field:

Embodying an Anti-Racist Architecture

field:

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field: has an interest in dynamic and alternative fields of architectural practice, education and discourse.

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field: does not seek to privilege what is known or easily representable and is interested in new phenomena and their relation to the transformative process of research.

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Art and design John Sampson, Luis Hernan
Cover artwork Alem Derege

field: is interested in contributions in a variety of formats including academic articles, books and film reviews, interviews, photo essays and other experimental modes of representation. Academic articles should not exceed 6000 words. All contributions must be presented to field: for peer-review in English and should not have been published or submitted for publication in another form in the UK. Translations of work published in languages other than English crediting details of previous publication will be considered.

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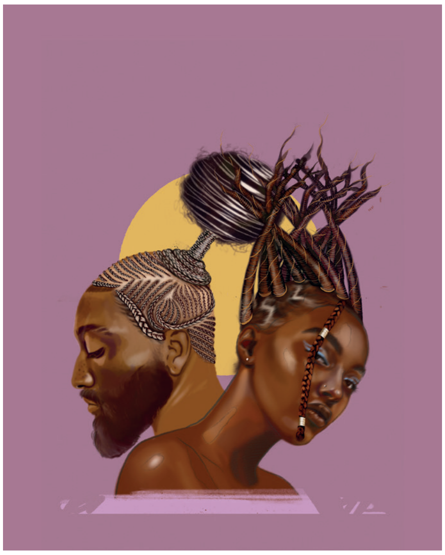
Cover Illustration Alem Derege



My initial interest in the politics around Afro hair came from watching comedian Chris Rock's 2009 documentary 'Good Hair'. Rock's inspiration for the film came from his young daughter enquiring "Daddy, why don't I have good hair?", highlighting how insecurities around physical appearance begin from a young age and are influenced by society's often polarised, eurocentric view of beauty. The concept of "good hair" is one rooted in slavery as those with looser, softer hair (and fairer complexions) were seen as being more white adjacent and thus given indoor tasks. For many of us who live in the west we manipulate our hair in order to appease others, sometimes through the use of relaxers, wigs/weaves or even just slicking back our hair with thick creams and gels as to not 'offend' anyone or to garner attention. This is particularly noticeable in educational environments and in the workplace. Watching Rock's documentary prompted me to examine my own relationship with my hair, which I wore exclusively straightened until the age of 15. Even now, as I am nearing my mid-twenties, I continue to struggle with how to "manage" my hair and feel confident wearing it out in its naturally curly state. That being said, in the last decade or so there appears to have been a shift, with an increasing number of Black women foregoing weaves and relaxers in favour of wearing their hair in an Afro state or opting for protective styles, like box braids and twists. These hairstyles are not new, however, they have been around for centuries and are often indicative of particular tribal/ ethnic groups, for example Fulani braids originating from the Fula people of Western Africa.

To me, there is a unique and beautiful quality to the way that Black men and women may style their hair – particular styles like, for example, cornrows aren't always constrained to 'cornrows'. There are actually a wide array of complex patterns and designs which people incorporate and they have a beautiful architectural quality to them. Slaves did in fact use braiding patterns as intricate floorplans to indicate escape routes and convey messages to each other. For example, in Colombia and other South American countries people used cornrow designs to gain freedom from plantations.

In my design, also inspired by visuals from Sonya Clark's 'The Hair Craft Project', the male figure on the left-hand side is wearing cornrows, similar to the aforementioned styles, which compile into a mound at the crown of his head – attached to this is a tree-like afro puff. I wanted to create a sense of ambiguity by linking these hairstyles not only to architecture but also nature. The blonde colour choice of the braids was intentional, with it creating contrast from the dark routes and emphasising the intricacy of the braids, as well as showcasing the versatility of protective styles as they enable us to "switch up" our look through the use of coloured extensions instead of chemical dyes which could compromise the health of our natural hair. The figure on the right-hand side has a single braid at the front of her face with locs on the base of her head and zig-zag partitions along her scalp. The orange thread wrapping around the conical structures are reminiscent of African threading – a technique which originates from Sub-Saharan Africa and is used a heatless method for stretching hair. The conical structures mimic vernacular hut typologies, like the Hamer conical huts found in Southern Ethiopia. Overall, this artwork is intended to celebrate and reclaim Afro hair and traditional styling methods in the midsts of threats such as demonisation and appropriation.

Alem Derege is a 24-year-old Sheffield School of Architecture alumnus who completed her BA Architecture degree in 2019. During her time at SSoA Alem became involved with the Black Females in Architecture (BFA) network and was recognised in RIBA's 2018 Black History Month campaign. She was also the recipient of SsoA's annual MSMR travel award scholarship in 2019 which sponsored her trip to the city of Asmara located in Eritrea, East Africa. Since graduating Alem spent time working as a Part I Architecture Assistant at MSMR architects and freelance illustrating. She is currently completing an MA in Migration and Diaspora studies at SOAS, University of London.

Cover Illustration Alem Derege

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Embodying an Anti-Racist Architecture

Editorial

Emma Cheatle, Luis Hernan, Carolyn Butterworth, Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye, Catalina Mejia Moreno

> ‘Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content.’ Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 1963, p. 36[1]

field: Issue 8 Embodying an Anti-Racist Architecture responds to two appeals. The first is a demand. In September 2020 our students at the Sheffield School of Architecture, University of Sheffield published the ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action’, a document condemning the ways in which the school and university institution are complicit in systemic racism in architecture, and demanding ‘immediate action and concrete change’. The second appeal is less explicit. In 2007 Renata Tyszczuk and Doina Petrescu launched the inaugural issue of field: a new journal intended to create an open forum for the practice and research of architecture. The first issue was appropriately dedicated to exploring indeterminacy, recognising the difficulty of defining the contours of architectural practice and research. As the name of the publication suggests, the journal emerges from the conviction that research into spatial practices involves, by necessity, ‘interlocking yet distributed fields of knowledge’.[2]

As an editorial board, we gathered together to plan field: issue 8 as a special issue that responded to both appeals, reflecting on the way that the spirit of the journal could establish a dialogue with the ‘Call to Action’. By reflecting on racism, we choose to address some of the most important and urgent needs that have historically shaped our discipline and to respond to the increasingly anxious and parochial discourse the discipline has developed.

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[1] Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963, p. 36, as quoted in E. Tuck & K.W. Yang, ‘Decolonization is not a metaphor’, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40; 2.

[2] Renata Tyszczuk and Doina Petrescu, ‘Editorial’, *field: Architecture and Indeterminacy* 1/1 (2007): p. 1.

The original ethos of the journal is particularly relevant to this new issue. In architectural education the idea of a field is often conceptualised as something that is outside of us; as a situation that requires examining from an external, neutral perspective; as a set of conditions to be recorded and made sense of. By using field as its name, the journal set out to challenge these preconceptions. As the first editorial explores, architecture needs to respond to the richness and diversity of interpretations when going into fieldwork. Recognising the nuanced, ethical nature of research, and that our positions are always immersed in the thick networks of social interactions, we need to learn not merely to observe, but to situate ourselves in relation to the action therein.

Fifteen years on from the first issue, and after a five year hiatus since issue 7, we were interested in reflecting on the ways in which the theory and practice of architecture has developed. To challenge self-referential discourses, we decided we needed to listen to what has been invariably pushed to the margins of the theory and practice of the discipline. We also asked ourselves what has changed since the first number was created and realised that the practice and theory of architecture had changed little, but the discipline was increasingly expected to participate in debates of wider societal and political issues. As an editorial team we come together in the conviction that all forms of racial and gendered injustice — spatial, environmental, material — spring from legacies of colonialism and the logics of exploitation, extraction and classification that have been imposed on populations. As an editorial board, our hope is that this issue will generate a self-reflective understanding of ourselves, as individuals and as members of an institution, and hence as contributory tools of oppression as well as obliteration of difference. We also seek to identify the spaces and contexts where we and others have been subjects of, or have evidenced racist behaviours and structures. As an editorial board we also hope that this issue, a first dialogue, will prompt important conversations and begin to generate urgent changes. Change is a difficult task and this issue of the journal has been composed in order that we can learn to sit together in the discomfort of initiating that change.

But who are we? The new ongoing chief editors of field: are Emma Cheatle, Senior Lecturer in Architectural Humanities, and Luis Hernan, Lecturer in Architecture and Digital Cultures, who took over the editorship of field: because we fundamentally believe in the role of architectural humanities not as a benign form for explaining or discussing architecture, but as a powerful and necessary tool for actively addressing the pressing issues that the discipline of architecture should face up to. The practice of humanities is always unsettled, dynamic, relational, and communicative and therein lies its agency. Emma and Luis also wanted to challenge

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the idea that only established academics can be editors, and that the journal should instead seek to map different fields of possibilities and situated knowledges. We approached Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye, then a University of Sheffield PhD student, and our colleagues Carolyn Butterworth and Catalina Mejía Moreno to make up this special issue board. The unique set of editors, each with specific positionalities and interests, has been working generously and in collaborative dialogue to create the journal. Carolyn, a Senior University Teacher, is director of Live Works which seeks to create new spaces for equitable urban production. She was extremely interested in extending the idea of an academic journal and opening it to practice-based staff, and to students, who would not normally contribute. Victoria, who aided the students' original 'Call to Action', moved out of Sheffield School of Architecture to Urban Studies and Planning, and from being a student to completing a doctorate during the editorial process, now lectures at Sheffield Hallam. She arrives in the team having experienced in the school the very extractive knowledge processes some of the articles criticise first hand. Catalina, now a Senior Lecturer in Climate Studies at Central Saint Martins, UAL, was Lecturer in Humanities at Sheffield. Her work is motivated by her embodied knowledge and studies of inequalities and injustices across the global south. Carolyn, Emma and Luis also work together (with Doina Petrescu and Cith Skelcher) on the school's Feminist Library, a digital project and resource which brings together the legacy of feminist student and staff work and intiatives in the school from the last 20 years. The spirit of that feminist archival project informs this one. We are also joined here by Indigo Gray whose incisive and generous copy editing input went far beyond the original brief we tasked her with, and brought another intellectual layer to the project. We extend special thanks to her.

The original call for papers came directly from and through the 'Call to Action'. The call's narrow focus has opened up to the breadth of issues of oppression across race and gender, including trans rights. The original 'Call to Action' caused a good deal of controversy, disquiet, and debate in the staff body in Sheffield School of Architecture, with some (anecdotally) feeling, if not personally attacked, then disappointed that they are being "criticised" by the students. The contributions we have received, and there are a wealth of them, are affirming, critical, angry and contrite – they collect together positions many of us feel. "We are sitting in the discomfort together", as Victoria has repeatedly said.

The issue has been eighteen months in the making with our original call for papers made in winter 2020. We have two kinds of contributions. The call was initially made "internally" as a direct provocation to the school's students and staff. This has resulted in a rich collection of positions, particularly from students. In promoting student work not normally published in a journal, we made an editorial decision to prioritise powerful, developing subjectivities and lived experiences over established academic knowledge. We have embraced the unfinished, the complaint, and the experimental.[3] We were pleased to receive contributions from School of Architecture academics and teachers, some of which are included here. These contributions shed light on some of the ways in which individuals are striving to embed anti-racism in their teaching and research. We hope, through field: and other means, their vital contribution to this subject can build in confidence and scope. The second kind of contribution emerges from our relationships as editors to a wider field – of mainly pedagogical academic and student groups responding to anti-racism at other schools of architecture, particularly Westminster and Brighton, and some student and academic connections in Johannesburg. This has resulted in what we see as a dense web of interrelated yet nascent starting points and networks. It reflects that we as a school, as an institution and as a discipline have barely/only just begun to respond to racism and inequality. In this vein we acknowledge the value and complexity of the many citational practices our contributors use, from C.L.R. James to bell hooks, from Sara Ahmed to Djamila Ribeiro. The bibliographies that our contributors have produced constitute a rich set of collective reading resources in the journal for us to learn from.

Issue 8 of field: is also the journal's relaunch. Does the name still suit us? With this number we would like to start a critique of the idea of a field as a boundaried space – which suggests some are outside, and that entry is restricted. Since the seventeenth century the common land once available to local commoners for various shared uses has been parcelled and enclosed by successive landowners and land acts, resulting in and perpetuating the inequalities around access and ownership we see today. We also continue to critique the idea of fieldwork and the way that its implicitly extractive logic raises ethical questions. Invariably, fieldwork is understood as a completist practice where a researcher collects (extracts) "data" to contribute to "outputs", rather than as a series of relational, ongoing practices. We position that the field, rather than a place, is instead "us"; "us" as a responsible, thoughtful collective of students, educators, and researchers. Then we can build something open, collaborative, and interactive through the discomforting but necessary self-reflective work of, as Audre Lorde says, touching that deep, dark place within each of us that fears and loathes the differences amongst ourselves and of others.[4] We retain the difficult nature of the word then as a challenge and a reminder. The ongoing issues of field: will remain free and open access. They will welcome editors and contributions from all fields of the spatial disciplines, and at all levels in their careers. As in the past, contributors and editors of the journal will continue to overlap.

field: Issue 8 Embodying an Anti-Racist Architecture comprises essays, articles, podcasts, drawings, designs, the cover image and a film. In bringing them together we do not so much try to answer the original 'Call to Action' but to map out both the state and trajectories of anti/racism at

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[3] Sara Ahmed, *Complaint!* (Duke University Press, 2021).

[4] Audre Lorde, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House', *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* (Milton Keynes: Penguin Random House, 2017), p. 21.

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the school as it is (or was) in 2021. We try to bring nuance and complexity from all of our contributors' situated positions, within both the institution and all of the places and spaces we inhabit or find ourselves within. We recognise and acknowledge the anger behind the 'Call to Action', and behind some of the contributions. We have asked ourselves how we both operate in solidarity and 'stay with the trouble'.[5] In the most critical pieces in the journal there is a resistance to problem solving, a critique of the knee jerk reactions to 'decolonisation' as a tick box representational exercise. We've also resisted themes as a way of tying contributions together, resisting boxes to place them in, and prioritising the potential conversations between them. We are reminded of a metaphor sometimes given for the nature of recovery after illness. You find yourself in a field that has been stripped bare of its crops and seemingly all its fecundity. There are, though, new green sprouts here and there; green shoots to be tended to, nurtured with the hope they will grow a new garden. Perhaps that is the kind of field we envision here, one located in a place decimated by racism, misogyny and inequity, yet one that contains the hopeful new germinations, through our young students, our engaged staff, our interlocutors and collaborators.

We have 22 contributions – an unsettled treasure of written, spoken and visual voices and positions. The front cover was commissioned specially from Alem Derege – her powerful and beautiful image of hair braiding as an architectural motif sets up and weaves a thread throughout the journal. It speaks to many of the image based contributions: Ruth Tay's provocative collage 'Shining a Spotlight on the Audience', which explores white saviour complex, and how this shapes the role we play as designers; Amy Crellin and Melissa Fitzpatrick's designs for 'Contextualising Colston', a critique of the potential futures of Bristol's Edward Colston statue is given, considering community participatory evaluation in light of real events surrounding Colston's statue and the Black Lives Matter Protests; the Unsettled Subjects' creative responses by Catalina Mejía Moreno, Hafsa Adan, Kavitha Ravikumar, and Shahed Saleem; Samuel Kapasa's photographic essay on the relationship between his practice and his identity; Aayushi Bajwala's visual poetry in the margins; and even Emre Akbil and Leo Care's call for an 'image equality archive'.

