

John F. C. Turner

There is little that I take issue with in Janet Abu-Lughod's paper; therefore, my commentary is an interpretation of questions raised and references to subsequent presentations and discussions.

In my view, there are four key questions which I feel able to address in ways that complement the excellent and stimulating paper presented: How should the rapid deterioration of inner cities be evaluated? What kinds of instruments should be used to deal with this deterioration? Who can and who should decide what is to be done and how? Will the Award be for completed works as "product" or as "tools"?

While there are many possible answers to these questions, and an even larger number of permutations and combinations amounting to alternative policies, it is my belief that there are but two common and predominant alternatives to each question. I think I share a common view with many participants at this seminar. These issues can be stated as follows: 1) Is it the buildings that matter? Or is it the relationship between the built environment and the inhabitants that matters? 2) Can the physical, or social, or both the physical and social heritage be saved and regenerated by large-scale, centrally administered technological and managerial systems? Or do these aims demand the use of locally controlled decentralizing technologies and administrative systems? 3) Who can and who should control the system used? The city and nation through representative government? Or the people and their neighbourhood communities in directly democratic ways?

These are not either/or questions in my own mind. And from the eminently reasonable and deeply informed discussions, I am sure that most, if not all, participants would frame answers to these questions in ways that would recognize some validity to both sides. Practical answers, I am sure, must be in terms of balances, and these, in turn, must be determined by clear distinctions between elements or aspects of the subject matter.

I will reveal my own bias in the following paragraphs elaborating these issues, but I

do not want to be misunderstood, especially with regard to the principle agreed upon by the Steering Committee: No one school of thought or action should be selected for awards. To do that will be in direct opposition to the aims of the Award. I agree wholeheartedly since I am certain that no one person and no group or organization of any kind has *the* answer. Truly effective answers to the fundamental questions courageously confronted can only come from the synthesis of new knowledge and the deepened wisdom that comes from the experience of doing. So, while I make no bones about the identity of the school of thought and action to which I belong, I see the others not so much as rivals, but as complements and potential partners in the discovery of new ways.

I take as the text for my commentary Janet Abu-Lughod's precisely worded statement of the higher purpose of the Award for work in such areas:

The creation of self-renewing centres which retain the best of the architectural heritage from the past and which utilize still valid principles of urban physical and social organization drawn from Islamic precedents to create, throughout the Islamic world, cities which are not inferior copies of Western models (which already have proved their bankruptcy) but authentically innovative cities designed to function efficiently for the type of life found in them today.

The First Issue: Ends or Values

In reminding us that people are the material of development, Jacques Berque reinforces what others, as well as Janet Abu-Lughod, have said and shown so eloquently. Janet's paper, reinforced by Nawal Hassan's pictures, tells us what the inner city of Cairo does for its inhabitants. They show how vital the environment is



Cairo, Egypt street market

Photo J. Turner

for the support of the people who live and work there. The paper, especially, explains how the Old City enables so many to live in spite of acute poverty. It provides the poor and the very poor with some security through social supports and access to a wide variety of jobs, thanks to the amazing diversity and intensity of economic activities. These supports are physical, but this may be secondary to the social and the economic.

It is still generally assumed that techniques demanding powerful machines rather than hand or hand-powered tools, both for the fabrication of building materials and for their assembly, are more efficient and productive than traditional methods, or their adaptations by innovations that lighten the burden of excessively hard labour. Almost any conventional modern housing scheme disproves the previous generalization. In the great majority of cases, centrally-administered housing and other kinds of building schemes are extremely costly to build in the first place. They are often extremely unpopular, sometimes rendered uninhabitable by their unwilling occupants. It is now becoming evident that they have extremely short life spans.

There may well be circumstances in which there is no alternative but to use highly centralized and industrialized building methods. It is increasingly clear that these cannot be the permanent norm, even in wealthy societies. It is now difficult, if not impossible, to justify the use of heavy industrial building systems and large building organizations for small structures on economic grounds. Even the myth of the necessity of high-rise buildings to economize on land has been exploded (most devastatingly by Sir Leslie Martin and Lionel March, who concluded, "The only sense that high buildings make in nucleated centres is in terms of real estate speculation. In terms of accommodating built space on urban land they are extravagant and irrational gestures")¹.

The contrasts between traditional forms of housing and urban space and modern urban-industrial forms speak for them-

selves. It is ironic that the rapidly diminishing supply of surviving traditional architecture commands ever-higher market prices from those who are enriched by the modern forms that are displacing them.

The Second Issue: Ways of Authority or Authenticity

"Inferior copies of Western models" are certainly the last things any of us at this seminar should wish to increase in the Islamic world (or anywhere else, for that matter). "Authentically innovative cities designed to function efficiently for the type of life found in them today" can be achieved only, if the above positions are correct, if the tools of city building are in the hands of the people. As an illustrative example of a perception of these needs, let me cite an inscription found on a wall in Ismailia:

From the people of Ismailia to the cabinet (a request for)

A speedy transfer of all factories in the Government to the city with an accompanying expansion in industry,

Conservation of the touristic appeal of Ismailia while improving its appearance,

Speedy construction in the public and private housing sectors,

A facilitation in approving generous loans for homeowners and merchants to encourage commerce and construction in the city while the government assumes a percentage of the bank loan interest,

A freedom in the exchange of building materials accompanied by a decrease in their costs when possible,

We call upon the mighty and able Allah for success under the leadership of our faithful president.

The economy of building depends on the artisan and his local client more than on the large organization and the corporate or collective client. The latter certainly have their place in the installation, and sometimes in the management of major

infrastructures, but these are mere supports for what really matters and for what takes up, or should take up, the greater part of urban space: people's homes and dwelling environments. Extreme Western models, like Los Angeles and Sao Paulo, are dominated, not by people's homes, but by the real estate and automotive interests. The ground is covered by roads choked with cars, whether in traffic jams or travelling at high speeds, in either case rendering the ground useless or dangerous for people. And the skies of many modern cities are dominated by indistinguishable towers of offices and dwelling units deprived of any urban context, totally isolated from each other by the elimination of the street. These opaque and impersonal environments are generated and dominated by heavy machinery and large organizations which cannot be handled by people in or from their own homes or workplaces.

