have advanced in structures of this style, there was still no real or radical departure from the notion of what living in the space meant. So while the International Style advanced the sense of what space could be, it was not willing to decentralize or disperse what or where the focus or center of the structure might be. In fact, it centralized what kinds of architecture would be seen as the dominant style. Architec-

ture was viewed as the reflection or result of historical, cultural, and economic forces, as opposed to also being a contributor to these forces. Architecture, which may be viewed as a marker of the times, can itself also be a force. Wright understood this when he wrote, "The common sense of the simple truth . . . *from within outward*, if awakened in our society as now in our architecture, would ensure the true uses of technology for human shelter and reverential harmonious environment, both socially and politically."[24]

The Johnson Administration Building (1936) was Wright's first chance at a large-scale commission in many years. He was nearly sixty when he designed it. As with the Larkin project, years earlier, Wright wanted to create a work environment that was exhilarating and secure for workers. And as with the Larkin Building, the Johnson Building demonstrates Wright's understanding of *depth*. He wrote, "[O]rganic architecture sees the third dimension never as weight or mere thickness but always as *depth* . . . a true liberation of light and life within walls . . . the outside coming in."[25]

Wright drew from his visit to Nikko, years earlier. Nute notes that Wright was one of the few among foreign architects who was able to get beyond the superficial aspects of the buildings at Nikko and appreciate their underlying forms.[26] The gongen-style forms, with their dual-function parti and presence of depth—the third dimension—seems to in part have provided the basis for the Johnson Administration Building.

Wright developed the fluid effects of streamlining through the use of circular forms. In the upper part of the administrative section of the building . . . the circular forms of the plan were truly developed in a three-dimensional way. "Architecture until then," according to Wright, "was finally closed off at the upper angle by a cornice . . . I took off the cornice at the ceiling, took out the wall beneath it and . . . I put in glass. Thus light was let into the interior space where light had never been seen before."[27] The corners of the wall are curved, while the top opens in a continuous "rift" of glass tubing that forms a band of light between the wall and the skylight of the ceiling so that just where the eye expects the building to come together, Wright inserts a horizontal band of glass tubes eliminating the horizontal corner—the corner between the walls and the ceiling.[28] The effect is that the ceiling appears "to float and dematerialize in the cool, diffused light."[29]

Wright was correct in seeing a hesitancy to take relativity or perhaps more accurately interaction to its limits in this type of design as well as in the interactions it fostered. Until that realization of and move to the fourth dimension is achieved, we are left with works that continue to lack the vital spirit that gives voice and value to more than one point of view and culture. Wright observed, "[S]helter is still a strange disorder when reduced to a flat lid—though a common desire on account of economy."[30] If, however, true relativity and multiplicity can be achieved or taken to its limits, as Wright observed, "The sense of "the within" or the room itself (or room themselves) I see as the great thing to be realized . . . may take the new forms we need as architecture. . . . This sense of interior space made *exterior* as architecture . . . This clarifying motive of the whole makes previous ideas useful only as a means to the realization of this far greater concept of architecture."[31]

At this point architecture moves to the fourth dimension—which is what Wright understood to be essential in Organic architecture. As *Stanza 4* explains, at this stage architecture must view space as tangible as well as intangible; it must view space as an ever present tension of what is known and what is not. More importantly, it views the space as a terrain of contestation. By elevating the necessity or role of the interpretative process of the inhabitants in the structure, Wright transforms the idea of depth and of space to be lived in from line(ar) to terrain; from eviction to contestation; from one dominant culture to multiplicity of other cultures that comprise the space.[32] Wright explains, "Space outside becomes a natural part of space *within* the building. All building design thus actually becomes four-dimensional. . . . Walls are now apparent, more as humanized screens. They do define and differentiate, but never confine or obliterate space. A new sense of reality in building construction has arrived."[33]

For an enclosure to be organic (true shelter) under these new auspices, the design and structure must provide for security that comes from knowing one's roots, as well as provide for the ability and desire to move beyond them. Organic architecture needs to make space that serves as an impetus for movement in order to sustain the life force of the structure and its inhabitants. Life is realized through the process of living and in making space for other than one way of living. Unity Temple (1906) is where Wright makes the leap from the third to the fourth dimension and in *The Destruction of the Box* he notes that "space is the reality not the matter."[34] In Unity Temple, Wright stopped treating space as matter—something frozen in time—and views it as a force that is dynamic, one that changes as it is being used. He incorporated what he was drawn to in the art and philosophy of the East. Wright described Unity Temple as "the first conscious expression which I know in modern architecture of this *new reality*—the 'space within to be lived in.' . . . The age-old philosophy of Laotze is alive in architecture . . . space is the basic element in architectural design."[35]