'The Call to Action' is a document borne from dialogue, and as such derives its power from the activism that collaboration and cooperation engender. Conversation and collaboration are inherent within many of the contributions as well as across them: Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye, Juliet Sakyi-Ansah, Michael Badu, Alisha Morenike Fisher, and Nana Biamah-Ofosu create two recorded conversations discussing their experiences as Black students-researchers-educators in predominantly white architectural institutions, reflecting on their shared as well as particular lived experiences; Studio Juggernaut, an open research group led by Jane Tankard at the University of Westminster School of Architecture and

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[5] Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016).

Cities, explores mechanisms for reciprocity in architectural education and practice; the Unsettled Subjects group operates both collectively and individually through readings and responses to C.L.R. James' The Black Jacobins; Tilo Amhoff, Vanessa Malao Nkumbula, Vivian Wall compile the findings of the Independent Thought reading group, a student and staff forum at the School of Architecture and Design (SoAD) at the University of Brighton. Both this and the Unsettled Subjects reading group were established as spaces for engaging critically and collectively with the "political present" (Beech 2021), as well as charting power, race and coloniality in architecture and the city, through reading, research and creative practice; Asma Mehan, Carolina Lima, Faith Ng'eno and Krzysztof Nawratek discuss white hegemony across different geopolitical and academic spaces, mindful of the nuances of using English as their shared yet borrowed language; and Eva Sopéoglou and Catalina Mejía Moreno, in their then respective roles as module leaders in environment and technology and humanities, share an interdisciplinary, reflective dialogue.

Individual contributions cluster around and through these collaborations, like pebbles filling the gaps and changing the overall shape: Zahraa Essa's work analyses the dollhouse to understand six rooms in the heteropatriarchal South African Indian Muslim home, deconstructing the constituents in the rooms to reveal the 'hauntings' (Gordon 2008) of colonial empire and economy; Michael Ford, in conversation with Rebecca Acheampong, takes us to Birmingham to highlight the displacement of BAME owned businesses by commercial gentrification; an anonymous contributor takes us to Malaysia to explore the racial constructions of Indians on the plantation frontier of British Malaya; Aisha Sillah evaluates post-apartheid design, arguing that its legacy remains a divisive force in the spatial environment; Sophie Mayer, examining attitudes towards ethnic and gender diversity in architecture, evealuates what can be learnt from mitigating practices in the legal profession; Juliet Sakyi-Ansah initiates a dialogue on how we might begin to collectively conceptualise anti-racist approaches in architecture; Aayushi Bajwala picks apart race and gender in the city and countryside through the practice of walking; Anureena D'costa revisits the 'Call to Action' one year on; Zoe Lord evaluates inequity in housing and its effects on quality of life; and finally ideas of white silence and embracing the feelings of discomfort are revisited in Ben Purvis' critical self-reflection.

We hope you embrace these positionalities as we have, stay with the discomfort, and find both solace and potentialites in their complexities.

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Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action

Connie Pidsley, Emma Carpenter, Jasmin Yeo, Lucie Iredale, Mimi Evans

with collaboration from Alice Grant, Julia Udall, Michael Badu, Onyi Enujuba, Rose Turner Wood, Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye, Aisha Sillah, Aisha Khan, Aayushi Bajwala

Introduction

Co-authored in the summer of 2020, ‘Anti Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action’ is an open letter from students and alumni of The University of Sheffield. Written during a time where globally the collective consciousness surrounding race and class was amplified, the letter demanded action and concrete change. Using our lived experiences, we argued that the school is complicit in the structures that perpetuate systemic racism within architectural education.

The letter took two approaches, both analytical and emotional. It provided a comprehensive action plan, developed as a framework to aid the school in making critical changes. Appended to the letter were ‘conversation starters’, first hand experiences from Black and Asian students, illustrating the impact of these inequities on a human level.

Circa two years on from publication and the collective consciousness of 2020 appears to be waning. The 2021 Race Report concluded that structural racism is a myth in ‘a tone-deaf attempt at rejecting the lived realities of people of African descent and other ethnic minorities in the UK'. This legacy of societal inequity, compounded by the overarching bureaucracy of the educational system, has stifled progress.

In this time, the letter has also taken on many guises… "a cry", "a complaint"… "an initiative"… "(student) activism". Guises considered palatable by some and tokenistic by others. But, no matter what the letter's legacy, most importantly it has and continues to initiate conversations on race and class.

Beyond the plurality of our voices as authors and contributors, there are countless more stories to be told and voices across the diaspora to be heard.

At the time of writing we argued that our school was complicit in the structures that perpetuate systemic racism within architecture. We would still argue that this is the case, not only in Sheffield School of Architecture but throughout architectural education and practice.

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CAN YOU NAME 3 WHITE ARCHITECTS…?

NOW, CAN YOU NAME 3 BLACK ARCHITECTS…?

FINALLY, HOW MANY BLACK MEMBERS OF STAFF AT SSOA CAN YOU NAME?

UK architectural education and practice is systemically racist.

ANTI-RACISM AT SSoA: A CALL TO ACTION

DISCLAIMER

We use 'BAME' in this letter as it is a widely understood term. However, we recognise and understand the limitations of acronyms like this and the way that they homogenise the individual experiences of distinct ethnic groups, which can be inaccurate and exclusionary.

Though the issues raised in this letter pertain primarily to our experiences at SSoA, these problems and solutions could be applied to other institutions and the wider profession.

The main body of this letter has been written by a group of third year students with different lived experiences regarding race and economics. We have tried to be as reflective as possible during the writing process but understand that there may still be an unintentional bias.

We welcome any feedback or comments on the handling of issues raised in this letter, and hope that it can bring attention to new and existing conversations.

To the Department, Staff, and Students of the Sheffield School of Architecture,

In the wake of George Floyd's murder, the resulting global Black Lives Matter protests, and general amplification of consciousness surrounding race and class, we, the undersigned, argue that our school has been and remains complicit in the structures that perpetuate systemic racism within architecture.

We demand immediate action and concrete change.

Systemic racism manifests from the existing hierarchies within our society that maintain white hegemony. These are especially rife within higher education and the architectural profession. Architecture is an innately holistic discipline, tasked with catering to the needs of all peoples and communities around the world. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that the individuals who take it upon themselves to contribute to the profession, reflect the diversity of the society that they serve.

To achieve this, we are demanding a radical shift in representation, institutional structures and pedagogy; one that accepts the political and social importance of architecture.

SSoA: A 'SOCIAL' SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE?

The current pedagogy at SSoA fosters an environment where discourse surrounding gender equality and feminism is supported and engrained across the curriculum.

But where has race been in this narrative?

Conversations about race have been consistently minimised, resulting in the propagation of largely Eurocentric and imperialist perspectives. In this critical moment, we cannot stand by and ignore this opportunity to re-evaluate our priorities and take responsibility.

By openly accepting accountability for this outdated pedagogy and initiating conversations about race, we can push for real change in the way that the school operates, to nurture and empower BAME students and staff.

For Sheffield School of Architecture to be the 'social' school of architecture that it claims to be, it needs to become an actively anti-racist institution.

We must examine our collective and individual experiences to allow for open and honest conversations.

THE ISSUES

The AJ Race & Diversity Survey 2020 found that 33% of BAME Architects and 17% of white architects believe that racism in the profession is widespread. This figure is worse for Black architects with 43% reporting racism as 'widely prevalent'.[1] These disgraceful figures are sustained by the conscious lack of conversation at every level of architectural education regarding race.

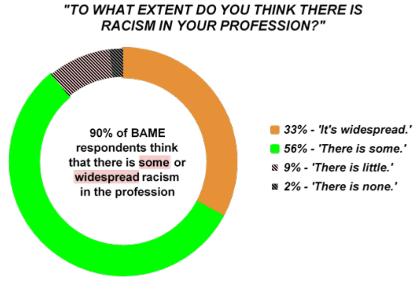

Illustration authors, based on data from The AJ Race & Diversity Survey 2020.

We must not be scared of the difficult conversations. It is not enough to listen to the experiences of BAME staff and students, and expect them to carry the burden of emotional labour. There is no excuse.

It is the responsibility of the entire SSoA community, regardless of race, to be actively anti-racist. We all have to challenge instances of racism, whether these are blatant or covertly hidden within microaggressions or biases that impact admissions.

Architecture remains a privileged profession, with economic barriers littered from undergraduate study through to qualifying as an architect. These barriers stifle accessibility and exclude BAME talent from architectural spheres. This is symptomatic of issues within a wider

[1] Richard Waite, 'Architecture is systemically racist. So, what is the profession going to do about it?', *Architects Journal*, 2020, https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/architecture-is-systemically-racist-so-what-is-the-profession-going-to-do-about-it/10047603.article [accessed 24 July 2020]

professional context, where 90% of jobs in the creative economy are done by people in 'more advantaged socioeconomic groups', compared to 66% in the wider economy.[2] There is an assumption of affluence applied to students in architectural education, which creates an alienating environment for those who don't meet the criteria.

This is an issue that disproportionately affects BAME students and we cannot address issues of racial inequality without addressing economic inequality simultaneously.

A more economically diverse student and staff body feeds back into a more socially conscious curriculum and school ethos. The curriculum currently allows students to enter into practice with an education that subconsciously encourages a creative saviour complex. A lack of working-class representation within the school is reflected in projects set on 'deprived' sites, highlighting class divides. Additionally, there is an absence of confident, open discussion surrounding socio-political issues, which impacts the intellectual rigour of students' work and the communities they are designing for. This may stem from a desire for tutors to remain impartial, and while impartiality is important for giving students the space to form their own ideas, many feel uninformed in initiating these more nuanced conversations.

Architecture taught predominantly from the Western perspective of the old modernist masters, whitewashes the history of the built environment.

How can we expect to create equitable, anti-racist cities if we solely rely on a single homogenous group to impose their vision?

The lack of visible BAME role models in the school, as well as the profession, results in feelings of otherness among BAME students. As a school of architecture, we have to actively recognise this and instigate a shift in pedagogy that celebrates counterparts to the 'modern master' from elsewhere in the world. A diversified curriculum needs to go further than humanities lectures. This needs to be integrated into 'studio culture'.

We must acknowledge the variations in the experience of different ethnic groups. When asked in the AJ Race and Diversity survey 2020 whether 'being from a BAME background can create barriers to career progression in the architecture industry', 44% of BAME respondents strongly agreed, whereas this increased to 51% when assessing solely Black responses.

This trend is seen all the way throughout the survey and highlights the increased inequalities that Black African and Caribbean Architects specifically experience in the architectural sphere. This is not to say that all other minority ethnic groups don't experience instances of discrimination and racism, but we cannot ignore that certain ethnic groups, primarily of Black origin, experience this to a greater degree. Additionally, these nuances extend to the individual realities of international students within the school which again should not be homogeneously grouped. The lived experiences of all BAME architects are not identical.

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[2] Mayor of London and others, *Supporting Diversity Handbook* (London: Mayor of London, 2019), p.23.

It is imperative that data collection reflects and responds to this reality

Systemic racism, economic barriers, a whitewashed curriculum and a lack of representative role models are all factors that perpetuate phenomena such as imposter syndrome and attainment gaps. There must be an understanding of emotional drain and trauma that these issues inflict upon BAME students and staff.

DEMANDED ACTION:

In an attempt to address these issues, we have created a by no means exhaustive action plan, to ensure SSoA commits to being actively anti-racist in future academic year.

For the full letter, including the table of demanded action which covers 1. Representation & Diversity, 2. Structural Change and 3. Equalising Pedagogy, please see https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cRMQPFOjpw7UTD5RmH-ywWiNduAsB4Bf/view

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

As the students behind the writing of this letter we value our time at SSoA and are grateful for all that the school has taught us. However, this fondness does not blind us to the need for progress. We believe that the School of Architecture is in the unique position that it can instigate change, on a local level, without the need to rely on instruction from the wider university. SSoA should be the example for every department within the university and for the 'Architecture School' as a typology. As it stands the school is paving the way on a multitude of fronts, however, there is more work to be done. We have to pave the way in ending systemic racism in architecture. There is no excuse.

Thank you to the staff and students both inside and outside of SSoA who have empowered and supported us in the writing of this letter.

Signed by the Students and Alumni of SSoA, and those in solidarity.

Thank you to the staff and students both inside and outside of SSoA who have empowered and supported us in the writing of this letter.

STARTING CONVERSATIONS ON RACE AND CLASS AT SSOA WITH:

SINK OR SWIM: A BA IN ARCHITECTURE, A PART-TIME JOB AND COVID-19

A BLACK MUSLIM EXPERIENCE

REPRESENTATION AS A POC SSOA GRADUATE

STRONG BLACK ARCHITECTS

A POC EXPERIENCE AT SSOA

SINK OR SWIM: A BA IN ARCHITECTURE, A PART-TIME JOB AND COVID-19

EMMA CARPENTER

Architecture is renowned for being a demanding course of study at university, challenging no matter who you are. It is amplified further when you aren't a white, middle-class cisgender male. I am a working-class BME woman who has worked part-time alongside my studies for the last five years. As a Black student in the UK, it is expected of you to work twice as hard as your white peers for a shot at the same opportunity. The outbreak of COVID-19 classed me as a 'key' worker during my final year, exposing more socio-economic discrepancies than before.[3]

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[3] The real 'key' workers in my opinion are the NHS staff, healthcare and transport workers.

Like many with my background, I began working part-time as soon as I turned sixteen. However, with my sights set on studying architecture and the high demands of my A-Level subjects, it became increasingly difficult to study and work in tandem. Under pressure from my teachers, I quit my job to focus solely on my studies. I intended on meeting the requirements for my offers at Bath or Cambridge (the two leading courses outside of London at the time) but I ended up going through clearing. I was lucky to be given a place on the course but I wasn't introduced to the financial aid of the Stephen Lawrence Scholarship during my application, something that could have prevented the need for me to write this piece. The disparity between the level of information I received as a clearing student and my non-clearing coursemates became apparent when the material list was released and I realised the true cost of the course. The lack of a job during my first year at university left me arriving back home with £2 left in my overdraft. Since then, I have held a dual-store contract alongside my studies through to graduation. My university recommended working no more than 16 hours a week - my contract was 12. Despite working "less", the job took more than 12 hours out of my week. Considering travel, getting ready, etc. I calculated that I had 18-21 fewer hours to spend on my degree than my non-working coursemates. The disparity led to difficulty completing my studies to the standard I had set myself and a sense of alienation in studio culture and social life, crucial to the "uni experience".