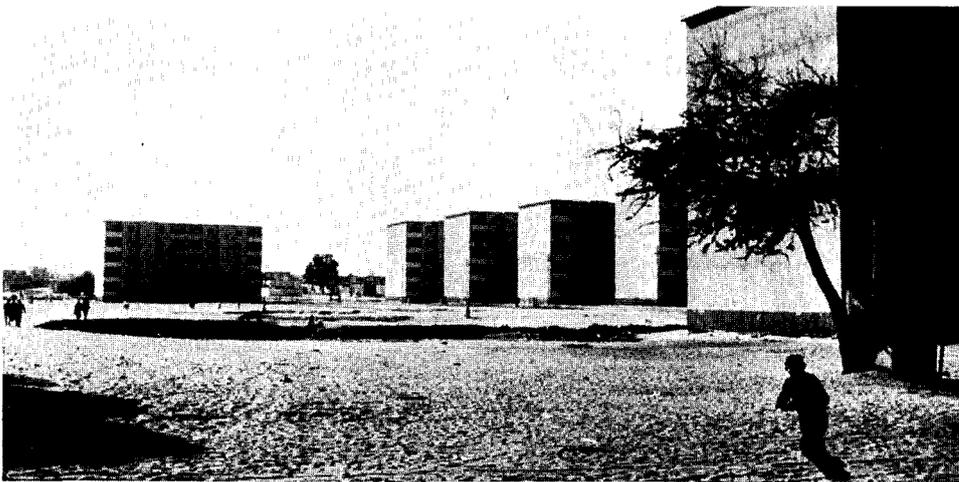
Edward Sapir's essay on "Culture, Genuine and Spurious," states the case for the dependency of genuine culture, of authenticity, on the personal control of tools, in the broad sense, and as defined below:

So long as the individual retains a sense of control over the major goods of life, he is able to take his place in the cultural patrimony of his people. Now the major goods of life, in the Western system, have shifted largely from the realm of immediate to that of remote ends. That is to say, many non-utilitarian spheres, social, religious, scientific, and aesthetic are pseudo-functionally interwoven with immediate ends while culturally divorced from them. It becomes a cultural necessity for all who would not be looked upon as disinherited to share in the pursuit of these more remote ends. Harmony not depth of life nor culture is possible when activity is well-nigh circumscribed by the sphere of immediate ends. Nor when functioning within that sphere is so fragmentary as to have no inherent intelligibility or interest. Here lies the grimmest joke of our American civilization. The vast majority of us, deprived



Cairo, Egypt a contemporary vernacular mosque

Photo J Turner



Cairo, Egypt block of new flats

Photo J Turner

of any but an insignificant and culturally abortive share in the satisfaction of the immediate wants of mankind, are further deprived of both opportunity and stimulation to share in the production of non-utilitarian values. Part of the time we are dray horses; the rest of the time we are listless consumers of goods which have received no least impress of our personality. In other words, our spiritual selves go hungry, for the most part, pretty much all of the time.²

This summarizes more completely and precisely than any other statement I know, the position implicit in Janet Abu-Lughod's paper and in many, if not most, of the contributions to the seminar. Where authority is not in the hands of the people, or where control over the immediate ends is not in their hands, there can be no genuine culture. Remote ends are divorced from everyday life and culture becomes a spurious activity, or product, even, when manipulated by the minority who control the means of mass-production

In case I am misunderstood, I repeat what I have already stated and implied: that this issue between "top down" and "bottom up" ways and means of satisfying the immediate ends of life (food, clothing, and of course shelter), is not a simple either/or choice. While I cannot summarize the whole argument in a few words I must, at least, point out the vital difference between complex systems composed of many different people, many things in different ways to the same general end, and the relatively simple and often large-scale support structures and networks on and within which these complex systems develop. More and more, planners are coming to see that complex systems, like housing, cannot be planned without destroying much of their value and without greatly increasing their costs. Clear lines have to be drawn between the supports provided by large organizations often using heavy technologies and the complex, highly variable, local and personal systems supported.³ I assume the Award will be for the stimulation and development of what people do and live with locally.

The Third Issue: Jobs or Tools?

This issue is raised in Janet Abu-Lughod's paper and by Nawal Hassan in their references to the proposal made and the preparatory research now being carried out. Some commentators have expressed doubt that a small enterprise of the kind described, the rehabilitation of historic buildings to be used as tenements for the occupiers themselves, can be effective. My suggestion is that the judgment depends on whether such a project is regarded as a tool-making enterprise, or as an end in itself. To make myself clear I must define the meanings of "materials," "tools," and "jobs" (or works) in this context: the materials we work with one can say are God-given, whether they are the "earth, air, fire, and water" or the material elements or ourselves and our values, which are inspirational and metaphysical. Obviously, we are not in the business of making materials in this general and deeper sense. The choice, therefore, is between the tools we use to transform those materials, and the works carried out.

As this particular case shows, a particular job or complete work can be seen and used as a tool, just as a completed tool can be seen as an end in itself. But in this case it will be useless or, at least, unused. A completed work of the kind proposed will not be useless in either case, of course. But whether its usefulness is limited to the households whose homes are improved and whose lives are not disrupted by relocation and rehousing, or whether its usefulness is shared by society as a whole, depends on the way in which the job is done. If it is approached as though it is an end in itself, if the context is treated merely as a problem to be overcome, its value will be very limited, however successful in achieving the immediate ends. On the other hand, if such a project is approached as an experiment, as an investigation of ways and means by which to achieve the wider and deeper, or remote ends, then any experience will generate knowledge useful for subsequent action, whether it is "successful" or not with regard to the immediate ends.

My own views on this are definite. As a matter of principle, as well as for practical and material reasons related to my own reputation and security, I do not concern myself with jobs that are ends in themselves. I am only interested in the development of "tools." I feel sure that this position is implicit in the aims of the Award.