The distinctive dual-purpose plan of Unity Temple also seems to have had its origin in the gongen-style plan from the Nikko Taiyu-in-byo. This form consists of three distinct elements

reflecting its primary functions: a sanctuary for the deity; an oratory for worshipers; and a narrow intermediate corridor connecting the two spaces. The gongen-style developed in order to accommodate two spaces (with distinct functions) that needed to be physically linked. Unity Temple required an essentially similar dual role.[36]

Wright accomplished this in Unity Temple by changing levels between the entrance lobby and main hall and between central areas of the main hall of Unity Temple and the cloister corridors. Changing levels can also be found in Taiyu-in.[37]

In Unity Temple we find the integration of spaces into a coherent whole, exhibiting grammatical consistency and playfulness. Wright said, "[L]et the room inside be the architecture outside" so that "it may be seen as the soul of the design."[38] Two aspects of Unity Temple stand out—the luminous experience of the interior, which is magnified by its contrast with the exterior's apparent visual weight; and space, which affords movement that is continuous and flowing. Nothing appears solid in Unity Temple. The eye is never arrested by structure. "The effect," according to Levine, "of looking through great depths of receding space is like an implosion of traditional architectural form creating a world where space and depth rather than mass and volume reign supreme."[39]

This aspect of the transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4 is the hardest for Westerners to comprehend, and yet it is the most crucial for reading Wright's work and for moving to architecture that is organic or global. If there is a way of incorporating the dominant (the known) with the others (the unknown) without evicting or subsuming alternative forms of living (the unknowable), organic or global architecture begins to make sense. It also resonates with the global processes we are currently experiencing.

Formulating space or action in this way is functional if, as Wright notes, we understand form and function to be one and therefore part of a larger whole that incorporates both in its use. *Use*, as it is realized here, is more accurately understood as the process of *using*. That is, it is dynamic rather than static; it is space defined beyond a linear notion of borders. Sassen refers to this as "a terrain of borderlands."[40] It is an accurate depiction of what happens when space is synthesized with interaction rather than viewed as distinct and separate entities. As Wright also suggests, this new view provides for space that is capable of flowing in any direction without becoming chaotic or anomic precisely because form and function have been conceived of as part of one another. Space that emerges under these auspices frees and yet secures its inhabitants. It also empowers inhabitants beyond those who represent the dominant view.

Wright's description of the Japanese house emphasized its apparent elimination of many common Western features, a characterisitic of which he wholeheartedly approved, having recalled in his autobiography how he saw the ordinary Japanese home as "a supreme study in elimination of the insignificant."[41] It may have been more than coincidental that the Prairie house differed from the more typical American home of the time, primarily through its elimination of many familiar features, e.g., attics, cellars, closets, and enclosed rooms. For Wright, one of the most important innovations of the Prairie House was its departure from the conventional "box" which represented the more typical American home of the time. Aesthetic idealism and the democratization of art were both popular themes in late nineteenth-century art theory. Architecturally and philosophically, Wright indeed focused on a representation of America that was inclusive. It was not simply a matter of acknowledging diversity or correcting traditional bias toward the architectural legacy of exclusion. The work and its intention acknowledged and respected diversity while reaching beyond multiple and sometimes national ethnic, gender, race, and class identities to encompass larger common themes, such as the migration experience, the breakdown and reformulation of families, or the search for a new sense of identity in new settings. Here we achieve "an extremely subtle evocation of American diversity, which at the time reinforces our sense of common membership in an American society."[42] Much has been made of Wright as the architect most representative of America, of democracy, of freedom, of "modern times." Much as also been made of the influences of Eastern philosophy on his work. Like the other aspects of Wright's work and life, we seem to be confronted with an apparent paradox and contradiction. Was Wright a man of the West, or was he a man of the East? Wright was both. We could add that Wright was an architect of every person because his understanding of and concern with the human condition is exemplified throughout his works. That places his work in a terrain that underlies parameters that are used to define works we call, "eastern," "western," "modern," "global," "classical," "radical," or "traditional." Norris Kelly Smith notes, "One has only to read a few pages of his writing or enter a building to perceive that ethical considerations were far more important to him than was his relation to the modern movement."[43]