While many university students work part-time, the combination of a job and an architecture degree is less common. Many staff will discourage students working alongside an architectural degree, but in a climate focused on promoting equality in the course, it must become accepted that some students need jobs to stay afloat. Although I had coursemates with jobs, I was undoubtedly one of if not the only student that needed her earnings to live. The course averaged at eighteen contact hours a week with the expectation that the ratio of hours taught to independent study was 1:3. Thus, an additional fifty-four hours a week combined with eighteen at work meant I had a ninety-hour week (seven thirteen-hour days). It was important to me not to work all-nighters on my coursework, to maintain the minimum requirement for "self-care". I had little time left to take care of my mental wellbeing and lead an active social life.

Other students and I have found that the staff reaction to students working during their degree is generally not encouraging. If anything, it is the opposite. Out of all of my tutors throughout my undergraduate, I only told two about my job. Not because they made me feel comfortable enough that I could open up to them, but because I thought I needed to explain why I was falling behind the standard of my peers. I was afraid that they wouldn't see me as hard-working when, in reality, it's the only trait for which I give myself credit. A tutor told me that they were in the same position at my age but that they were given an ultimatum: work or focus on the course. They stopped working. They told me they'd monitor me in case they would have to apply the same ultimatum. Although it was said with the intention of being encouraging, it did little to relieve me of stress. This comment elevated the pressure I already felt to attain the same standard as my peers: I was not in a position to lose my job; I didn't have the luxury of quitting. My "inconvenient" job kept my head above the water throughout my degree. Sink or Swim. My only option was to work harder than I ever had and to prove to my tutor that I could do it, I could graduate with a job on the side.

With four months until graduation, the country went into lockdown and I moved back home to spend it with my family. Lockdown happened just as we were beginning the most crucial design phase of our final project – when we needed our tutors the most. The realisation that I was now an 'essential' worker did little to calm my nerves – why did I have to work in one of the 'essential' sectors? Up until then, I had negotiated my shifts so that they would be as convenient as possible. Still, I found myself being given random shifts throughout the week that were interfering with lectures and tutorials. Luckily, my tutor agreed to timetable my tutorials around my shifts so that I would lose the least contact time possible.

I was "lucky" because I knew of tutors that would not do the same. I was no longer in control of my work schedule, as a dual-store student on the minimum contract was only useful to cover for those who had to shield. The lack of regular shifts worsened my stress as I knew it directly affected my studio partner, my tutor and their daily lives. Previous feelings of being below-average and less talented were added to by the sense of causing inconvenience to my uni peers. My small role in helping to feed the nation during lockdown is something I'll always be proud of, but this pride is dwarfed by the shame and estrangement I have consistently felt for having to work.

When I would tell coursemates I had to work; they would always say 'how do you do it? I could never do both'. I always replied that it's easy to stay motivated when there isn't an alternative. When the only other option is to drop out because you cannot fund your degree, you keep going. If I have taken anything away from working with my degree, it is that I am grateful to be employed and that I am more durable than I give myself credit for. It is possible to graduate with a BA in Architecture from a leading university while working part-time, if I can do it, anybody can. The hardest part is knowing your potential but accepting being underestimated because you can't afford to prove it.

My experience showed me significant inequalities with the architectural education system. Below are examples where a part-time job interferes with a standard architecture degree. These should be seen as suggestions of how architectural education can be improved to prevent these situations:

STUDY VISITS

Although the department emphasises that some visits are non-compulsory and that missing them does not negatively impact your work, they remain enriching opportunities that are otherwise unattainable. These visits are accessible to low-income students only if they can afford to save money from their paycheck and are approved for time off.

Compulsory study visits are attendable at best if a student can use their limited holiday balance, although in most cases approval only comes for unpaid time off. To mitigate the drop in pay, students will have to make up the hours lost, affecting their study time later on.

Day-visits on university time may also coincide with evening shifts, meaning the student may have to leave early (thus missing out) or carrying their uniform around with them all day. Neither option is ideal but unless a colleague can swap shifts, it is one or the other. Taking extra time to return to site alone is not only dangerous, but leaves less time for coursework.

"SPARE" TIME

Time taken up by work is time removed from independent study and a social life. There is a sense of responsibility to use spare time wisely and with the duress of the architecture degree, spare time is utterly engulfed by coursework. The "late hours" way of working, so prevalent in architecture and often encouraged by tutors (despite staff pleas not to), is more tempting to a student who loses close to twenty hours a week. However, the dilemma of the 'good' working-class student is whether to work late, or to work well. Opting to work well removes any remaining 'downtime', vital for proper mental health.

Imposter Syndrome, or an internalised feeling of being below average, is not rare in architecture. It is almost normalised but never spoken about publicly. Many struggle with self-doubt, and this is worsened for working students. This self-doubt leads to the conviction that such students are always catching up, rushing, to keep up the appearance of being a 'regular' student. Students will spend every hour outside of work and sleep on the coursework only to believe it is never enough to satisfy staff.

There also exists the argument by students dedicated to playing a sport, engaged in the creative arts or with other non-uni commitments that the issues in this piece are not exclusive to working-class students. I would argue that these extra-curricular activities are a choice, perhaps the degree is the side-project, and it is not a matter of sink or swim as it is for low-income students. Students with extracurricular commitments often receive subsidised travel and food, and may be given more leniency by departments whereas many working students barely qualify for a bursary.

MATERIALS AND SOFTWARE

A degree in architecture requires access to many softwares, some of which are free to students and others which are not. To ensure availability of all softwares to all students, the university has a limited array of computers with full access to these softwares available until 9pm. However, as a working student, the access hours do not always coincide neatly with shifts. Much of the time spent on coursework happens in the later hours of the evenings, contrary to the recommendations of staff. Thus, students unable to access the uni computers must find ways of funding their subscriptions to essential softwares – another expenditure reliant on the job, and another reason students need to work.

As for the materials and printing essential to the course, the credit supplied to students by the department barely lasts the academic year – especially when some funds intended for the final year credit are redirected to a compulsory study visit. Portfolio and model costs are added to the list of unavoidable course-related expenditures, obviously financed by jobs, which tutors would prefer us not to have, for working-class students. The assumption of affluence in architecture is detrimental for students wholly self-reliant to finance their degrees. Truly egalitarian departments would recognise this issue, and introduce course funding which is reflective of students' backgrounds as well as subscriptions to softwares which students can access at home.

EVENTS

Outside of the course, the department's society runs lectures by well-known architects throughout the year. These are a great opportunity for students to spend an hour away from their coursework to learn about the profession whilst also networking. Such lectures and other events should be available to all students, but when they fall at the same time as a shift at work, suddenly these students are excluded. It is important to understand that a fixed-contract cannot easily be manipulated to suit each social event in a student's life. If societies would rotate the days these lectures were available, or at least record them for independent viewing, those in attendance could be more diverse and representative.

In the process of applying for my Part 1 placement, I became aware of another instance where a part-time job will impede low-income students further. Due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus and its implications on the job market, many practices in a position to hire Part 1s have large projects incoming. Thus, they need to hire a suitable candidate as soon as possible. Many fixed contract part-time jobs have a notice period that must be observed. In my case, I need to give my employer one months' notice. Any practice desperate to hire will overlook the applications of working students as their availability will not fit theirs, placing them at a greater disadvantage than their peers. There also exists the fear that employers reviewing CVs similar to mine will think "this person could not complete their degree giving it their full attention. They are distracted by a job and money. This isn't someone I want to employ' instead of 'this person has good time-management and works very hard". I hope to be proven wrong.

A BLACK MUSLIM EXPERIENCE

AISHA SILLAH

DISCLAIMER: This piece is simply to share my experiences to strengthen our demand for change. It is in no way an attack on anyone referenced. My aim is to start a conversation moving towards a more equitable and inclusive future at SSoA.

The need for change at SSoA and in architectural education extends beyond the curriculum. There are social aspects within SSoA which contribute to the often-exclusionary atmosphere of the university experience. The following text consists of my experiences at SSoA where I feel work can be done to include people of every ethnicity, religion and culture.

The SUAS Winter Ball is a celebration for all students at the SSoA, but this cannot be achieved unless every attendee is equally accommodated for. As with many events, a survey was sent out for dietary requirements for which I outlined 'halal food only'. At the event, there was no confirmation of the food being halal, and even more alarming only water was served as an alternative to the wine drinks packages awarded to each table of guests. Water should not be the halal version of wine, especially when non-drinkers are expected to pay the same ticket prices as drinkers.

Halal options should have been made unambiguously available to Muslim students. Why ask for dietary requirements if there is no intention to recognise them? Why pay to be singled out? It is enough to stop students like myself from attending such events in the future.

Events within the school should be advertised with the intention of being accessible to all. Exclusive advertising methods have previously been employed (in emails and posters) by focusing the event on the consumption of alcohol. The issue here is not its consumption but instead the latent message to non-drinking students that they are already unwelcome. This alcohol-centralised culture extends into the profession through networking events or project discussions at pubs, leading to a loss of opportunities for some students and employees who simply don’t share the same values. For a discipline and a profession that so strongly advocates for societal progressions, it is a shame that inclusivity is often overlooked.

While the university has done well to include prayer rooms in most of the buildings, the Arts Tower fails in this regard. There is said to be a ‘prayer room’ which I tried to use to pray until I found it was turned into a working space for students, and later a staff office. If a respected and distinct place for prayer can exist in other buildings, why not in the Arts Tower? Especially considering the significant amount of time students are expected to spend there.

During Ramadan, I was invited by one of my peers to go for lunch, and had to tell them I could not because I was fasting. Their response to this was, “Oh so you’re one of the fasters.” This microaggression, intentional or not, showed me just how the exclusionary environment at SSoA may contribute to the unfortunate words and actions of some of its students. Students who will graduate and eventually have to work with or for clients who may be different to themselves.

QUARANTINE

I am not unique in suggesting that the global pandemic of COVID-19 has revealed a number of inequalities in all areas of society. Architecture has always been and continues to be a time, resource and labour-intensive course, typically leaving those with less behind. Its effects were similarly amplified during quarantine.

Students like myself who were quarantined in council flats with extended family members, would simply not have the space or facilities to carry out work to the expected quality. In my case, living in a two-bed flat with four other family members (one of whom was pregnant) and an extremely weak internet connection meant time, space and concentration were all compromised. This resulted in doing work in a noisy room on the floor which takes a toll on physical health, and is just embarrassing during tutorials.

This struggle alongside fasting in the month of Ramadan meant realistically less time could be given to work while still having to observe religious duties of learning, praying, and cooking for Iftaar as a family. I tried to explain these difficulties to a tutor, but I was cut short with “You won’t get an extension, Ramadan is just not eating.”

Again, this is a microaggression, intentional or not. My reaction in my head was “unless you are a fasting Muslim, you are in no position to tell me what Ramadan consists of.” I had to explain my situation to the head of year and later speak to this tutor again who finally understood my situation.

An extension for most students was very helpful but may not have proven enough when measured in conjunction with individual circumstances. Despite a safety net policy for all, unique circumstances should be recognised and mitigated against accordingly during marking rather than keeping the same standard across the board.

It is a question of equity or equality in such scenarios because yes, we all experienced COVID-19 in an unprecedented way together, but privilege meant we all had different levels of difficulties to battle through during quarantine. Some students had designated spaces in workable environments with access to necessary facilities, while others had output quality and productivity heavily compromised. How then is it fair for such students to be marked to the same standard? When such differences are not recognised during marking it negatively affects Muslim and economically disadvantaged students, and possibly strengthens the notion of wealthier students progressing further into the degree, thereby keeping the profession elite, white and aloof of everyone else for whom architecture is supposed to be.

As a Race Equality Champion for the university, it has been disappointing to see how racism effortlessly manifests itself into our university environment as a response to our own actions. This position, alongside my experience as a Black Muslim student in architecture, has made it immensely necessary to facilitate such discussions for a more inclusive school. I hope that by addressing these issues of discrimination, we can relish and thrive in a future where architecture is indeed representative of the very people for whom we create solutions.

REPRESENTATION AS A POC SSOA GRADUATE

AISHA KHAN

Over the recent years, representation of non-white ethnicities has become a more discussed topic in all fields – whether this discussion has led to action is still in question. However, the architectural industry is once again, behind. Sheffield School of Architecture has a reputation as the 'social' school of architecture in the UK, yet a massive underrepresentation of BAME (although the notion of lumping all non-white ethnicities as one group is counterproductive) students and tutors is clear.

One of the topics explored in this publication is the whitewashing of architectural education – alongside disregarding legitimate masters of architecture, this once again brings up the topic of representation. As a student, you are constantly trying to see yourself where you want to be – can you see yourself in the architects we learn about? Can you see yourself in the staff teaching it to us? Can you see yourself in design media? Can you see yourself in the people you're applying to work for? Since graduating, I have felt an overwhelming disappointment when applying for jobs. Every firm's 'our people' page holds inevitable disappointment, when you see page after page of middle-aged white men smiling at the camera. I've realised I have started excitedly telling my parents when I see a woman of colour on a website, yet every firm is an 'equal opportunities employer.' The definition of 'equal opportunity employer' is an employer who 'agrees not to discriminate against any employee or job applicant because of race, colour, religion, national origin, sex, physical or mental disability, or age.' So why is it that if there is no discrimination, we still struggle to see people of colour where we want to be? Agreeing to 'not discriminate' is the bare minimum. When systemic racism exists, it is not enough just to 'not discriminate.'

It is clear that the place to see change manifested into an industry is through education, yet if people of colour are underrepresented at each stage of (a very long) architectural education, this cannot change. The 2018/19 RIBA Education Statistics shows a clear drop in the number of 'minority ethnicity' students from the start of Part 1 to the end of Part 3. Clearly something is wrong with this educational model if it is disproportionately affecting minority ethnicities. Maybe that's why the lack of people like me in the industry seems worse since graduating. Sheffield seems to have a diverse (to an extent) cohort but graduating has shown me that university is a bubble. So, if we are a diverse student body, why are less women and minority ethnicities finishing architectural education? (only 10% of Part 3 architects qualifying in 2016/17 were not white). I do not believe that representation within the student body is the biggest problem, it is the education itself.

Architecture is unlike most courses, with a very long period before qualification, which in itself causes a lot of problems. We all know that race, class and gender are intrinsically linked and the length of architectural education holds clear drawbacks for women and students from a working-class background, therefore favouring middle-class white males. The amount of time spent at university, with or without student loans, is too long. Clearly this is a bigger issue than something SSoA can fix alone but it is a valid place to start.

When I'm complaining to my housemates about the bleakness of only seeing middle aged white men on the websites of architectural firms, they joke that that's what my group of course mates will look like when we are older. As young people we have a duty to make changes we want to see and apply to work for people that we believe are making positive change, but as a 2020 graduate I am in the last place to be picky. Maybe in a different economic climate, we would be freer to apply to work in diverse workplace environments but the fact is that we don't have the power or choice to work for places that promote and champion minority ethnicities, even if we can still work for 'equal opportunities employers.'