Notes

¹Leslie Martin and Lionel March, editors *Urban Space and Structures* (Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp 52–53

²Edward Sapir "Culture, genuine and spurious," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXIX (Jan 1924).

³Prof Graham Ashworth made this point exceptionally clear in his opening address on "Planning, The Inadequate Philosophy" to the Town & Country Planning School at the University of Lancaster, September 2, 1977

Discussion

Lari

I must compliment Dr. Abu-Lughod today in bringing us down to earth. I am a Western-trained architect working in the Third World in what is the largest Muslim country and, unfortunately, I fit beautifully into the category of *khawāṣ* (elite) as defined by Professor Nasr yesterday. I am a Muslim, but not a devout Muslim. I am not consciously trying to create Islamic architecture, but what I am trying to do is to build honestly and relate to the living pattern, climate and so on. If anything, I try consciously not to use a vocabulary, a formula which instantly produces buildings which is commonly supposed to be Islamic architecture.

I do not believe in making buildings *musharraf* by Islam. We had an architect, a Western architect named Stone, who made a mockery of architecture when he made an atomic research centre look like a mausoleum with an arcade, and built a wedding cake for an office building. Later we had a series of such buildings built by Pakistanis also. Now we have a fire station that comes complete with arches and *jali* and a dome!

However, architecture is not my overriding concern. There are those who are solely concerned with it, and they will be working in it for the petro dollar. My concern is for a majority of the urban population living in slums in a city of 4.5 million people in a poor country like Pakistan. They do not need an architect with his patronizing attitude. They are doing very well by themselves, thank you. This is the incredible thing about Hassan Fathy. He had the vision to see, more than three decades ago, what most of us cannot even comprehend today. People in the slums are building with recycled materials. Be it eclectic, clay pots, or tin cans, they are using their materials most ingeniously. I am struck when I go there to learn from them by the vitality there. The tragedy of planning, as it exists today, is that once the planners take over, they kill the life there. The planned slum is infin-

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itely worse than the unplanned slum. There is just no excuse for an architect-planned slum.

Dr. Abu-Lughod says that several factors are key to the vitality which is Islamic. To simplify, they are the narrow streets, the multi-functionalism of elements and inter-mixing of functions. I do not think that they are particularly Islamic. The streets are pedestrian. Their width should allow a camel to pass with its load in the old city and a dead body to be taken out easily in the slums. I believe very strongly that narrow streets bring people together, while the wide road designed for the automobile alienates them from each other.

The streets and other public places are multi-functional. The street is not only for walking or carrying loads but also for children to play in, the vendors to sell in

and people to stand in. Also, there is the element of surprise that occurs when you go across a narrow street which opens up. The mosque is multi-functional. It is religious. It is a madrasa. It is a meeting place. I think, where resources are limited, human ingenuity comes into play and resources are used in the best way possible. Everything happens right there, the working and leisure cycles. The twenty-four hour cycle has always existed. I think it is possible to translate it today into the real form.

I've done a new housing scheme, a small one of about 900 units. I have used the narrow street. It is pedestrian. Children can play in it. The development is a mix of single, double and three-story structures, but we do not get a façade that is totally unbroken; the profile is irregular. I

think it's a good design. This is one way to approach the problem.

Grabar

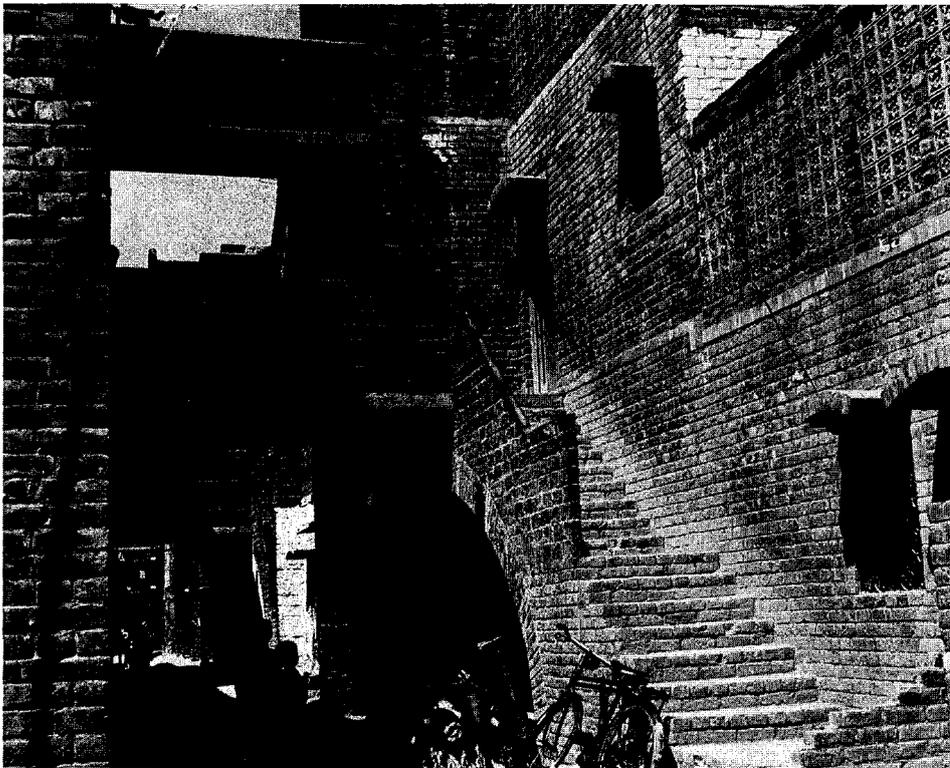
Dr Abu Lughod's paper pointed out the importance of law itself in making the various systems she described operate. Unfortunately, we do not know this law very well. Working with two Saudi students the past year, we have read legal texts from medieval Medina. Our objective was not to read the official text but judicial decisions, that is, the *qaḍi* decisions about fights between people concerning buildings. Some preliminary key terms and key ideas and reasons for decisions made by *qaḍis* were collected.