Rethinking Global Architecture

What has been offered in this analysis is a way to review Wright's architecture specifically and to rethink building and criticism more generally from a global landscape. The non-Western and nontraditional elements of his philosophy and buildings are not often the

focus of analyses of Wright or his works. Perhaps this is because observers or critics are more eager to show Wright's work as examples of architecture that is considered modern, American, or radical in the ways that the dominant (Western) culture normally interprets these concepts. We now have a way of seeing Wright's works that shows how he incorporated nondominant cultures into his works and gave voice and value to them. These elements give his work their modern, American and radical qualities as well as their organic or global ones, though Wright never used the latter term. Wright's understanding of building acknowledges the importance of the past as something that requires continuous review and critique. Wright saw the need always to remember, but also always to move beyond as well; to always be in the process of beginning again. In this way his work is revolutionary. It comes full circle. The other significant contribution these philosophies and perspectives make to Wright's work is that we see what was perceived a modern problem is perhaps a more universally experienced one: the need to integrate parts to the whole without devaluing either. Wright's work elevates the status of architecture to one that is social as well as sociological by acknowledging and preserving what is different or unique as well as what is held in common in the creation of his work. The solution to a building problem is the solution to the problem of community—providing social order and identity to members. If the structure was organic, it would be defined under the auspices of the fourth dimension because it remained rooted in the whole—at all times and in all places—and precisely because of this, it would not be resistant to changes as yet unknown or unknowable. No global culture can absorb everything. Contestation then becomes an integral part of the landscape, highlighting the link between inside and outside. This was an aspect of Japanese building that Wright admired and incorporated in his work. Wright was interested, after all, in developing a form of life. Therefore, what he was creating needed to incorporate its mortality. So his work in relation to its surroundings is one where its edges are certainly always in flux and where the possibility of others eventually moving the center—causing the shift or demise of his work—was understood and embraced. Wright often quoted Goethe's dictum, "Death was nature's ruse in order that she might have more life."[44] This aspect of Wright's architecture may make it more resonant with the true terrain of globalism than many more contemporary architectural forms.

Just as the evolution of Wright's work demonstrates how a coexistence of diverse philosophies is not only possible but necessary for what he calls organic architecture, so too can an analytic paradigm become a useful tool for generating and responding to social and economic issues involving built forms, inscribed in global sites and the behaviors that occur within them. Today feelings about globalization are more complicated. Globalization may bring within reach regions of cultural difference, but it also threatens those regions with sameness. In *The City and the Grassroots*, Manuel Castells notes, "The new space of a world capitalist system . . . is a space of variable geometry, formed by locations hierarchically ordered in a continuously changing network of flows: flows of capital, labor, elements of production, commodities, information, decisions, and signals. . . . [T]he new tendential urban meaning is the spatial and cultural separation of people from their product and from their history."[45]

While suggesting that "what tends to disappear is the meaning of places for people," Castells finds many social movements mobilized against this loss of meaning in places. Paradoxically, the elaboration of place-bound identities has become more rather than less important in a world of diminishing spatial barriers to exchange, movement, and communication. Understanding the history of urban cultural landscapes offers citizens and public officials some basis for making political and spatial choices about the future. It also offers a context for greater social responsibility to practitioners in the design field.[46]

At the end of the twentieth century, modernity has an extensive repertory of forms with which to represent possible truths of its time. Wright was too intelligent an artist to imagine that design could undo abstraction. Design is abstraction. Italian architect Ettore Sottsass has written, "It is true that materials, colors, rhythms, spaces and proportions are controlled by the mind, by a hypothetically higher order, but they also belong to the grand, to the impossibility of our human landscape."[47] Design and globalization are both technologies. Wright used the first to soften the impact of the second, while sustaining the integrity of each. This is as global (and timeless) as one can be. Wright understood this when he wrote, "This new sense-of-the-within naturally unfolding, taking form by the culture of art, architecture, philosophy, and religion, natural; all being content to look *within* to the spirit for the solution of every human problem and, by expanding the means so found, enlarging and achieving new, varied expressions of life on earth—this would be old wisdom, ancient as Laotze at least; yet modern."[48]

His are truly modern statements. They are American statements. They are much more.

Bibliography

Gutheim, F. (1950). *Frank Lloyd Wright: On Architecture*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap.

Hall, E. (1966). *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Doubleday.

Hayden, D. (1995). *The Power of Place*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Hoffmann, D. (1995). *Understanding Frank Lloyd Wright's Architecture*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

Kaufmann, E. and Raeburn, B. (eds.) (1960). *Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings*. New York: Horizon Press.

Lao-tse. (1944). *The Way of Life*. New York: Capricorn Books.

Levine, N. (1996). *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Moyers, W. (1993). *Healing and the Mind*. New York: Random House.

Muschamp, H. "Concerned More About People Than Planes," *The New York Times*. Arts and Leisure section. 6 July 1997: 30.

Nute, K. (1993). *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Pfeiffer, B. Brooks. (1995). *Frank Lloyd Wright: Collected Writings.* Volume 5 (1949–1959), New York: Rizzoli International.

Sassen, S. (1991). *The Global City*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

—. (1993). "Analytic Borderlands: Economy and the Culture in the Global City," working paper.

Satler, G. (1999) *Frank Lloyd Wright's Living Space: Architecture's Fourth Dimension*. Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press.