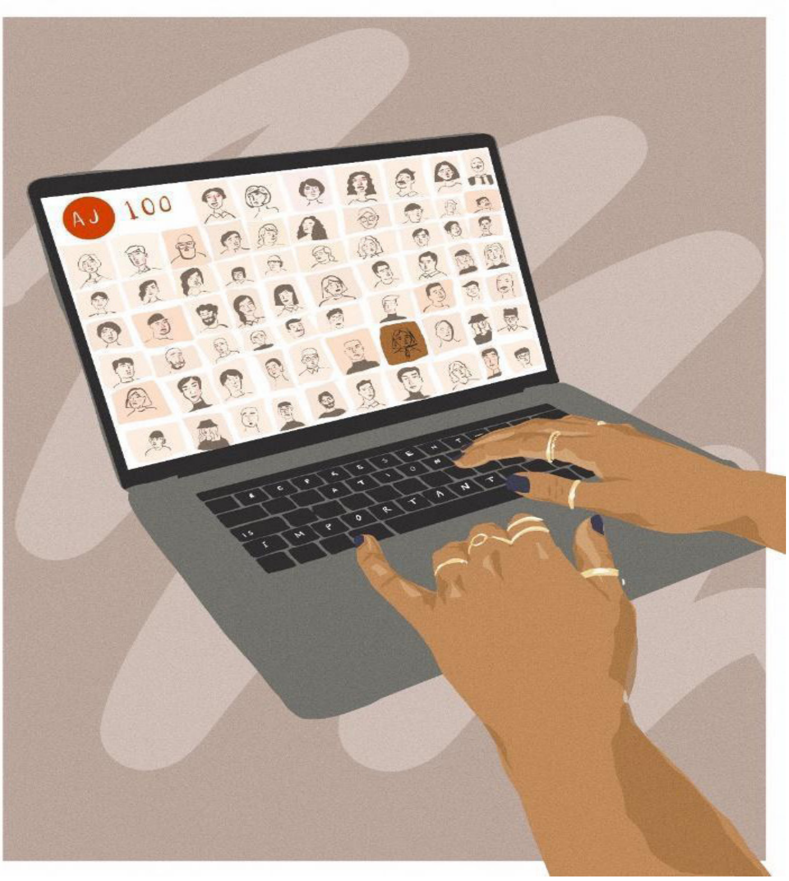
As a South Asian woman, seeing Zaha Hadid at the top of the field for years has played a huge role in feeling represented in architecture. However, off the top of my head I couldn't name many South Asian architects, male or female, whom I regularly see in the media. I can't help but feel as though the industry assumes that all South Asians are represented because of one person. This is the same feeling as wondering if your achievements are just to 'tick a box', a feeling that I'm sure many BAME students can relate to.

So, what can we do?

Ordinarily, as people, we have power through our choices, where we choose to study, or whom we choose to work for, but again, as young people in this current climate, our choices are limited and it is easy to feel quite helpless. Therefore, change needs to happen within our institutions. This publication outlines long- and short-term changes to be made within SSoA, of which I would like to emphasise the importance of increasing representation of BAME staff and students. As much as we can lobby for change within the institution, as students and alumni, one thing we can do is make ourselves aware.

I have found that starting conversations surrounding race with my (mostly white) course mates can often have me dismissed, or that there is a mentality to agree that there is a problem but then dismiss it because ‘there’s nothing we can do.’ This attitude perpetuates the issue of feeling ‘othered.’ The only way people can become aware is if we force this conversation to happen, especially with our classmates.

Address the underrepresentation of BAME tutors, students and qualified architects, and reach out to other students who also feel underrepresented. Understand what is happening within the industry, even reading the RIBA Education Statistics can be eye opening. In recent months, I have found conversation with other minorities to be the best way to understand what is happening around us, listening to personal experience. So have the difficult conversations with the people around you and make yourself aware of the experiences of your peers and how that might differ to yours. Most importantly, we must all identify our privilege, whether that be race, class or gender, because checking our privilege is the first step in being able to use it to help.



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STRONG BLACK ARCHITECTS: THE FACADE OF BLACK STRENGTH IN THE FACE OF A STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Anonymous

Mental health has become somewhat of a hot topic in recent years, with many individuals coming forward to express their need for more support and less stigmatisation, an admirable and just cause. And while mental health awareness is something that I think is important, I couldn't, and to a degree still can't help but see it as something that isn't for me, even during a critical year of unrest that has exacerbated mental health issues universally. Because you see, Black people, don't do mental health...

There is evidence to suggest that people from a BAME background are more likely to suffer from a mental health problem, with African-Caribbean people like myself seven times more likely to experience psychosis than White British people. But still; mental illness...?

"Wi nuh av dat."

Simply because, for Black people, it's often not an option.

Growing up in a predominantly white neighbourhood, it became apparent that I would have to work twice as hard as my white counterparts to be valued. I was given a 'white' name to avoid biases when submitting job applications; frightened by society's propagation of Black stereotypes portraying us as ignorant, stupid and useless; given funny looks and comments from neighbours and shop clerks; all of which suggested that I would never be accepted as worthy or good.

"Wen yuh leave dis yah yard yuh a representin di faamli."

As an anxious young Black person, you do everything in your power to evade these stereotypes to avoid rejection, or worse, humiliation from your white counterparts; an experience I am all too familiar with.

At school, where some of my white peers had never interacted with a Black person one on one, I became the unofficial representative for Black people everywhere. I would have to be exceptional before I could shed my token status. The image of ‘strong Black men and women’ therefore, is a complex one. It’s an image that I and many other Black people in my life are forced to adopt simply to live. Strength means hiding any semblance of weakness, thickening your skin and hiding parts of yourself to appear palatable. Acceptable. Assimilated. You ignore your mental and physical discomfort, because you know from experience that if you speak out, your pain will not be taken seriously, or may be used to silence you.

How fitting then, that I would take interest in a discipline like architecture, where despite 1 in 4 students seeking treatment from psychological services in 2016, mental health is expected to take a backseat to your coursework.

While recent efforts have been made to encourage students to adopt a healthy work life balance at SSoA, like numerous schools of architecture across the country and the world, a long-hours culture persists. Its essence taints the comments and suggestions of tutors, implying that you should work over the weekend, during the evening after studio, perhaps during the time that you require for other activities such as a part time job, family commitments or self-care. This leads students to feeling out of their depth. As a consequence, they work long hours, running in circles trying to understand what they did wrong and how to fix it, sometimes to no avail. This culture of self-neglect extends to the staff of our institution, who overwork themselves as much as the students. As students we respect and appreciate our staff, which unfortunately leads to weakened pastoral care where students are:

1. Hesitant to ask for help to avoid adding to staff workloads

2. Unable to get the help they really need.

Working long hours lulled me into a cycle of neglecting my mental and physical health during crunch time. My aspirations for success were again tinged with anxiety about being ignorant or incapable; the same imposter syndrome that ran deep through my aforementioned experiences in education.

“Eediat gyal.”

My imposter syndrome was most definitely exacerbated by a lack of Black representation in the wider profession, both inside and outside the school. I believe the definition of affluence extends far beyond a tax bracket. It’s who you know, the experiences you’ve had, the opportunities you are given and the confidence that is instilled in you to take them. I would look at practice websites and fear that I wouldn’t fit in and would have to deal with the same anxiety inducing microaggressions and racism I dealt with since early childhood. My Black self-esteem was low, and it wasn't until later on, arguably too late, that I finally asked for some kind of support.

"Yuh cyaan carry on wi dis nansense."

The infrastructure surrounding pastoral care at SSoA is fundamentally broken. This unfortunate reality left me feeling lost at times; especially where my anxieties overlapped with my blackness.

After a particularly uncomfortable experience with racial slurs among other microaggressions, I didn't know who to turn to. I chose to speak with my head of year, who I knew was already stretched for time, but I was unsure of what they could do for me and what the consequences of raising my voice would be in such a tight-knit school. I considered resolving the incident on my own terms, but was dissuaded after speaking with a very empathetic Black student studying at the University of Edinburgh who had been through a similar experience.

Upon reflection, I regret the way that the situation was put to rest. Ultimately it was left up to me to decide how my course mate should be disciplined. My options were to take it to the university (an elusive process that I feared would create tension on such a relatively small course), deal with it myself or I could leave it be. I chose to take a middle ground, using my head of year as a mediator as I teased out an apology and attempted to educate said course mate. While I am still appreciative of the apology, I worry about pressure on BAME students to lead the way in correcting the lapses in judgement that often go unchecked among the staff and student cohort; lapses protected by a colonised and unrepresentative curriculum and studio culture.

At a university level, when accessing psychological services, I struggled to find support for stress related to my blackness as well. The counsellors who I spoke to, all of whom were white, were often unable to support me when talking about the imposter syndrome, microaggressions and isolation that comes with being black in academia. Furthermore, I understand that many students studying architecture feel similarly misunderstood and unable to find the right support specific to such a uniquely intense course. For me, the most important action point outlined in this publication is the need for specialised pastoral care, so that the anxieties of architecture students can be appropriately dealt with. Pastoral staff should also be trained in EDI so students from all minority backgrounds can access the right support too.

"Tan a yuh yard."

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted inequality across the board. All students wrestled with working from home, some more so than others. My wrestling match was with a deepening plunge into a mental health crisis. Severely depressed, isolated and eventually unable to receive treatment from the University Health Service as I moved back home, I lost motivation. The strong black mask was beginning to slip but I didn't want to be another BAME Part 1 to Part 2 dropout statistic. Again, I was hesitant to bother stressed out staff who were equally affected by the pandemic. While I am forever grateful for the extensions I was granted, I still stand by my desire for permanent course specific pastoral care staff who I could go to, for the sake of student and staff welfare.

"Black Lives Matter."

I think there is a lack of appreciation for the level of distress caused by seeing imagery of people who look like yourself being abused, murdered and discarded all over social media. The same social media where I am supposed to be cultivating an online portfolio to find work after (virtual) graduation. The murder of George Floyd and accompanying BLM coverage has been tough for Black people around the world. Disappointingly, no support for the movement, or Black students whose mental health may have been affected was offered or signposted by the school, despite claiming to be a 'social' school of architecture.

While it is important to recognise the successes of the Sheffield School of Architecture, particularly those surrounding feminist discourse, the time has come to lift the quarantine on conversations about race in architectural education and the type of the support that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students need. The claim of social awareness must go deeper than a marketing campaign. Though I am now a graduate, I hope that this publication becomes the spark that ignites anti-racist initiatives for future cohorts of students to come.

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A POC EXPERIENCE AT SSOA

AAYUSHI BAJWALA

Racism is widespread in the university environment, whether it be microaggressions in a social context or the massive underrepresentation in varying departments. As I am most familiar with the Architecture Department, now going into my third year, this is where my focus will lie. However, you will find that issues of race are deep-seated into the pedagogy of all departments. What I describe below is based solely on my own experiences. It is important to note that everyone experiences discrimination in different ways. My account of racism is most likely not identical to others.

Whilst more women and people of BAME communities are taking up the career in recent years, British architecture is still largely dominated by white men. As a woman of colour studying architecture, I have been described by my peers as a ‘role model’ for other BAME people considering the profession. My white peers and tutors need to understand the great pressure that follows BAME students being labelled as ‘role models’ and the lack of support that is offered to us, as the numbers remain small in the profession. This has led to the phenomenon of tokenism within the course.

With only a small number of BAME members at the Sheffield School of Architecture, whiteness is still perceived as a ‘default’. Having these ‘token minorities’ allows institutions to label themselves as diverse, without having enough BAME people to actually achieve inclusivity; this allows minorities to feel alienated in the very place that they are being educated, encouraging a general feeling of ‘otherness’ or even a phenomena of racial imposter syndrome.

I want my voice to be heard without being labelled as the voice of all Brown architects.

Being labelled as role models because our race puts a burden on our achievements to be of exceptional nature, rather than being afforded the luxury of white mediocrity; there is a pressure to prove deep-rooted Black and Brown stereotypes - illiterateness and ignorance - wrong. At the university, we have exactly the right number of BAME students and staff for this effect of ‘tokenism’ to take place creating a false illusion of diversity.

We have achieved diversity to a certain degree, but not inclusion.

As a response to my recognition of largely Eurocentric course content at the school, it has been suggested that I set up a society which educates about architecture particularly from the Global South. There are many reasons why I was uncomfortable with this; the expectations for people of colour to be responsible for teaching their white peers about the effects of race; the fact that societies are optional and learning about racism is essential for everyone; lastly, the fact that this will allow different cultures to be seen as niche or an ‘other’.

One particular concern, due to the recent explosion of the social media coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement followed by the sudden disappearance of it, is the tendency for anti-racism to become a trend, rather than a default set of ethics that should already have been adopted.

The Sheffield School of Architecture is widely seen to focus its teaching towards ‘architecture for the people’ with its social and sustainability charged ethics and its tendency to teach through a feminist lens. These have become recognisable trends for Sheffield in the global scene of architecture. Sheffield’s anti-racism cannot become a trend. Instead we must collaborate with other universities internationally and make a global effort to address the issue of inherent racism in architecture.

Another reality that needs to be recognised is that many BAME people are breaking barriers for people of their race - there must be more acknowledgement of such situations.

It is important to state that BAME people are not disadvantaged by their race or cultural background, but historically, white supremacy has created a paradigm that does not favour them, and even to this day, it shows.

The university must also understand the difficulties of proceeding into a career where we struggle to find any role models to relate to. I am the first woman in my family to attend university and have additionally defied traditional South Asian expectations by treading into a career that is not medicine, dentistry or engineering. I felt great pressure to prove myself in my degree, to my white peers and my South Asian community. A low grade in a project will affect students from different cultural backgrounds and race in a different way. White educators must understand the immense strain that many BAME people face as they go into careers their communities may have never ventured into before.

The lack of support, communication, and identification of such individuals at The University of Sheffield is heart-breaking.

Conversations regarding the effect of race in the profession is one that must take place between staff, students, and alumni in The University of Sheffield. I recall one event this year, after a SUAS talk, in which a BAME member of staff began to describe the racism they had experienced in their career. Once they had finished talking, they were met with complete silence. We must educate ourselves and provide sufficient training to staff and students to have the right conversations in a respectful but effective way, equipping them with the right notions and vocabulary to practice anti-racism. This should help erase white fragility, sensitivity, and defensiveness around the topic, creating an environment where we can finally talk about it. The topic of race should be one that is revisited as it is one that is truly relevant in the architectural social sphere.

This is also a plea to better pastoral care for BAME students suffering from feelings of 'otherness', exclusion or racial imposter syndrome in the School. I look back to a year meeting in my second year where we were presented with a list of staff that were available to give support to students. They were all white men. I would like to make a request for a support system in place for BAME students, in which they can approach members of staff that have been through similar experiences and can offer solutions to problems they can understand and relate to. A student body approach to the issue, is no longer sufficient. The university, itself, must act.

I do acknowledge the support that is offered at the university such as Race Equality Champions, launched in January, to tackle microaggressions. However, these services are only sought out by BAME people affected by racism, when we should all be taking responsibility to recognise, talk about and tackle it.

I hope that the School of Architecture will respond to this eagerly and aspire to become an actively anti-racist institution, making changes that will have a long-lasting effect and solve the inequalities that are deeply embedding in the architecture profession.