The first one is of preservation of privacy. This was a consistent matter of battle in Medina. Two floors were all right. The third floor was constantly protested. If the third floor had windows opening to the outside, the judge declared it must be destroyed. A building with windows opening to the inside could be preserved. In other words, the notion of privacy was essential.

The student who did most of the work has not convinced me on a second point, but I want to share it with you. It is that there was a notion of zoning. *Qaḍis* accepted the notion that certain activities cannot be introduced in certain areas and certain things should not be done in some places.

The third point is that one should preserve an activity that existed previously. One must remember here the complicated problem of the ruins (*kharāba*).

The fourth point that constantly appeared was that there must be a public space, and the terms used vary. The public space that belongs to everybody is constantly emphasized by the *qaḍi*. Encroachment of public space is constantly punished so that people even have to destroy their walls. There is an enormous internal documentation based upon actual court decisions. I am sure that chance played an important role when we hit upon them for Medina. I



Angori Bagh, Pakistan: low cost housing settlement. Architect: Yasmeen Lari Completed 1975

Photo: M. Hasan

feel sure they exist in Cairo, in Istanbul, in Isfahan, everywhere. A job for historians is to look for the actual practices of the system.

I agree very much with Dr. Abu-Lughod that the traditional system had institutions which seem to meet the problems of today, *waqf* and others. What worries me is that those institutions are precisely the ones against which the whole culture revolted in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I am troubled by the suggestion that we should go back to these old institutions. I would like to raise the question simply because they do exactly the things which all reformist movements have opposed. So I wonder whether it is easy to suggest that things that were in operation in the fourteenth century or the fifteenth century, which disappeared, can be revived and restored.

The last thing I would like to say is that I was struck by Mr. Turner's slides, and

especially by that inscription. It raised a question in my mind. Where are decisions made? Clearly it is on a street, in a block, wherever men know what they want. Help is needed. How can decisions be channeled and organized in contemporary systems?

Kuban

I would like to make a point about the land speculation question in cities. We seldom speak about it, yet it is very important to our understanding of the existing city systems. Without understanding the politics in a whole district, one cannot solve anything. Architects sometimes think they can solve everything. They cannot. For example, I have no hope for Istanbul. We have no money. We have no power system. We have nothing. Still, I try very hard although I see no way out.

There are some specific remarks I feel I must make when I look at my country. We have a wide diversity in urban forms. Dr. Abu-Lughod says that one knows when one is in the presence of Islamic civilization. I think this is not very correct. We associate certain cities with Islam because of our own accumulation of knowledge. If somebody from Mars landed on Earth, would he be able to differentiate whether a community is the way it is because of Islam or of some other reason? The structure of an Islamic city differs in Iran, in Anatolia, in the Maghreb and other places. There are places in Turkey which are closer in structure to places in the Greek islands; others to those in Syria, and still others to Caucasia than to Islamic cities. It is very difficult to say what is Islamic about them. There have been some definitions of the Islamic city mentioned here, but we must be aware of the regional differentiations. We cannot put everything into the same category. I



Istanbul, Turkey wooden houses in the Sultanahmet-Hagia Sophia area

Photos. H-U Khan/Aga Khan Awards

don't agree with Dr. Abu-Lughod when she says that the significant urban centres in the Islamic world are based on specific Islamic principles.

One can say that a lower-income person's emotional-economic attachment to his location is often underestimated. That is true. But it is true only in small cities where the original population still remains. In Istanbul, as in many other larger cities, no such thing exists. Almost all people are migrants from rural areas; their attachment to the city barely exists.

Economic incentives are very challenging. One may be against any kind of "touristy" things, but I think tourism is a twentieth century phenomenon. You cannot put it aside. One must accept it as a phenomenon which exists, good or not so good. Millions of people travel. One cannot stop them. They will come, so let them be used as a source for development.

You recommend a more critical appraisal and say that if the answers are negative, you cannot revitalize Islamic art and design, and it must be relegated to anti-quarian experiences. But you think there are positive answers. In most cases, in my opinion, there are only negative ones; it must be relegated to the past. But I think we can find new functions for old environments. In Istanbul, for example, there are wooden houses of great importance in the old city. There are also more than 100,000 students who need accommodation in the old city. To find money for the preservation of the culture, a new outlook has to be established. It is possible to get money if the political powers are convinced that this place is worth saving. And then students may even be able to have dormitories in this area. This is a start, but there are many such solutions for preservation.

In order to acquire a city property, the government must negotiate with each property owner. Ubiquitous multiple-ownership, the ownership of each dwelling space within a single building by one or more persons or heirs is entangling. A three-story house may have only three of the owners living there. A fifty-unit apart-

ment building can bring about extremely complicated dealings. This is a terrible thing in Turkey. It can destroy even the idea of planning.

Nasr

I think that we have forgotten that we have come here to study and discuss Islamic architecture. We seem to be arriving at the result that there is no such thing as Islamic architecture. Then we should all go home and ask the Aga Khan not to give the prizes. But I think that the problem is not so simple to brush aside. If someone did come from Mars, I beg to differ with Professor Kuban, I think you would find that there is a logic or some kind of resemblance between the bazaar of Fez and that of Isfahan.

I want to come back to the important comments made this morning by Dr. Abu-Lughod. First of all, I would be the last person in the world to deny the significance of the *Shari'a*. But it's quite interesting that architects are in such love with concrete. That is why we have so much concrete in our buildings! But you cannot really discuss the concrete without the abstract. In fact, there are many aspects of the *Shari'a*, in addition to those Professor Grabar mentioned, that are extremely important for the Islamic city. The question of the right of the neighbour (*haq al-jar*) is an important part of *fiqh*. Special studies should be devoted to it, because the question of relationship between neighbours is, of course, fundamental for architecture. We have an expression in Persian which is very significant from an architectural point of view. Neighbours are called *hamsaye*, "he who shares the sun's shadow." And I think it's a key for understanding our own architecture.