Smith, N.K. (1966). *Frank Lloyd Wright—A Study in Architectural Content*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

van de Ven, C. (1977). *Space in Architecture*. Amsterdam: Van Corcum Asen.

Wright, F. Ll. (1949). *Genius and the Mobocracy*. New York: Duell, Sloan, & Pearce.

—. (1953). *The Future of Architecture*. New York: Horizon Press.

—. (1954). *The Natural House*. New York: Horizon Press.

—. ([1943], 1977). *An Autobiography*. New York: Horizon Press.

Zevi, B. (1950). *Towards an Organic Architecture*. London: Faber & Faber, Ltd.

Notes

1. Bill Moyers, *Healing and the Mind* (New York: Random House, 1993), p. xiii.

2. See for example, Saskia Sassen's, *The Global City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991) for an excellent delineation of characteristics of global cities and for the process of globalization.

3. Saskia Sassen, in her working paper, "Analytic Borderlands: Economy and the Culture in the Global City," (1993) provides a detailed discussion of the global terrain employed here.

4. A thorough and insightful analysis of Wright and Japan, some of which is used here, can be found in Kevin Nute's, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993). The book also contains an extensive bibliography.

5. Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, p. 2.

6. Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Natural House," in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings,* eds. Edgar Kaufmann and Ben Raeburn (New York: Horizon Press 1960), p. 298.

7. Frank Lloyd Wright, "A Testament, 1957," in *Writings and Buildings,* p. 303, eds. Kaufmann and Raeburn.

8. Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography* (New York: Horizon Press, [1943], 1977), p. 217.

9. Wright, "A Testament" in *Writings and Buildings*, p. 303, eds. Kaufmann and Raeburn.

10. Wright, "A Testament" in *Writings and Buildings,* p. 300. eds. Kaufmann and Raeburn.

11. Ibid., p. 300.

12. Edward Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 153.

13. K. Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993) p. 8.

14. Ibid.

15. *The Way of Life* is taken from Lao-tse's, *Tao Teh Ching* or *The Way of Life* (New York: Capricorn, 1944), Ch. 2. The hierarchy of space is derived from Cornelius van de Ven's, *Space in Architecture* (Amsterdam: Van Corcum Asen, 1977), Part One, Ch. 1. Wright's delineation is drawn from a composite of his writings.

16. Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Future of Architecture* (New York: Horizon Press, 1953), p. 258.

17. Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 16.

18. Ibid., p. 17.

19. Ibid.

20. Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House* (New York: Horizon Press, 1954), p. 54.

21. Frank Lloyd Wright, *Genius and the Mobocracy* (New York: Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1949), p. 14.

22. Levine, *Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, p. 54.

23. Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, p. 145.

24. Wright, "A Testament," in *Writings and Buildings,* p. 326, eds. Kaufmann and Raeburn.

25. Ibid., p. 313.

26. Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, p. 149.

27. Wright, *An Autobiography*, p. 472.

28. Levine, *Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, p. 303; Donald Hoffmann, *Understanding Frank Lloyd Wright's Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995), p. 89.

29. Levine, *Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, p. 303.

30. Ibid., p. 317.

31. Frank Lloyd Wright, *Organic Architecture*, 1935 in *Frank Lloyd Wright on Architecture*, ed. Frederick Gutheim (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1941), pp. 189–190. See also Bruno Zevi, *Towards an Organic Architecture* (London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1950) for an excellent discussion of Wright's organic architecture. Wright and Zevi were mutual admirers of one another's work and had a good association in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s.

32. Sassen, "Analytic Borderlands," in *The Global City,* pp. 14–19.

33. Wright, "A Testament," in *Writings and Buildings,* p. 313. eds. Kaufmann and Raeburn.

34. Wright, "The Destruction of the Box," 1952, in *Writings and Buildings*, p. 285, eds. Kaufmann and Raeburn.

35. Wright, "A Testament," in *Writings and Buildings*, p. 313. eds. Kaufmann and Raeburn.

36. Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, pp. 167–68.

37. Ibid., p. 169.

38. Levine, *Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, p. 41.

39. Ibid, p. 46.

40. Sassen, "Analytic Borderlands," p. 3.

41. Nute, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan*, p. 39.

42. Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), pp. 8–9.

43. Norris Kelly Smith, *Frank Lloyd Wright—A Study in Architectural Content* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 4.

44. Wright, *Future of Architecture*, p. 229.

45. Manuel Castells, in Hayden, *The Power of Place*, p. 42.

46. Ibid., pp. 42–43.

47. Herbert Muschamp, "Concerned More About People Than Planes," *The New York Times*. Arts and Leisure Section, 6 July 1997, p. 30.

48. Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Living City*, 1958 in Pfeiffer, *Frank Lloyd Wright: Collected Writings.* Vol. 5, p. 261.