I wanted to write this to expose the effect that Black Lives Matter has had on BAME students. Much of the summer, for me, has been an internal thought process - picking apart small microaggressions, reflecting on my own biases and privileges as a non-black person of colour, and finally recognising the bigger picture of how systemic racism is embedded in much of what we do at university and everyday life. It has been a slow but effective realisation and this piece of writing is a fragment of my complicated thought process during this difficult time. I feel hopeful, as I have been met with similar attitudes and opinions from my peers and I would like to thank those who have shared their experiences and made efforts to push for a more inclusive environment in the school.

I feel positive that the Sheffield School of Architecture will support these efforts. By addressing these issues of race inclusivity in the department we will be taking massive steps for the entire field. We must, as a collective, utilise the strength and power we have as a successful and internationally recognised school to challenge issues we see in the architectural profession. With our platforms and leverage we can act on our beliefs to reach for a future in which there is a fairer and better society.

We must not be scared of the difficult conversations.

There is no excuse and it is the responsibility of the entire SSoA community.

We must all stand together and take responsibility, using our powers as staff and students to truly enact change.

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Shining a Spotlight on the Audience

Ruth Tay

Introduction

My collage explores the white saviour complex, and how this shapes the role we play as designers. The white saviour complex refers to well-meaning acts of philanthropy that reduce areas in poverty to a theatre where skilled white people can act as the hero, while ignoring the systemic causes behind the problems in these areas.[1] As Teju Cole points out, emotional validation is emphasised over transformative change.[2] 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' led me to realise the tendency of our designs to perpetuate white saviourism. Sheffield's reputation as a "Social School of Architecture" encourages designs that aim to alleviate the problems of the marginalised, without a critical understanding of the issues we are tackling.

Shining a Spotlight on the Audience

As stated in 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action', the subconscious coaxing towards a 'creative saviour complex' means that architects are cast as social heroes, a role that is patronising towards the subaltern communities for whom we design. Instead, we should be practicing solidarity and allowing more people to have control over their built surroundings.

In the collage accompanying this text, the stage curtains and predominantly white audience represents the performative nature of Sheffield School of Architecture as a seemingly progressive school in

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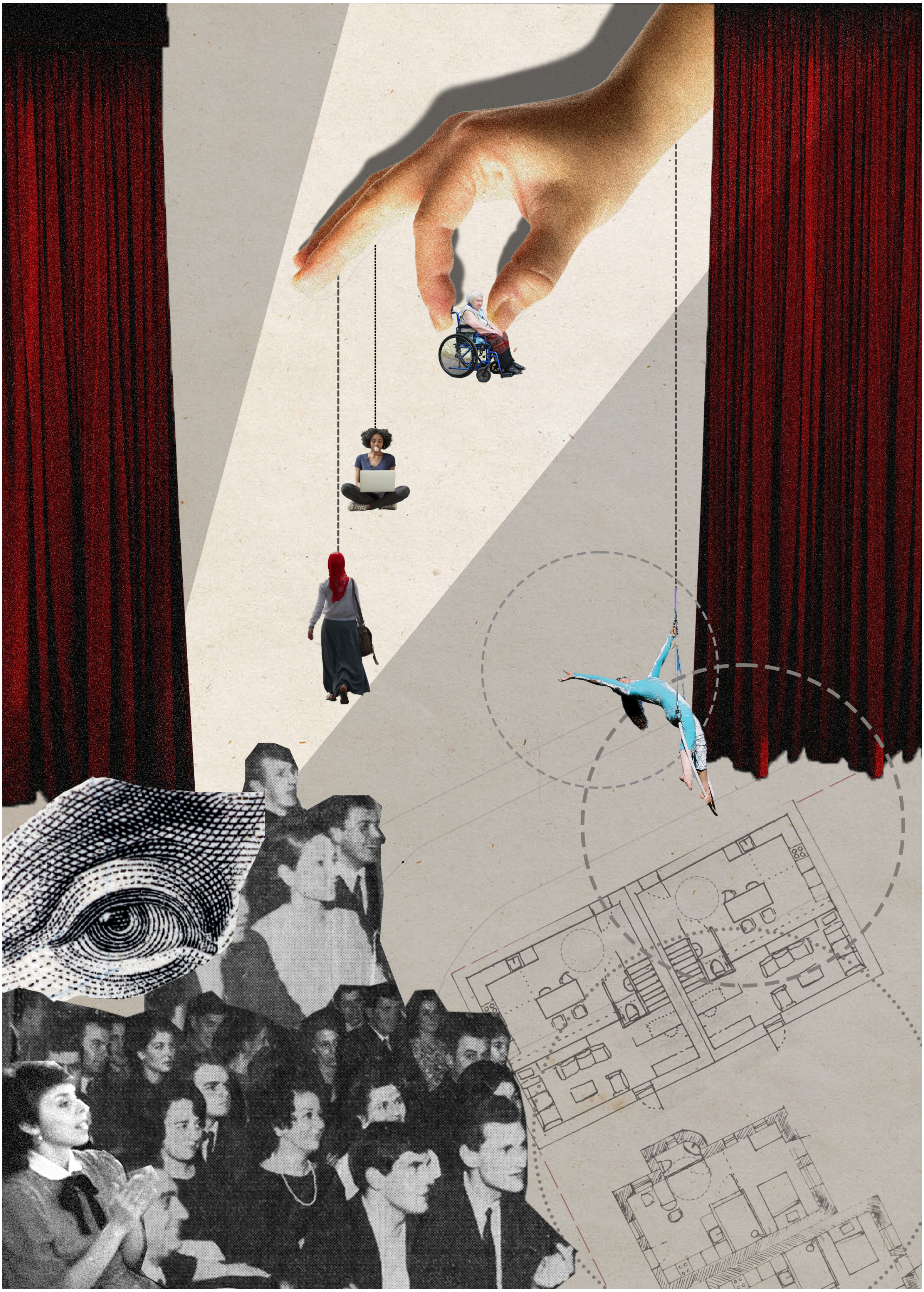
[1] Julio Cammarota, 'Blindsided by the Avatar: White Saviors and Allies Out of Hollywood and in Education', Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 33:3 (2011), 242-259, <DOI: 10.1080/10714413.2011.585287>.

[2] Teju Cole. 'The White-Savior Industrial Complex,' The Atlantic, 21 March 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/> [accessed 19 June 2021].



Shining a Spotlight on the Audience Ruth Tay front of a wider academic circle. The role of architectural journalism and publications as the audience is pivotal to this performance. We must stop applauding virtue signalling and support serious reflective evolution. I have reflected on my acting role in this performance, having class privilege but lacking white privilege. It is easy to bask in applause under the pretence of a "socially conscious" design, but when you can be cast as both the oppressor and the oppressed then you begin to probe the structures behind these roles. My power to influence the built environment rests entirely on my skills and the financial support of my family. If either of these things were to vanish, it would be up to an architect to "consult" or ignore my views.

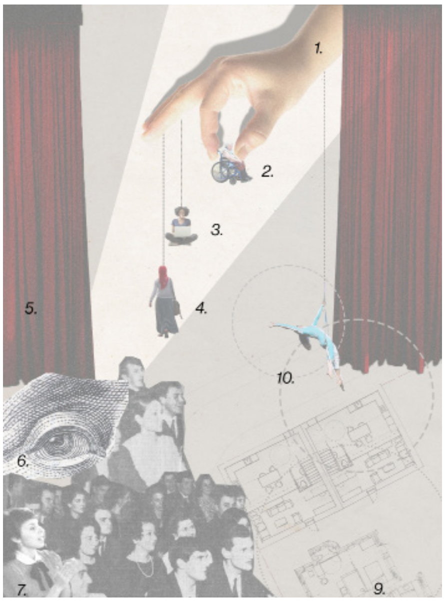
Moving in certain circles yields access to better job opportunities, represented by the accessibility circles in this collage. High costs and time pressures of the main path to qualification hamper working-class and BAME students' access to architecture, as discussed in the 'Call to Action'. These circles also refer to the extra and invisible hoops minority students have to jump through in university or professional life. This can be partly addressed through mentor schemes or other new systems but first we must acknowledge the intersection of class and race instead of pretending we are a post-racial society.

Sheffield School of Architecture also has a role in shaping our view of the Black and Asian communities for whom we frequently design. What role do disenfranchised communities play in the design process? Often they are flimsy paper cutouts pasted on a finished render to effect the appearance of diversity – replaceable background extras in a composition arranged by a white hand. Casting minorities in a victim role renders them powerless; waiting for an architect, unable to effect real change themselves, is a false narrative. Users have been designers and builders for millennia, but as architects we have hoarded agency over the built environment. Destroy this false dichotomy between the passive user and the designer who holds power and expertise over people's heads. Whoever holds the pen wields power, and it is time to pass it on.

Non-engagement with these issues while profiting from them is naïve complicity. We cannot design solutions to problems that we do not fully grasp. Deepening understanding through a humanities curriculum rooted in current issues that address race, more equitable design processes, and widening participation in architecture can go some way towards dismantling the white saviour complex in design. This is not a performance, the decisions we make have concrete consequences in reality.

Biography

Ruth Tay is currently completing BArch Part 1 at Sheffield School of Architecture, with interests including decolonisation and urban permaculture. Raised in Leeds with Singaporean-Malaysian roots, dual identities and exploring complexity have been at the forefront of her mind for the large part of her youth. Since 2019 Ruth has been involved in Students for Climate Action campaigning for sustainability in architectural education. Outside of university she enjoys gardening, playing the violin and making jewellery.



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1. Jernej Furman, Medical Pills, digital photograph, Flickr, 3 December 2017 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/91261194@N06/45354187832> [accessed 14/12/2021]
2. Senior Guidance, Senior older woman in wheelchair outdoors, digital photograph, Flickr, 27 June 2017 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/146515428@N03/35529164806> [accessed 14/12/2021]
3. No title, architectural cutout, Non Scandinavia, no date, <http://www.nonscandinavia.com/> [accessed 30/05/2021]
4. No title, architectural cutout, Non Scandinavia, no date, <http://www.nonscandinavia.com/> [accessed 30/05/2021]
5. Ruth Tay, Red Curtain, digital photograph, Walkley Community Centre, own collection.
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'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' A Year On

Anureena D’costa

George Floyd’s murder and the subsequent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 forced us all to confront the deep-rooted biases that shape our day-to-day lives. The global call to arms gave rise to a wave of advocacy and empowered many of us to demand change.

For the students at the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA) this is manifested in ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action’. The work of Metropolitan Architecture Student Society at London Metropolitan University and BLM_Arch@MSA at Manchester School of Architecture has been influential and at the forefront of the current anti-racist movement in architecture. I have interviewed two students, James Thormod and Elise Colley from these groups, to hear about their experiences, motivations and approach to activist work.

With work of this nature, it is easy to shut yourself into your own echo chamber and method of approach. It is vital to consider the full spectrum of work already being produced at SSoA and beyond; to learn from our shortcomings and adopt new strategies.

This article collates the conversations between James, Elise and I, offering the student perspective and insights into each of our institutions’ downfalls and achievements during this time.

1% of all registered architects are Black.[1] Comparatively, Black people account for 3.3% of the UK population.[2] BAME stands for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic – while it can be useful for statistics, it is a highly divisive term used by the media and government to homogenise and reduce the disparate histories and experiences of millions of people (7.9 million to be exact) into one acronym.[3] BAME people account for 14% of the UK population and yet under 10% of architects are BAME in 96 AJ100 practices – the UK's largest practices, as defined by the number of architects employed.[4] The disparities between these figures are even more abhorrent when you take into consideration that the majority of these practices have an office in London, where 40% of the population is BAME.[5] Despite statistics like this, why does it take a global pandemic and the murder of George Floyd for the architectural profession to finally plead guilty to systemic racism?

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[1] Architects Registration Board, ‘Equality and Diversity Data’, *Architects Registration Board,* 2021 < https://arb.org.uk/about-arb/equality-diversity/data/> [accessed 22 June 2021].

[2] Office for National Statistics, ‘Population of England and Wales 2011’, *Gov.uk*, 2018 < https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest> [accessed 22 June 2021].

George Floyd's murder and subsequent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in 2020 forced us all to confront the deep-rooted biases that shape our day-to-day lives. The global call to arms gave rise to a wave of advocacy and empowered many of us to demand change. For students of architecture, like James Thormod and Elise Colley, one means of initiating this change has been through publications and letters calling their institutions to action.

"We pay a lot of money to these institutions, and effectively, they're letting us down," said James, Part II graduate of London Metropolitan University (LMU).[6]

Conversations on Racism at LMU

James Thormod and Lucia Medina co-curated the 'Conversations on Racism' publication for the Metropolitan Architecture Student Society (MASS). This document is a collection of carefully researched and evocatively portrayed essays that offer multiple perspectives on racism. Unable to attend the BLM protests in 2020 and finding the performative activism of posting a black square on Instagram for the so-called 'Black Out Tuesday' futile, 'Conversations on Racism' offered James the chance to use his talents to respond and protest in a meaningful way. The publication was effective in putting pressure on LMU, sparking productive conversations between the Heads of School and student body. Although they received encouragement and verbal support for MASS initiatives, James was disappointed with the lack of urgency within the school. The students then took matters into their own hands, seeking out funding for the 'Now What' lecture series from the Centre for Equality and Inclusion within the broader University. According to MASS, "'Now What' is an open discussion through which to enable re-learning of design, history, aesthetics; challenging the way in which we learn and practice".[7]

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[3] Office for National Statistics, 'Population of England and Wales 2011', 2018.

[4] Bruce Tether, 'AJ100 2020: Women are gaining ground in the profession, but not BAME architects', *Architects' Journal*, 2020 <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/aj100-2020-women-are-gaining-ground-in-the-profession-but-not-bame-architects> [accessed 22 June 2021].

[5] Greater London Authority, *Supporting Diversity Handbook*, London: Mayor of London, 2019 <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/supporting_diversity_handbook_web.pdf> [accessed 24 June 2021].

[6] James Thormod, Interview by Author, (Google Meet, 18 June 2021).

[7] Metropolitan Architecture Student Society, @massatmet 'Introducing Now What', *Instagram*, 2021 <https://www.instagram.com/p/CLM5y3nMwqt/> [accessed 23 June 2021].

In June 2020, the school changed its name to 'The School of Art, Architecture and Design', removing slave trader Sir John Cass' name.[8] James revealed:

"The architecture school loved its name as 'The Cass' – as it was commonly known – and it seemed the main pressure to change its name was coming from the central University."[9]

Silence in Manchester

Similarly, Elise – who recently completed her Part 2 at the Manchester School of Architecture (MSA) – felt Manchester was also complacent. During the BLM protests, students were dissatisfied by the lack of public support received from MSA. Elise shared that the students were falsely informed of an 'embargo' regarding public statements due to the complications of MSA being a part of both the University of Manchester (UoM) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).[10] This embargo was revealed to be a "lie" only after students rallied together and wrote to the Deans of MMU and UoM, stating that "the forced silence of the MSA makes it painfully clear that you have fallen short in acknowledging the institutional work urged by the Black Lives Matter movement."[11]

"They were allowed to comment [...] they felt it would have taken too long to go through all the channels," said Elise.[12] This complacency and deceit by the university led to the formation of the BLM_Arch@MSA student group, of which Elise is a key member.