But real questions, of course, are why the Napoleonic code was adopted, why enough people do not practice the *Shari'a* and why those who plan for the vast majority who practice it are often totally unaware of what it means to practice the

Shari'a. That is where the fiddling of theosophy, as you called it, comes in. Fiddling is not too bad because, as Goethe said, good buildings are the crystallization of music. So one should have little fiddling beyond crystallization! It is the philosophical problems which, in fact, have become impediments for the practice of the *Shari'a* which, in turn, influences architecture.

Moreover, there is another aspect which you did not discuss (it was not really the subject of your paper), and that is the significance of form for an architect. No matter how much we discuss the social functions, which have not been analyzed and which relate to the *Shari'a*, once again I come back to the significance of forms to geometry, of forms with which an architect has to deal. I believe that one cannot really understand the significance of these forms within the context of Islamic thought without going back to their roots and their meaning. There are two complementary aspects of architecture and city planning; one is the social aspect, one is the artistic aspect. I don't think architecture without art really has much significance. That is why I beg you to come back to considering the significance of philosophy and theosophy.

I would only conclude by saying that you made some very profound comments about the relationship between the traditional Islamic city and the avant-garde ideas of the city planning. They can be of importance for the preservation of Islamic cities by inducing administrators not to consider it avant-garde to destroy them. But, as far as an argument for the preservation of Islamic culture is concerned, everything which is avant-garde is going to become *arrière-garde* in a few decades. To look only upon an external avant-garde model as the only reason for the preservation of one's culture proves to be false. I beg that whatever is done in the future about the Award, some attention should be paid to the role of the *Shari'a* as well as philosophy and its function within the Islamic city and within Islamic art.

Kandiyoti

I think that seeing the way towns look while ignoring the urban power structure is a mistake. This is why, I think, the practice of the *Shari'a* is reflected in spaces, fortunately or unfortunately, having been mediated through the market mechanisms. How does one affect these market mechanisms? How does one legislate to help deal with them? I do not know.

In my opinion, neither architects nor Islamic philosophy figure at all in the way towns look. What does figure, I think, is a combination of changing systems and changing social structure coordinated with certain types of mechanisms and a certain type of power structure. Perhaps the Award should not go to architects at all, but to grass roots administrators, persons who have the courage to support programs that run counter to the kinds of markets that bring about deteriorating towns. Neither bad architects nor unbelievers are destroying the cities.

I want to move on to a sociological point, which relates quite closely to what Janet said. I think something very interesting is occurring with architectural determinants. We now have architects telling social scientists what should be done, and not challenging the conjectures claiming, "The people know what they are doing." Both can be equally wrong. I will tell you why. At the moment, architects and archeologists alike are marveling at traditional equilibrium making normative statements just like social anthropologists used to do. One cannot have a value-free environment. All environments reflect values.

However, sociologists have something to say about value and I think that we have not been talking about value change at all. I see major parallels being made between the values that Western avant-garde architects are striving for and the values which were implicitly imbedded in traditional Islamic architecture. I think that it is wrong to say, "Look, people in San Francisco are making pots and selling them. Why aren't we preserving traditional

craftsmanship?" This is very wrong, extremely wrong. Why? Because, the people in San Francisco are imbedded sociologically speaking, not ethically or morally speaking. I'm not making a value preference, please don't read me wrong here. I think it's beautiful that all crafts should be protected in San Francisco. But I do not think this revival of craftsmanship has anything remotely to do with the craftsmanship that is now artificially and most perniciously being maintained in Third World countries. Each system has its own equilibrium. The reason we're confused by Third World countries is that transition has its own mechanism and produces breakdowns in values which are reflected into space. Those, in turn, are reflected into city space, then into household space, and then into people's heads. So I think that you can make a parallel between post-industrial equilibria and traditional equilibria. They are equally balanced. However, I think that when we are talking about transition we must be very careful.

I have found, working in Turkey, that the fundamental equilibrium between function and space has broken down. This is how great the infiltration of postindustrial values has been. I think that we are deluding ourselves when we look at the shantytown now and say that people know what they're doing, at least in Istanbul, and that they are uniting function and space spontaneously and beautifully. This is not true. On the contrary, I have found that probably there is a kind of curvilinear relationship in the process of development. There is an equilibrium at the traditional end and there is probably some kind of new equilibrium that postindustrial societies are striving for by not saying they have reached it. Actually, for the sake of transition, there is chaos of values and chaos of forms. I think architects will be really disappointed when they think they can go to the people to come up with something that is functional and beautiful. They cannot. When I interviewed people, they were doing hideous things. They were cooking in their ablution area, putting refrigerators in the living areas, etc. The architects were about to throw up. They

did not want to look at this. They refused to believe this. I said, "This is what the consumer wants now. You may not like it. If you want to be democratic about it, you must acknowledge it." These people have been raped, and this taste is the result.

Faghih

I think that even today we are putting the problem too theoretically. The state of affairs which we have found in cities, Islamic cities, is one of emergency. Nobody, no government, no private enterprise is interested in the poor areas. They all think that we are Don Quixotes working for causes and talking to them as if asking for charity. These are the attitudes which I myself found working in Isfahan and with which colleagues in Iran are faced. So we are very interested in those who preserve, who conserve isolated buildings and who don't think that a derogative term.

For the time being, it's very important for the Award to look at those people, architects, administrators . . . unknown, not famous, who are doing isolated projects. No matter how large our action would be, it would always be a fragment within the total transformation in each of these cities. It is a fragmented and isolated action. Therefore, it cannot, by nature, include all the totality of Islamic art and Islamic culture. We are mostly involved in physical action, because we want to preserve some aspects of the traditional matrix; we know we are a minority trend. If we talk about a creative adaptation, it means that young people have to get interested. We have to look at successful experiences such as in Italy or in England, where the young generation became interested in living in older areas because the houses were cheaper, and converted them into viable neighbourhoods.

I think we have to reject two uncompromising positions. One is that of the conservationist; he is very fanatic about getting exactly the same image that was there. The other is that of the developer

who wants to bulldoze and destroy. You have to find ways in which you destroy some parts and leave others, to bring in life and change communication. We shouldn't be afraid to solve the problem by cutting through the knot. Solving it would definitely not create the Islamic space as it was before. But these are the choices we have to make. Otherwise, everything will be destroyed.