Even though the hard work and emotional labour of students writing and signing the letter felt "redundant", it forced MSA to reflect on "the clear racial disparities [...] in the School".[13] As a result, the EDI Code of Practice was formed, which among many things focuses on diversifying reading lists, specific mentoring and scholarships.[14] While she considers it rewarding that staff are listening, signing the EDI Code of Practice and promising regular reviews, Elise fears there is no accountability for staff, and it relies heavily on individuals' consciences to follow this framework. Instead, BLM_Arch@MSA is leading the anti-racism cause at Manchester, curating talks from inspiring guest speakers, educational resources and The Family Scheme—a mentoring scheme inspired by the Royal College of General Practitioners' model. Led by Lifa Zvimbande, RIBA North West Director, this mentoring scheme seeks to connect students at secondary school, Parts 1 to 3, newly qualified and experienced architects. It is aimed at students "who do not fit into the typical portrayal of an Architect (whether that's due to race, gender, social class, etc)".[15]

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[8] Prof. Lynn Dobbs, 'A message about our School of Art, Architecture and Design' London Metropolitan University, 2020, <https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/news/articles/a-message-about-our-school-of-art-architecture-and-design/> [accessed 26 June 2021].

[9] Thormod, Interview.

[10] Elise Colley, Interview by Author, (Google Meet, 21 June 2021).

[11] Colley, Interview; The MSA Black Alumni, *A statement on behalf of the Manchester School of Architecture* (MSA) student body (Unpublished 2020).

[12] Colley, Interview.

[13] Colley, Interview; Helen Aston and Prof. Ola Uduku, 'Equality Diversity and Inclusivity at Manchester School of Architecture', Manchester School of Architecture, 2021 < https://www.msa.ac.uk/2021/edi/> [accessed 27 June 2021].

[14] Aston and Prof. Uduku, 2021.

[15] BLM_Arch@MSA, @blm_archmsa, 'The Family Scheme', *Instagram*, 2020 <https://www.instagram.com/p/CEeQqldJqZN/> [accessed 28 June 2021].

‘A Call to Action’ at Sheffield

James and Elise have been impressed by the ‘Call to Action’ letter written by the students at the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA) and the school’s response. In this letter, through evocative personal accounts, students unveiled their experiences of professional, academic and experiential disenfranchisement, arguing that the school “remains complicit in the structures that perpetuate systemic racism [...] to be a ‘social’ school of architecture that it claims to be, it needs to become an actively anti-racist institution.”[16] The letter was signed in solidarity by over 200 people—spanning professionals, alumni, and students across different institutions.

In response to this ‘Call to Action’, the staff and students from the EDI Committee at Sheffield have been meeting fortnightly to discuss and propose initiatives, such as the ‘SSoA Voices Survey’. This anonymous survey seeks to take the temperature of the school to identify and act on the issues staff and students face. Sheffield University Architecture Society (SUAS) have also committed themselves to inclusivity. Their popular ‘Lecture Series’ and ‘Lunchtime Specials’ have showcased work from diverse professionals and students. The Student Action Group – an EDI splinter group, of which I am a member – has set up and launched film nights in collaboration with SUAS. These sought to extend the important conversations resulting from the ‘Call to Action’ letter with the entire School.

Ultimately, the EDI Committee has opened up a space through which to engage in discussions and put forward initiatives in the hope of improving the culture of the School. While conversation is a crucial step in creating change, the EDI Committee is at risk of being stuck in its own echo chamber. From personal experience, too many meetings have been spent discussing issues, speculating on the best course of action, and indulging in self-congratulation for just turning up – made even more frustrating by the fact the ‘Call to Action’ letter already laid out a comprehensive action plan.

Representation

‘Now What’ and other lecture series that increase representation of the non-typical architects and non-architects are vastly important. James considered their talks a success, with attendances of 50-60 people.

“There was a real desire for something different, more young voices, diverse voices [...] women doing great things in architecture, people of colour doing great things in architecture”, said James.The true impact and success of these changes and inclusions cannot be measured.[17]

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16 Connie Pidsley and others, 'Anti Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action', 2020 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cRMQPFOjpw7UTD5RmH-ywWiNduAsB4Bf/view> [accessed 28 June 2021].

17 Thormod, Interview.

From their collective ten-year experience at four different institutions, James and Elise – both of Black heritage – have never been tutored by a Black person while at university.

“If you can’t see it, it’s very difficult to think that could be you”, said Elise.[18]

James shared that his motivations behind pushing initiatives like this are also about changing the historic culture and Eurocentric discourse within architecture.

“If it’s all being presented as this White establishment – and that’s the only people who succeed – there’s a problem, isn’t there?” he said.[19]

The effects of lack of representation are subtle but prominent. James shared how working in a large, predominantly white practice, was challenging. He was not able to find his voice, leaving him feeling unfulfilled. From my own experiences of studying my Part 1 at the University of Nottingham, despite achieving excellent grades, I felt very anxious and not competent enough in comparison to my peers. Always feeling a step behind my white counterparts was further cemented by over 120 rejections for job applications and months of unemployment when I was looking for a Part 1 placement in 2019. At the time, I naïvely did not consider my race to be a contributing factor.

Networking

In an industry in which who you know is more important than what you know, James and Elise both believe networking is key for people of colour (POC).

“It shouldn’t be […] that POC have to make more of an effort to build networks but the fact is […] you can’t always rely on family connections that other people can,” said James.[20]

Elise divulged that the support and lessons she has learnt from being a part of The Family Scheme were invaluable while job hunting. Elise will be working at Hawkins\Brown later this summer. Although in its infancy, around eight families have already been created in The Family Scheme.[21] Being paired with people at different stages of their career allows you to ask important questions like ‘how do I ask for a pay rise?’ or ‘what do I actually need to do for the enigmatic Part 3?’. Elise wishes she had access to such an incredible support system earlier on in her career. James also shared that his mentors at MAP Architecture – where he is now leading projects –have had a huge impact on growing his confidence in the field:

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[18] Colley, Interview.

[19] Thormod, Interview.

[20] Thormod, Interview.

[21] Colley, Interview.

"Architecture is hard, it takes a long time to really feel like you can offer your services effectively to people".[22]

Networking and access to mentoring, if not part of a scheme, relies on an individual putting themselves out there. As POC we have learned that the system will not accommodate us – we have to play by our own rules and use that to our advantage. Scroll down your LinkedIn feed, and count how many Brown and Black profiles you encounter in one minute. What happens to the people who do not have the same energy to work a room, or regularly post on LinkedIn?

"They feel left out of the profession and feel forgotten about [...] and that's where [the industry] is letting people down," said James.[23]

Education can make a difference

This is where our education and curriculum can play a crucial role. 'Advocacy', a core module at LMU, allowed James to research diversity. Listening to professionals in the industry talk about the Black experience gave him the confidence to research and write about it. Most importantly, it allowed him to network with people like Joseph Henry, Neba Sere and Elsie Owuso, who are already leading the anti-racist front in architecture. 'Histories' is another module at LMU that James feels is particularly ahead of the times: where Black history is taught through art and how we relate to it from a decolonial perspective. At MSA, 'Events' – similar to 'Live Projects' at SSoA – connects you with 'collaborators' who are your clients. Elise shared that a couple of these collaborators prioritise diversity in architecture by encouraging their students to focus on outreach to schools. The idea came about to encourage more young people from less privileged backgrounds to consider a career in architecture. The Theory Forum, as part of the 'Architectural Research Methodologies' module at Sheffield, introduced me to the activist work of many talented professionals, including Joseph Henry with Sound Advice, Nana Biamah-Ofosu and Bushra Mohamed and their work with Studio Nyali, and Feifei Zhou with Feral Atlas. I have been most impressed by the breadth of guest reviewers that have been made accessible to us this year. A particularly memorable experience was having the opportunity to be reviewed by Neba Sere, co-founder of Black Females in Architecture.

The general feeling from my conversations with Elise and James was that our institutions are slow to change, and are simply not doing enough. Moreover, there is a lack of accountability amongst staff. Aside from the work mentioned above, carried by a few staff members at each institution, the initiatives are largely student-led. Students are in a unique position within schools. We are the first to feel the effects of change as a result of

[22] Thormod, Interview.

[23] Thormod, Interview.

the current political sphere. We know the needs of students and so can inspire change which is effective and relevant.

Work of this nature demands a lot of time and emotional labour, which is particularly challenging for students of colour. While writing ‘Conversations on Racism’, James was in his final year of university and working part-time, constantly juggling his desire for change with his own mental wellbeing.

“It’s actually helped me build a voice and feel more confident in the profession. At the same time, there was a point where I had to say I can’t actually do more than what I’m kind of doing at the moment,” he said.[24]

Equally, Elise feels frustrated that the students of BLM_Arch@MSA have to create a plan and organise events in detail before MSA would even consider taking part. She felt that for any real change to happen, there needs to be a top-down and bottom-up approach; students can only do so much and need the support of their tutors, schools and organisations like the RIBA.[25] This work should be paid. A lot of the important work being done by students past and present is free labour. I should not be feeling grateful that my work within the EDI Student Action Group at Sheffield is only being partially remunerated. Acquiring payment for the work students have carried out should not be this convoluted, especially considering how much profit institutions like SSoA, LMU and MSA will make through admissions in painting themselves as anti-racist.

Despite the challenges they have encountered, James and Elise feel optimistic about the future. Through BLM and other anti-racist work being undertaken by professionals, the industry is beginning to change. Practices, competitions, design teams and even procurement are now being judged on how diverse the teams are. A year after the various calls to action, the range of initiatives students have set up all tackle similar issues in our institutions: lack of representation in staff, Eurocentric curriculum, and lack of networking opportunities. Both highlight the importance of mentorship and support from tutors in giving them the confidence to start their ascent up the steep social gradient that maps out the architecture industry. The issues affecting education directly impact practice.

Elise is looking forward to collecting feedback on this year’s initiatives from students. According to her, BLM_Arch@MSA’s main priority for next year is to assemble an outreach programme for schools in the deprived areas of Manchester, to showcase architecture as a viable career.[26] For James, a diverse workforce can only enhance innovative design and represent the multicultural public it promises to serve moving forward:

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[24] Thormod, Interview.

[25] Colley, Interview.

[26] Colley, Interview.

“It’s more positive for design if you have a range of lived experience offered to the design process. You get better architecture […] this actually matters for the environment we’re creating.”[27]

Biography

Anureena D’costa is an MArch student studying at the Sheffield School of Architecture. She is a committed member of the EDI Committee, through which she has had the pleasure of working with some of the authors of ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action’ to collaboratively extend these conversations with the whole school. Her research and discourse on race and education is prominent in her fifth year studio project based on challenging Eurocentric ideals of intergenerational housing. Furthering this, Anureena’s dissertation focuses on the architectural profession between Part 2 and qualifying as an architect, critically analysing the period that witnesses the highest drop off rate for students of colour.

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[27] Thormod, Interview.

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Questioning Hegemony Within White Academia

Asma Mehan, Carolina Lima, Faith Ng'eno and Krzysztof Nawratek

Introduction

We have been working together in various configurations in the past, but we were yet to meet as a group prior to writing this text. Krzysztof was our main link in his awareness of each individual's interest in the decolonial discourse which inspired this discussion. This conversation is the outcome of three discussions we had (online). We recorded them, made a transcript and then wrote the text. English isn't the first language for any of us, but it is "almost" the first language for Faith. However, we all use English to communicate between members of this group. We tried to write the text, correcting our grammar while attempting to keep idiosyncratic characters of the way each of us use the language and also reflecting on the significant 'role that language plays in perpetuating western hegemony' (Faith, below).

The questions organising our discussion have been formulated post factum, during the process of editing the (pretty chaotic) "raw" text. Let's say that they are asked by X, our shared, bigger than each individual consciousness.

X: What did you think when you saw 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call for Action'?

Asma: The direct reference to #BLM [Black Lives Matter] strikes me in this call for action by the students of Sheffield School of Architecture at Sheffield University. In the wake of demonstrations against racial injustices this summer in a short blog, Port City Heritage: Contested Pasts, Inclusive Futures?, research colleagues at Delft and Rotterdam and I discussed how our own research practices relate to systemic inequalities within different cities in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.[1] Co-authored with colleagues in South Holland, we concluded that we need to better understand how these contested and complex pasts, legacies of diversity and segregation, and colonial pasts impact port cities today. Beside the shift in the academic sector, these #BLM campaigns and protests also affect governance decisions. I think it is critical, timely and relevant to bring forward the issues of decolonisation of knowledge, racial discrimination and gender equality issues in academia and beyond across the different contexts.

Carolina: I don't know how a discussion can actually go to the material plane and do something when it comes from, for example, three passing white people (Me, Asma and Krzysztof). I say passing white due to the fact I'm actually a Latin-American woman, but in Brazil I am seen as white… Here in Brazil, this kind of conversation is something that is happening between academic people only. I think it is really important for academia to discuss race, discuss colonisation and to discuss gender. So my question is whether discussing this really changes anything? We need to change the way people get access to knowledge and how through centuries we have conceived the university in a western way.

Faith: I agree with what Asma and Carolina have highlighted with regards to issues of race and gender. The University of Sheffield prides itself with the idea of diversity, and that includes the School of Architecture. However, despite the diversity of students this diversity appears to have hardly influenced or is reflected in the teaching curriculum and pedagogy. There is a tendency to take students almost as "empty vessels" to be filled with knowledge. I think there should be a more conscious attempt to identify what these students bring to the department from their diverse backgrounds. Thus, the school should continuously evolve as it interacts with more students and staff from different backgrounds and experiences. It should create a space where different voices are not only heard but influence the lens through which learning and teaching is understood. The 'Call for Action' begins to address these issues embedded within the learning and teaching environment.

Krzysztof: The Sheffield School of Architecture is not an extremely diverse place. The staff are predominantly white (with very few exceptions) and British. Our student body is more diverse but, again, we are not the most diverse school in the country. Therefore, I believe the issue of representation is important. However, representation is not enough. One may be a woman and reproduce patriarchal relationships, one could be Black and speak the "white speech". To me the 'Call for Action' addresses these two issues – representation and reproduction of existing academic (white, Anglo-Saxon) hierarchies. Faith has a point – by not treating students as "empty vessels" we can start challenging these hierarchies. I also think that what Carolina said is interesting, when she describes the three of us as white. I think the discussion about race as a construct will happen later. When we see whiteness as an intensity of privilege then I am white, of course, but I am "more white" in Brazil and definitely "less white" in the UK.

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[1] Asma Mehan, Hilde Sennema & Saskia Tideman, Port City Heritage: Contested Pasts, Inclusive Futures? 2020 https://www.portcityfutures.nl/news/port-city-heritage-contested-pasts-inclusive-futures [accessed 19 January 2022].

X: Why is it important to discuss hegemony, space and knowledge construction?