Rageh

I have just a few points that might look contradictory to the presentations this morning, but I should like to feel that they are complementary; they add and do not subtract.

The inscription which was pointed out by John Turner does not support but contradicts his theory. These are the demands of the people to the central government. None of them is practical and none of them can be afforded by the people themselves. So it is not really a way for the people to do by themselves and for themselves. These are things that the people cannot do. It is quite indicative that first they want industrialization and last they want urban development. And they want loans from the bank, they want this and that. Certainly the central government cannot in any way fulfill any of these demands. So that is not really an expression of a will or a desire to develop one's own environment by his own means and to have housing by the people and not for the people.

Janet's paper is a marvelous contribution, but I am afraid as architects and social scientists, we really do lack the historical dimension and, consequently, the essence of the Islamic thought. Nawal spoke about Fatimid Cairo and Janet alluded to the fact that we are dealing with the preservation or rehabilitation of Fatimid Cairo. What we saw is not Fatimid Cairo. Nothing is left of Fatimid Cairo but the Al Azhar Mosque. The forms we saw today are Mamluk. So instead of taking a section of our history and making it the pivot of



Bam, Iran: view over the town

Photo: R. Holod

our thought, we should go further and study the underlying essence of the whole thing, what is unchangeable, as Berque mentioned yesterday. So it's not viable to stick to a Mamluk model but to expand it through history and most probably even beyond this Islamic era.

To some extent, Janet has been a little romantic. If you make a total and intensive survey of the area, you would find a density of seven and one-half people per single room. Although some of them are integrated into the social system, a great number are not. They are part of an influx from the rural areas. They are alien to that environment and are a hindrance to its harmonious and homogenous nature. Many are living there and working outside. These incursions militate against the main concept of having an integrated social order.

As for the notion of having the people develop things by themselves, we all love that, we're all for that, but let us remember that what really ruined this area were the people, because there is no mechanism for the people themselves to develop these areas. Areas such as around Ibn Tulun on

the street of Mar, these marvelous areas, are all but ruined by miserable and ugly apartment buildings built by the people. So really we don't have to throw this responsibility to the people. We have a role and the government has a role; planning has a role. Unless the people function within a comprehensive and sound planning policy, we wind up with chaos as we have now.

Kowsar

We, as architects and planners, can translate concepts into plans and detail. Hopefully, we will be able to convince the population that living in these old sections does not necessarily mean living with poverty and lack of progress. How can we do this? Often in Islamic countries, economic power and political power are in the same hands. Conservation and rehabilitation is not in the interest of economic power, is not in the interest of land, construction and speculation. At this stage, the participation of the population in the construction or conservation or even

the revitalization of their habitat begins at a political level. In discussing this I think we must be aware of every kind of Muslim decision maker. We architects have to convince them that the issues of conservation and rehabilitation do matter.

Zubair—Abu—Lughod—Ardalan

Zubair: It seems to me that if we study dynamic societies such as Saudi Arabia where rapid change is taking place, we can identify elements which conspire against all cities. The profit motive, rapid change and rapid development are destroying old cities. So if we want to preserve the city as a total environment, not just some monumental buildings, but the whole city, I think we are doomed to failure.

Abu—Lughod: I am afraid I did not make myself clear. In no way have I been recommending that you preserve entire cities. I believe in a system of triage in which we find a sub-area, a set rather than isolated buildings, a locality not the entire city, which we take out of the marketplace, which we take away from the profit motive. We must remove it from land speculation, because we do not have the chance to preserve it otherwise. I have been criticized for ignoring politics and economics. I think if we go with the economic and political system, we have no chance at all. I hope to convince people, who have the chance to make a decision, to place part of that heritage outside of these processes and to see whether it can be preserved. This heritage may also have some valid principles for new building and as Yasmin suggested, could guide contemporary construction.

Zubair: If that is the case, it seems to me the prospect is more hopeful.

Ardalan: I think the idea that is presented is that in order to make yogurt you need a little bit of yogurt.

Zubair: What would you determine the location of and the size of these localities? I do not think you could leave the matter to the people. In Saudi Arabia, in Mecca,

Medina, Jiddah, in every old city, you will not find anybody who would think himself economically astute for renting a building for a nominal sum when the government is encouraging him to build. He will not stand and say, "I will preserve this for the sake of heritage itself."

Ardalan: But we are aiming at creating a sensitivity to this type of legislation. This is legislation which is thought to be progressive, but it may actually be retrogressive.

Zubair: You could leave some of the old areas and build outside them if you want to develop cities and move some of the people out to the new districts.

Robertson

It is always interesting to me that people advocate architectural change, meaningful architectural change, in each generation as being possible only by changing the entire system. I think one of the problems is that we really must be willing to work within established systems. There is no possible way to take the planning and development of cities outside of the dynamics of the existing forces of economics and existing politics. I just think that is hopelessly defeatist. I do not think you will get anywhere that way.

All decisions have design implications and certainly one of the greatest problems that architects have faced is that they really have not taken the time, had the energy or the self-discipline to understand what the dynamics of economics and politics and the legal implications of zoning were on cities.

In fact, all of those features affect the shape, design and use of the city in a very fundamental way. Indeed, some of the most impressive changes made recently in the United States had been made precisely by people who took the time to work within governments, to understand politics and economics. They worked hand in hand with speculators who were interested in making large profits by recreating, re-

adapting, reusing, revitalizing otherwise derelict areas of the city. There is in every society and culture a prevailing dynamic. It has been a tendency of planners to work continually against tides rather than with them and they are nearly always defeated because of this. One must search out the strengths in every system. One must use the momentum of those forces to deflect slightly from seemingly predetermined courses of ongoing development and not to stop it at the barricades.

The Western model is changing. Janet's paper, I thought, was brilliant in its description of that kind of change. Certainly, one of the phenomena that we must discuss here is the effect the changing model or its perception by Western consultants, planners and architects will have upon the people that they are attempting to serve, some badly and some well. It will be profound.