Asma: How can we decolonise the set of references for the production of knowledge in the western academic context? Considering the dominant western hegemony in different fields, especially in the humanities and social sciences, how can we make sure that both researchers and the research outcomes are decolonised? I think we are still at the beginning of a long journey. We still try to analyse and identify the existing challenges in the western research, researchers, and western University research methodology training. Like Faith, studying and working in the western academic context as the scholar who was born and raised in Tehran gave me a powerful analytical basis to compare and analyse the two academic systems in the West and East. During my PhD, I realised that there are very few references available from the well-known and established academics that I used to know and work with in Iran. I guess this gap in the academic references produced in the East and West is even deeper in the fields of social sciences, humanities and philosophy.

Carolina: It is very important to comprehend that power and hierarchy are present in all relations, so it is crucial to empower other voices beyond middle-class white male from western academia. We need to have a new set of references. When we discuss and publish this it needs to reach professors, deans and decision makers. This discussion, without involving them, is almost as innocuous as a discussion that doesn't encompass everyday social reality. Coming from my experience in Brazil, for example, I don't have a large set of Brazilian, female or non-white references. So, as you all are saying, this is something important. I also haven't had a single Black professor in university. When I talk to some friends, who are Black, they say that something that pushed them back from staying in college is related to the references, they don't see Black references, and they start to think that they don't belong in the universities. Some Brazilians that I know who are in Europe now say they see some opportunities, but Europeans don't want them, but they accept due to the Brazilian references. Just because we don't have these opportunities back home, it doesn't mean that is recognition or decolonising. Like Asma said before, it is going to be a long journey due to the number of challenges we face.

Faith: I think the questions raised by Asma are extremely important in shaping this discussion. Allow me to take an example from my PhD research. When we talk about sustainability, who are we sustaining? This is particularly important to ask when certain concepts are embraced without proper interrogation that often continue to perpetuate this western hegemony. For instance, if buildings in Nairobi, Kenya are certified using LEED standards or BREEAM standards, both of which originate from a significantly different context, it is hardly the people from Nairobi who are benefiting or being sustained. For starters, Kenya does not have a significant portion of the technology and products required to meet the sustainability threshold outlined in these certification tools and therefore, these products have to be imported. Hence, not only are we importing western knowledge, we are importing a large number of materials required for the building to count as “green”. In addition, we are paying the same “custodians” of this knowledge to assess our buildings and give us their stamp of approval. Now, once we have done all this, the question begs, who is being sustained?

From a broader perspective, take Mobius for instance, Kenya’s car manufacturer, I would argue that all government officials should be issued with the Mobius as their official car and not the “fancy” western models they currently use. This sets a precedent that would arguably not only denote a vote of confidence on Kenyan products but grow the manufacturing industry, Kenya’s economy and reduce reliance on the West. There have been some good attempts however in this direction. For instance the East African Community (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi) issued a proposal to ban the importation of second hand clothing to East Africa from the West by 2016 in an attempt to grow the local textile industry. However, soon after the proposal, the EAC faced several threatening petitions from the West forcing the EAC to bow to pressure from these lobbyists. What I’m trying to highlight is the systemic nature of that problem in an attempt to explore how to begin tackling it. Arguably, academia has the most significant role in tackling this problem. How, however, is still a matter of discussion.

Krzysztof: To me the discussion about power is essential here. We need to be very clear about it. As a lecturer and non-British I can easily imagine that in my work I focus on decolonial thinking and practices to strengthen my academic position. My research is on religions as intellectual traditions challenging western (post)enlightenment thinking. Obviously, working in Brazil and before that in Malaysia I can try to represent researchers from these countries and try to speak on their behalf in the western academia. This is the risk and the challenge. This is why I believe we must discuss and deconstruct hierarchies of power we are part of. We need to acknowledge that colleagues who are conducting research and collecting data are better suited than we are to analyse and conceptualise these data. The genuine international collaborations will help to reshuffle the existing academic hierarchies.

X: What kind of set of references characterise your education background?

Asma: Like Carolina, Faith and Krzysztof, I did my Bachelor and masters studies in my home country, Iran (Tehran mostly: the city where I was born). Even in Iran, the academic environment was mostly dominated by the western schools of thoughts, methodologies and set of references. There were a few local references available which were mostly inspired by the western world in an unorganised manner and dis-integrated with the local context. In 2013, I moved to Italy to start my doctoral studies in Architecture, History, and Project programme. While diving into the rich Italian and Western European academic culture, I realised that there are a few voices available directly from countries like Iran. Even the most established scholars in Iranian Studies are the ones that graduated and worked in the western academic institutions.

Faith: As an educator in Kenya, often when we ask students to select case studies or case precedents to inform their designs, very few, if at all, would select references within the African context. They would rather “bigger” more notable buildings done by FLW [Frank Lloyd Wright], or [Santiago] Calatrava or William McDough and others whose works more often than not are significantly divorced from our context. That is something that was also apparent during my PhD research, I found that despite a lot of “accepted” sustainability concepts being present within the Kenyan vernacular design or even more broadly, their way of life, very little is documented or even discussed within the sustainable design discourse. For instance, interrogating the “Kenyan” traditional hut or housing done within the Kenyan coastal cities where evidently there is a real consideration for climate and thus the buildings are context appropriate and arguably sustainable.

Carolina: My education so far has all been done in Brazil. I feel the lack of local references. It is not that they do not exist, but the professors and the indicated and commented readings in the academy are not local. When they’re local, we’re talking about white men with a western background. So we do not have a large number of references that are not from the western world. However, some professors during the MA course presented some Latin or Asian references, especially when discussing development or culture. Still, we continue to study mostly Weber, Durkheim, Marx, Lefebvre and others. To get to know more about the knowledge produced here in Brazil and about the culture in my country, I am trying to personally reach them. I have also noticed just like Faith said that studies and projects are often about “bigger” references, often outside Brazil or Latin America.

Krzysztof: I have been educated in Poland. Mostly in communist Poland. My education had references to the west, but there were also broad sets of references to Russian thinkers. I read Mikhail Bakhtin before he became fashionable in Anglo-Saxon academia.

X: How important is language in the construction or deconstruction of different hierarchies?

Asma: All four of us in this discussion have a different mother tongue. I do believe that language is a very powerful tool to represent different academic voices across the world. I used to work and study in Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Germany and Switzerland. What I like about the European academic context is the diversity and availability of different languages, cultures and voices even in the peer-review and publication processes. Although, it is important to note that by publishing the multilingual academic products even in Europe, you can get credits but at the end of the day, what is the most important criteria is producing high-impact factor academic publications mostly in English. I guess this is an ever-lasting challenge for non-English speaker academics as well.

Faith: I agree with Asma, I think the concept of language and the power of language is interesting. The English language has been made the “authority” when discussing academic writing. So much so that if we want to quote a book written in Swahili for example, or in any other language then it has to be translated into English. Only then will it become a notable reference. Therefore, I think the role that language plays in perpetuating this western hegemony is significant. This is not just within academic circles, the person who cleans my car for example will accord me more respect if I speak English. This highlights the systemic nature of the problem which goes beyond the hegemony that was created consciously to a more unconscious complex phenomenon.

It is also imperative to consider language and how language influences voices, as well as who is talking and about what. Because this leads to the idea of whose voice is being highlighted by whom and whose voice is being suppressed. Hence with regards to anti-racist architecture or the decolonial discourse, it’s important to consider who is talking about it, who should be talking about it, who is not talking about it and why are they not talking about it. This would begin to highlight the power embedded within the different voices and the politics of knowledge construction.

Carolina: Something that I noticed in this process (in academia and knowledge production) is that it’s not only getting associated with a certain institution (usually western institutions), but also writing in a different language is something that gives you a lot of credit in Brazil. Language is power and this happens not only in Brazil. People automatically assume that you are smarter or that your knowledge is more legitimate if you are an English speaker. Despite the uncertainty, after brief research it is possible to notice that 5% or less of the Brazilian population speaks

English. Speaking and writing in English symbolizes an association with the West and even with the colonisers. Although there is a discussion about strengthening South-South cooperation, even in this environment English is not expendable. To enter a masters or doctorate programme, you must prove proficiency in English. Meanwhile, territorially Brazilian languages, which are more than 100, are not even taught in schools. In this way, it keeps western hegemony, like Faith pointed out, and not valuing the knowledge produced here, since it is not even written in Portuguese.

Faith: I think what Carol mentioned is interesting, if only 5% of Brazilian population speaks English and academia largely produces knowledge in English, then who is this knowledge being directed at? It appears it's not quite the Brazilian people. Plus, I'm afraid this is similar in many other countries whose first language is not English.

X: What, if at all was/is the influence of colonisation on the dichotomy of privileged and non-privileged?

Asma: Every time I am filling a form/questionnaire for the academic positions in the UK, USA, Australia, or Canada, I have a moment of self-reflection about my ethnical and racial identity. Who am I? Which category can I define myself in? Am I white? Am I Middle Eastern white? Do I belong to another white category? Am I Asian white? Am I Indo-European, Caucasian, …? We can label ourselves in thousands of identities. The question here is which ones we want to be.

We (Carolina, Faith, Krzysztof and I) had a long discussion on this issue. As a white female Iranian academic, I struggle to find my place between puzzles of racial and ethnical identities. How much does the place we were born/the ethnicity that we have affect our life? The word "Middle Eastern" itself can be interpreted as political in different contexts. The word "Iranian" (sometimes misspelled as Iraq) has a heavy impact on the audience due to the current situation of the country and the media coverage. Even if I call myself "Persian", it reflects another load of identity related to the glorious past of the Persian Empire.

Living as an immigrant in different countries also makes me think more critically about the questions of colonisation, race, gender, and privilege. It is interesting to add that these double or even triple identities can be a powerful personal representation as well, in the western societies. At the same time, while you have your roots in another place, you need to represent a mixed, liminal, merged and brand new identity in the host societies to be able to enhance your personal identity and integration with the new communities.

Carolina: Even when we appropriate the knowledge produced in the Global North (or in the West) it is necessary to understand that space, society and time are organised and arranged in different ways in the North and the Global South. When carrying out research using dialectical historical materialism, it is essential to understand that Marx was talking about work among white men, despite the different classes, for example. Silvia Federici made an important update in this regard, bringing the aspect of gender to the discussion within what Marx proposed. Colonisation here was founded in race. It was the criteria to define the labour and the class. Consequently, they (Blacks and “natives”) ended up having less access, not only to money and upper classes, but to possibilities and privileges present in Brazilian society until today. White or white-passing people get more access in Brazil. When I go to a western place, I get to be seen as Latin, but here in Brazil I’m seen as white and have lots of privileges because of that and I need to be critical in my research and in my practice to change it pragmatically.

Faith: What Asma and Carolina have pointed out is very critical in that at the core of colonisation was the imposition of western power and authority over indegenous cultures and knowledge forms, thus one can argue dividing the world into privileged and non-privileged. As part of my PhD research, I explored the relationship between colonisation, modernity and globalisation in relation to the hegemony embedded in knowledge construction. I explored how imperialist colonial history legitimised and delegitimised certain knowledge forms establishing privileged epistemologies. It is also apparent that many of the universities in the Global South largely remain as colonial products that continue to perpetuate Eurocentric theories. Therefore, the West continue to benefit from their superior/privileged position entrenched in colonisation.
For the rest, for a long time, the more one can position themselves in association with the West, as Asma highlighted, the more privileged they tend to become. However, a shift contrary to this trend is slowly becoming apparent.

Krzysztof: My position is slightly awkward. I am Eastern European, hence, I am white (we still discuss whiteness as a privilege) but not as white as my British colleagues. I am also “less white” than academics from the western Europe or the USA. But on the other hand, in Brazil I am “more white” than Carol, because I am European. We can say that Poland wasn’t a colonised country, nor was it a coloniser. However, there is ongoing discussion about “decolonising Eastern Europe”. Having been occupied by other forces (Poland was erased from the map for 123 years, and re-emerged as a sovereign country in 1917), we have never been a “centre of the world”. On the other hand, Poland has been presumed as being a colonial power. Some of our national literature (for example by Nobel Prize winner Henryk Sienkiewicz) is conspicuously racist. Hence, for many Polish people colonialism is an ambivalent term – if it would allow us to claim “special” position as victims, we may be happy to say we have been colonised. However, we also fantasise about the “Great

Poland" which could colonise others. This is exactly how we try to present our white privilege as overrated (I do it myself in this text, questioning my whiteness) in order to take a better position in the global hierarchy of nations.

X: From your experience, how did/does hierarchy influence education models?

Asma: I trained in the mostly conservative schools of architecture in Iran (Tehran and Isfahan) mostly based on what they taught for years inspired by the European cultures of teaching and education; historically French-inspired pedagogical approaches in the field of architecture and urbanism and then inspired by the German schools of thoughts such as the Bauhaus. The most recent academic educational system is inspired by the Northern American and the Western European approaches and systems of education.

Faith: My undergraduate training in Kenya was somewhat similar to Asma's, largely still conservative [and] entrenched, in my case, [in] the old British pedagogical approach to the learning and teaching of Architecture. There was very little interaction with the community and the organisation within the school remained largely hierarchical. Unfortunately, this was also the case in the UK where I undertook my masters degree. This model limits the potential for rich knowledge production.

Krzysztof: When I first came to Brazil and saw how the architecture school in UFMG [Federal University of Minas Gerais] operates, it's mind blowing. Architecture schools are firmly engaged with the local communities, they work with people outside academia and they do their best to redistribute the knowledge and privilege they have. It is impressive. Also, how the research is conducted, by combined teams – in a pretty horizontal way – from professors, PhD students, MA students and even Year 1 UG students. I do not believe we would be able to work like that in the UK, because the structure of the curriculum is too rigid. To do this, the whole British university structure would need to change. For architecture school, it also means that RIBA/ARB would need to approve these changes. I am not saying it is impossible, but it would be difficult and would take a lot of time.

Carolina: What Krzysztof says about Brazil is something very good and that I am proud of… These horizontal possibilities we have in our teaching and learning. When I was an undergraduate, I worked with PhD candidates on a research project coordinated by an Associate Professor. However, classes are formally organized by the semester of entrance to the university, just like in elementary and high school. But there are experiences that differ from this educational model, which I understand as a form of resistance to what is imposed. In Belo Horizonte, in primary school, there is an example of a school that does not work in school years but in learning cycles. Students are arranged in learning rooms, in which students share spaces. In the halls there are teachers, and they offer individual guidance and clarification. There is also a Brazilian university that also conducts “multilevel” classes. However, it is important to emphasize that such occurrences are an exception, considering that most of the processes that occur are fixed in the western academic production mode. Such possibilities are insurgencies from academics dedicated to the subversion of this hegemonic mode of production. These examples occur in “loopholes” and are not accessible to the popular classes.

X: What influence, if at all, has capitalism had on academia?

Asma: Krzysztof put forward the importance of economic issues in academia. I agree that it is critical to talk about the question of economics in academia. How do we distribute the money in academia? How are the acquired grants, funds, scholarships, and fellowships distributed between researchers, professors, assistants, scholars, fellows, and students during the various stages of their academic life? I think the current format of money distributions in academia is partly hierarchical, non-horizontal with a top-down approach which needs to be modified. The current regime of grant and money distribution claims to be merit-based and competitive. But the question here is who defines these merits and required criteria? Are the assessments unified, context-based, and selective? Are there any ways to make sure that all the acquired qualifications from the local knowledge are measured with non-western tools and methods? From whom do we get credit in academia? I think providing detailed responses to the critical above-mentioned issues can open new ways of imagining the future of academia.