Finally, a point which is fundamental. It is the phenomenon of number and the phenomenon of speed of change, the spectre that stands behind everything that we are talking about. Nearly all of the world's problems since the beginning of time have been at least addressable because we have applied small-scale organization. We are now faced with problems of mass and there are no operable principles of large-scale organization other than the sword. We tend, therefore, to break large-scale problems up into small bits and to apply the same kind of small-scale organizational solutions to them. But the bits do, in fact, aggregate to a sum that is much more complex than the solution to any of its constituent parts. It is a phenomenon that all scientists have, that all politicians have and that all planners have. This has wreaked havoc with architecture as a language. I think it is absolutely essential to understand that what all of us would talk about in terms of a successful architecture in any period of history is based on a number of assumptions: it must have time to develop and it must have longevity. There must be a resistance to its immediate abandonment. It has to have a common vocabulary. It must have multiple but commonly understood meanings. It

must provide a way in which given words have changing use. It must have a high and a low art form, a sign and various dialects and an esprit and an art. Almost none of these requirements exists now in rapidly changing cultures and that is why it is almost impossible to develop a satisfactory architectural language.

Mousalli

We are gathered here to discuss architecture in the spirit of Islam, and the theme of the seminar, as I understand it, is continuity and change. I want to talk about the development of the Islamic city of Mecca, about Islam as a way of life, and about how the population within this urban centre practices Islam.

The main function of the Meccans throughout history has been, and will be, serving the pilgrims who come annually to perform the *Hajj*. It is not a harbour city, nor can it be regarded as a commercial centre. It has a single function, service to those who come. The city is in a small valley surrounded by mountains. Its focal point is the main space, the *Masjid al-Kahir*, surrounded by different quarters.

I would like to point out as a person who was born and bred in Mecca, the image of the city to me is really not just the place where I live with my neighbours, but the difference between the textile and meat markets and other such things. It is really and organic form where everything is next to each other as one complete net or pattern. But the only open space to me is what I can always see and am really close to: the central mosque.

As a Meccan, I would like to live as close as possible to the main mosque, preferably next to one of the gates. The older buildings, which we had in Mecca, and some are still in existence, were about five or six stories high. They normally house about four or five families with a place on the roof for sleeping outdoors. We are accustomed to living as an extended family. Having a house in a four or five story building, during the pilgrimage situation,

you find the family taking the upper one or two stories and reserving the lower stories for the pilgrims. So everyone is close to the mosque.

With the recent developments, we in Saudi Arabia do not want to show that we are behind the rest of the world, so we have accepted the concept of a master plan. An international firm has been commissioned to do a master plan of Mecca. The first thing they do is to provide two things: modern concepts which prevailed in the 50s and 60s, that is for the car and wide open spaces. A major expansion of the city had already begun twenty-five years ago (I was one of the victims. My parents' house was demolished). Now there no longer is that harmonious progression from door to alley to open space to city gate. The resulting vast spaces have completely lost their traditional and Islamic character.

Coupled with this change of a new building type, is the introduction of the apartment building in concrete. Less than half a million people live here all year long, but in the season of the *Hajj*, the population expands to about two million people. This is, in fact, eight times the population in the same area. The recent development provided the chance for people to rebuild, especially around the mosque. Now apartment buildings, instead of being four, five or six stories, are from ten to fifteen stories! This gave the greedy motivated people the chance to commercialize land or to build an apartment building, and instead of renting it to the local people of Mecca, they keep it closed all year long and rent it for only two or three weeks at exaggerated prices.

Ardalan

I think that the issue that you have raised, Mr. Mousalli, is important. I myself have documented the city of Mecca and the building of the Holy Shrine. I very much share with you the great concern that the centre to which eight hundred million Muslims turn for prayer is today losing its level of dignity. One of the greatest crises

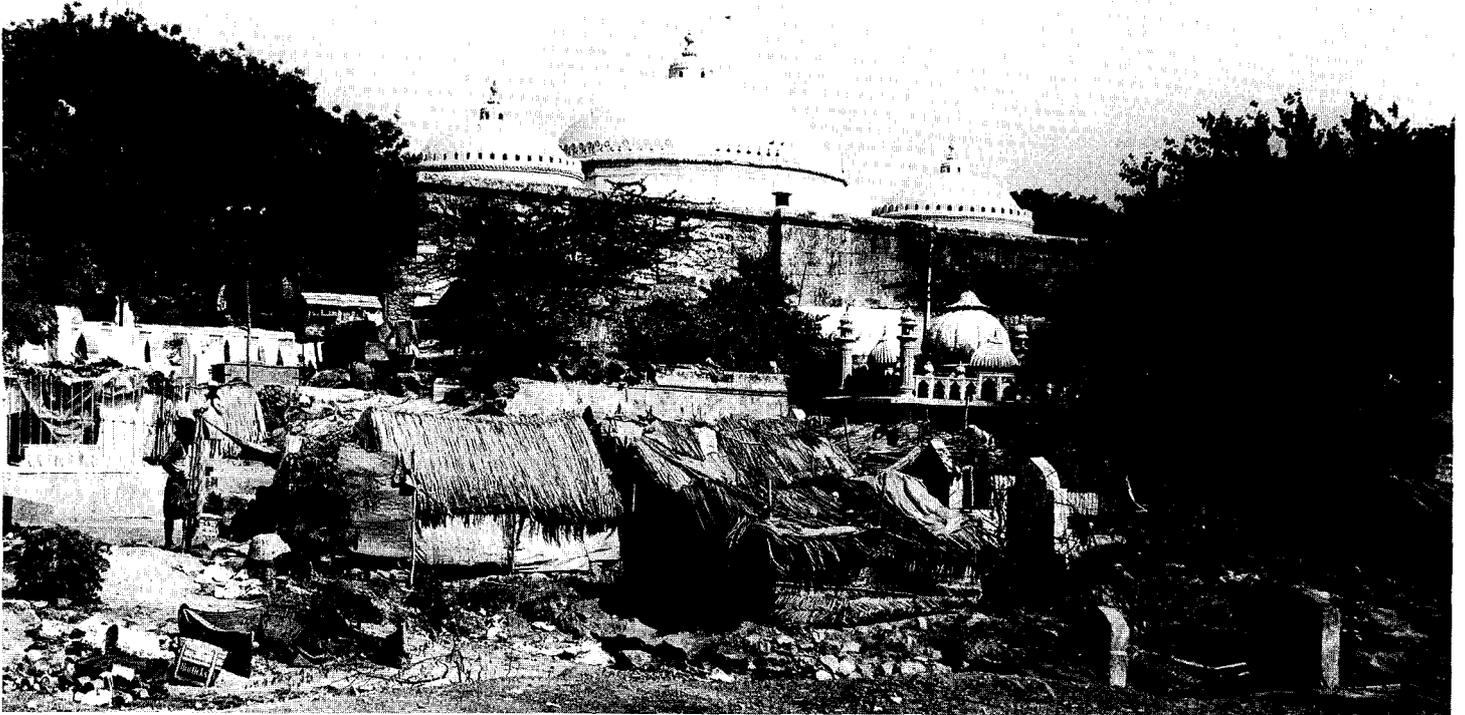
that we are facing is the fact that the very holy centre of Islam is deteriorating in terms of its physical shape and quality.

F. Khan

One of the things I find is that the problem we have been talking about is not especially related to Islam or Christianity or Buddhism. In fact, the urban problem we talk about is the urban problem in an Indian city, in Bangladesh or in Timbuktu, for that matter. But we can see that the planners have found a very interesting way of isolating the poor, finally and totally. If we want to talk about an ultimate Islamic city, we must say that the poor should live near and by the rich. The concept is so strong that we are arriving at the same point elsewhere through simple logic. Multiple family housings with a wide range of income groups must finally be put together instead of having distinct separate slums. The planners are trying their very best to maintain the greatness of those slums, but I think that is romantic at best and destructive for the future.

Stambouli

Fifty percent of the urban population throughout Muslim society is living either in slum areas or in the deteriorated quarters of the madina which are often worse than those of the slum areas. With such basic constraints in mind, how can we visualize the future of the Muslim urban scene? What are the alternatives, if any? There is no way to solve the key problems of our urban scene either within our liberal political system or within a socialist one. In fact, the crisis of our urban scene reflects not only the crisis of our societies but also a crisis of knowledge—knowledge of our own culture, knowledge of our own societies in their present and their immediate future. Therefore, in order to create and re-create the spaces we live in in the spirit of Islam, we have to be, first



Delhi, India. squatters in cemetery adjacent to tomb of Nizam Uddin, a well-known centre of Sufism and popular pilgrimage site

Photo: D. Sareen/Aga Khan Awards

of all, creative enough, imaginative enough, in overcoming the technocratic rationality or at least in criticizing it deeply, regenerating knowledge and restoring to our people their rights for initiative and their rights for managing their daily life and solving their problems. This is, in my opinion, the essential message of Janet's contribution.

Afshar

I more or less agree with what Janet Abu-Lughod and John Turner were saying, but I would like to add another perspective to this. Many of the urban problems we are facing have to do with the fact of urban bias. I am afraid that this conference itself might begin to reflect the same bias. If we

take as a given fact that everyone is going to move into a few very large cities and we work only towards that, then we might just be compounding the problem and perpetuating it. But I personally believe a policy of decentralization is possible. A lot of these problems can be eased by looking realistically at the urban situation, then turning to rural and small town development and seeing what solutions that can arise out of them. For example, in the case of Iran, it has been projected that by the year 2000 the majority of urban settlements will be the small market towns. These new creations will be based on existing small villages. They will not be totally new towns. What can be done there, what sort of theory and action can be developed? In terms of the new urban settlement and also of the rural development and improvement, such a strategy

becomes a viable alternative to more and bigger Cairo and Tehrans.

H-U Khan

Oleg Grabar asked where decisions are made. This is all tied in with the question of equality, the rich and the poor, and the rich who wish to stay in power. I have to bring in some of the political considerations which we have been skirting. When we talk about making laws and even planning regulations, we must ask certain questions. Who are we who are making the laws? For whom are we making them? Whose laws are we trying to evade, or whose laws are these people in towns thinking about? They do not care about the laws of the moment; they are taking

action into their own hands. I think they have every right to do so, because it is their city and not that of the remote people who make the laws. The city does not belong to them.

Nasr and other people have brought up the question of forms and their significance in art and architecture. At the moment, architects have no role to play in development. I believe that architects have no significance because they have been thinking of themselves with a capital "A" in terms of art and architecture. Architects should start redefining their roles.

Correa

I just want to re-emphasize Fazlur Kahn's point that the Islamic city needs the poor living next to the rich. The reason it probably will not happen, I am sorry to say, is due to the land ownership and the land policy followed in many cities. If we want to get the Islamic city, we have to look at this aspect of the question and perhaps the Award should also be given to people who make real efforts to change that.

I agree completely with Mr. Rageh; I felt that there was a sentimentality in the slides that Nawal Hassan showed of that lovely family (not that I was not moved by it). The question, however, is what do they represent? It is not a problem of housing forty-five such families or four hundred, but it must be forty thousand, and you can't put them all into those houses. But putting them in a squatter colony also is getting them out of the way, because they live in an area of town where they can't reach their jobs.

The poor come to the city looking for jobs, not for housing. You give them houses; it is like "Let them eat cake." To do anything for these people, the scale of the problem necessitates complete restructuring. It begins with the recognition where the jobs are, where the desire lines are, where the pressure points in the city are. That's what will save the city. I agree

with Robertson when he advocates using the existing forces, but I don't see the existing forces in my kind of city being just developers, but probably many other forces.

Ardalan

The conversations that we had yesterday dealt, very necessarily, with some of the philosophic base of what Islam is. Today, looking at some of the social, political and economic dynamics certainly gave us the complement. I believe that these two working in concert are the type of directions according to which we can grow in the new ordering of Islamic cities and revitalization of an Islamic point of view.