Carolina: Research in Brazil is extremely under financed but is also a great business. Currently, there are (private) universities closing all around Brazil. Fortunately, we don’t need to pay for our education if we join public universities. The programme I am part of is at a public university. However, masters and doctoral students are often subject to a regime of exclusive dedication, in which they cannot work formally in exchange for a research grant that varies between R$1500 and R$2200 from the main agency of promotion and not everyone is entitled to grants. Their distribution in graduate programs is linked to their productivity (which is often measured by the level of journals and books published, in a ranking that values internationalization at the expense of local knowledge) and distributed among the best students’ performance, on the same measurement bases. This form of distribution ends up implying a reinforcement of western hegemony.

Krzysztof: British academia is a business. It brings in a lot of money and it is rooted in the colonial past – because of the language and its prestige in the world. Without international students the British model of university will not work. But the British architecture industry goes beyond just students paying for an education here. This is what Faith has been investigating in her work – by teaching international students a set of normatives, standards and regulations, British architecture schools are reproducing conceptual infrastructure allowing British architecture and construction companies to operate globally. We need to talk about money when we discuss de-colonialism.

Faith: I would argue that academia across the world has become a business, it is just that western countries have done it much better than others. Taking universities for example, billions of dollars are invested in order to attain/retain certain [university] rankings that create/maintain hierarchy. These rankings continue to privilege western universities over the rest of the world. This hierarchy is reflected in other facets of academia just like Asma mentioned grants, publishers, scholarships, allocation of teaching positions, all of which have an economic element embedded in their decision making process. I think it is safe to say the western countries have successfully monopolised and commercialised knowledge systems making it difficult for countries like Kenya to make any meaningful contribution and as Krzsystof said, allowing British (western) architecture and construction companies to flourish globally. Thus the issue of economics with reference to decolonising academia is one that cannot be ignored.

X: How has your association with western academia influenced your positionality?

Asma: Working closely with Krzysztof from the Sheffield School of Architecture (especially) and other colleagues associated with western academia gave me a critical and analytical tool to be able to assess the important questions and dilemmas such as the issue of decolonisation. The trans-national voice that I did not have in the confined zone of my country of birth was awakened. While being critical about the unheard voices, I am really thankful to have the chance to work with many inspiring western academic scholars. I believe together, we will be able to move forward the equal, just and inclusive future in academia and other contexts.

Carolina: Even with all that, I'm really thankful that being associated with the western academia by working with Krzysztof, for example, or being able to speak and write in English, is something really important. Not only due to the association but with the access to a culture and the tools as Asma said. This association and accesses give you a lot of credit that is probably better than money, like to open doors and accesses.

Faith: Well, I think my association with the West has allowed me to be who I "need" to be depending on whom I'm dealing with. For instance, within the academic circles in Kenya, the fact that I am a University of Sheffield alumni gives me a bigger voice. So even my students and colleagues tend to respect me more. Certainly, studying at the University of Sheffield provided the opportunity to meet a range of people from diverse backgrounds and experiences significantly increasing my knowledge base. Outside of Kenya (or Africa) however, my identity as a Black female Kenyan architect, coupled with my Sheffield education, gives me a bigger voice especially with reference to the decolonial discourse. Perhaps because for a long time voices like mine were suppressed. Therefore, for me the challenge is how to take advantage of my positionality to make a difference.

Also, I think what's more interesting with regards to what Krzysztof referred to as the "hybridity of my identity", is perhaps how it has evolved and continues to evolve. A couple of years back, within the academic circles, I would prefer to be less associated with JKUAT or Kenya, and more with the University of Sheffield or the United Kingdom. However, increasingly with discussions like Black Lives Matter or decolonial methodologies, there has been a shift, voices like mine are highlighted and recognised more and therefore, my identity as Kenyan has begun to "overpower" my identity as a Sheffield alumni.

Krzysztof: Even when I was working on my PhD in Poland, I received a lot of help from western academia, namely from Professor Kimmo Lapintie from Helsinki and Professor Julia Robinson from Minnesota. My Polish supervisor did not really understand what I intended to do and these two western academics kindly offered me some help. I would not be who I am without them. I believe the western and especially Anglo-Saxon academia still have a lot to offer to the world with regards to the quality of research and the ability to critically self-reflect on its own privileges. But it is possible mostly because of their economic power and prestige. Western academia is powerful, hence, it can do (almost) whatever it likes to do. Sometimes, it can be good for the world. However, I do not have doubts that non-western universities, if they have enough economic power and academic freedom (and it is already happening!) could be as good as British or American universities. Working closely with colleagues from Brazil or Malaysia, I do feel the centre of academic importance is now fragmented. Western universities, through their networks of influences, are still channeling the knowledge produced globally. Our role is to "hack" the system and make the real producers of the knowledge visible and strong within the global system of academic exchange.

Biographies

Asma Mehan is the principal investigator (PI) currently affiliated with the University of Porto (Portugal). She is the co-author of Kuala

Lumpur: Community, Infrastructure and Urban Inclusivity (co-authored by Marek Kozlowski and Krzysztof Nawratek, Routledge, 2020) and author of Urbanism in Tehran: From Sacred to Radical (Routledge, forthcoming 2022). Asma received awards, grants, and fellowships from the Municipality of Amsterdam, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS-KNAW), Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), AESOP, EAHN (European Architectural History Network), Society of Architectural Historians (SAH), ZK/U Center for Art and Urbanistics Berlin and Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain (SAHGB).

Carolina Lima is a Geographer, MA in Geography by Federal University of Minas Gerais. Researcher at Cultural Diversity Observatory in Brazil, member of editorial coordination of the Boletim do Observatório da Diversidade Cultural, researcher at Metropolises Observatory and member of the project Spatial practices of members of Pentecostal Churches in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, from Postsecular Architecture Research Network. Her main research interests are in public space perception and praxis. Currently working on Profane space does not exist. Candomblé and Pentecostalism in a Brazilian City (co-authored by Daniel Freitas, Krzysztof Nawratek and Bernardo Pataro, Routledge, forthcoming 2022).

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Krzysztof Nawratek is a Senior Lecturer in Humanities and Architecture at the University of Sheffield, UK and a Visiting Professor at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brazil. He is an author of City as a Political Idea (UPP, 2011), Holes in the Whole. Introduction to urban revolutions (Zero Books, 2012), Radical Inclusivity. Architecture and Urbanism (dpr-Barcelona, ed. 2015), Urban Re-Industrialisation (Punctum Books, ed. 2017), Total Urban Mobilisation. Ernst Junger and Postcapitalist City (Palgrave, 2018) and Kuala Lumpur. Community, Infrastructure and Urban Inclusivity (co-authored by Marek Kozlowski, and Asma Mehan, Routledge, 2020). He is currently working on Profane space does not exist. Candomblé and Pentecostalism in a Brazilian City (co-authored by Daniel Freitas, Carolina Lima and Bernardo Pataro, Routledge, forthcoming 2022).

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It’s not my Place: On White Silence and Feeling Uncomfortable

Ben Purvis

Introduction

Alongside many of my notionally progressive white peers, in response to the 2020 upswell of anti-racist action following the murder of George Floyd I began a personal journey of interrogating my practice and expanding my knowledge. As a member of staff at Sheffield School of Architecture, the ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA Call to Action’ formed one of several examples which brought home how structural racism impacts those within my immediate personal and professional circles.

This essay is a reflective piece which focuses on my reaction to the ‘Call to Action’ as someone racialised as white. In particular, I interrogate and deconstruct my initial reluctance and discomfort to write about racism as someone with no direct lived experience of it. Key to this is the distinction between making space for marginalised voices and letting the burden of labour fall upon minority groups through inaction.

Not my Place?

This special issue of *field:* calls for work that responds to ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action’ published by a group of students from Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA) as a response to the global waves of Black Lives Matters protest following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020.[1] The ‘Call to Action’ begins as a provocation, outlining the lack of diversity within the school and wider architectural sector. It then presents a detailed series of targeted and time-oriented actions for beginning to address outlined issues. It concludes with a series of personal accounts of the experiences of racialised minority students at SSoA.

When I first saw the call for contributions, my first thought was that maybe I had valuable insights to contribute. I have been involved with the school's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committee for the last year, as well as equalities organisation through the University and College Union (UCU). A portion of my research has analysed hierarchies within the academy, and I have experience of organising against precarity and injustice within the sector as both a union officer and through my research networks.[2] All this has led to a growing feeling that the structure of Higher Education (HE) within the UK is systemically resistant to meaningful attempts to diversify and decolonise. As I thought through several ideas that I could contribute to this special issue, I became increasingly uncomfortable and unsure as to whether it was my place, as someone racialised as white, to write about this. This was manifested in terms of the shibboleth of *making space*, and the ideation that it is *not my place* to write about racism as someone who will never personally be a victim of it.

This uncomfortable feeling has persisted, despite my increasing realisation and belief, that the *not my place* framing is problematic and counterproductive. Whilst elevating marginalised voices is important, it is all too easy for *making space* to mean inaction and silence; avoiding difficult topics and reflecting upon our own roles in maintaining unjust structures and leaving the labour of addressing systemic injustices to those most oppressed by them. Thus, it is my belief that there is space for me to contribute something considered and informed, and I hope that in reflecting upon my own journey and experience of white silence I can stimulate further some of the conversations that the 'Call to Action' provoked.[3] Rather than writing a more academic piece about power structures and hierarchies within the university and their relation to systemic racial injustices, I felt first the need for a more reflective piece, leaning in, interrogating and disassembling my discomfort and white silence. This piece is not about me (despite leaving my passive authorial voice comfort zone), it is not a *mea culpa*, and I have endeavoured to contribute something meaningful without centring myself and relying too heavily on self-flagellation, virtue signalling or saviour narratives. Nevertheless, I feel it is important to outline my personal journey and experiences of race to illustrate something that other white people can reflect upon in relation to their own journeys.

[1] Connie Pidsley and others, 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action', 2020.

[2] Ben Purvis, Hannah Keding and Phil Northall, 'The Academic as an Output? Critical reflections of postgraduate researchers on a collaborative interdisciplinary research project'(forthcoming).

[3] Yolanda M. Wattsjohnson, 'End White Silence', Multicultural Perspectives, 5.3 (2003), 12–18.

[4] James Baldwin and Richard Goldstein, 'Go the Way Your Blood Beats', in James Baldwin: The Last Interview: And Other Conversations, by James Baldwin and

Reflecting on Privilege

I am white, I grew up in a very white area, went to a ‘good’ school, worrying about finances was not a serious concern growing up, my grades were good, and my post-16 education was within an environment where there was little doubt that I would go to university. I attended a Russell Group University for both my undergraduate and PhD. I made my first friend who is not white when I was twenty-one.

Growing up I had encountered privilege across a range of dimensions, both where I held and lacked it, but had not at that point been taught to recognise it. As a child I had wondered why my friend’s single working mother fed us oven meals whilst my mother on family leave made fresh meals from scratch. I never had to correct anyone who had difficulty pronouncing my name. I had witnessed a Spanish speaking child struggle to fit into a school system that had little experience of or provision for non-English speakers. I remember the stigma surrounding having to wear my elder brother’s faded hand-me-down school jumpers whilst most of my friends wore bright new ones. It wasn’t until much later that I would directly experience friends being racially profiled by club bouncers and border police.

Interviewed in the 1980s, novelist and activist James Baldwin, reflected upon the intersection of sexuality and race:

‘I think white gay people feel cheated because they were born, in principle, into a society in which they were supposed to be safe. The anomaly of their sexuality puts them in danger, unexpectedly’.[4]

In my early-mid-twenties, as I began to explore the intersection of my sexuality with my gender expression and identity, I received my first bouts of verbal abuse in public (are you really gay if you haven’t had someone scream f*ggot at you out of a passing car?). I wear earphones whenever I leave the house now. Whilst I have recently leant in to feeling more comfortable wearing whatever I want, I am still mindful of how I look and act within an unfamiliar environment and am still unlearning the internalised code-switching that occurs when meeting new people that I perceive as unqueer.[5]

Despite this lack of privilege relating to my sexuality and gender expression, I work in a profession which is largely progressive on a superficial level, and where white gay people are reportedly overrepresented.[6] And whilst conscious of how I present at times, I continue to benefit from privileges across other dimensions. I’ve never been particularly concerned about having to walk home alone at night, I’ve never had to worry about whether I can afford to pay my bills next month, I’ve never had to plan my travel based on whether a route has step

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Quincy Troupe (Brooklyn: Melville House Publishing, 2014), pp. 57–74 (p. 67).

[5] Kissy Duerré, Life Is Short so Live It to the Fullest <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CMs37UfAWi9/>.

[6] András Tilcsik, Michel Anteby, and Carly R. Knight, ‘Concealable Stigma and Occupational Segregation: Toward a Theory of Gay and Lesbian Occupations’, Administrative Science Quarterly, 60.3 (2015), 446–81.

free access and I have never feared for my life when confronted by a police officer.

The SSoA Call to Action

The 'Call to Action' came at a time that felt like a phase shift in the consciousness of my left-aligned, progressive bubble, characterised by a proliferation of Instagram infographics, as well as action against police violence (and more recently Palestinian solidarity).[7] Tacit support for anti-racist movements without action and deeper reflection of personal practices and complicity was beginning to feel insufficient. It has taken the best part of my 27 years for me to begin to comprehend that racism is not a problem of bad or ignorant people, from the far-right to grandmas excused for being "from a different time," but a deep structural issue in which I am inherently complicit. This is a testament to the extent to which cultural hegemony conceals such structures. That I have felt and continue to feel uncomfortable as to whether it is appropriate for me to write about racism and my own complicity demonstrates how ingrained the *not my space* white silence logic is.[8]

I first became aware of the 'Call to Action' when the school's EDI lead, Cith Skelcher, sent it to the all-staff mailing list shortly after its publication. At this point I had had little interaction with the fantastic students of SSoA, and was thus taken somewhat aback at how powerful, detailed and thoughtful this document is. Whilst not shy to be critical of the school and the wider architectural profession, it strikes a constructive and collaborative tone, illustrating its content with lived experiences of students from racialised minority backgrounds within SSoA, provoking further conversation and a collective desire to hold the school to account. Shortly after the document dropped, Cith circulated an email calling for members of the school to get involved with the EDI program. I responded to this with enthusiasm, though in the spirit of my white silence reflex, I felt the need to append my email apologising for being 'another white gay man in EDI.'

The initial EDI meeting in September 2020, buoyed by the enthusiasm created by the 'Call to Action', was attended by around 25 staff and students. After a lengthy and inconclusive discussion about how the group should organise, we split into groups each focusing on individual aspects of the 'Call to Action'. Over time, the numbers dropped off as other workload demands picked up and some of the initial enthusiasm or optimism waned. Nevertheless, a core group of attendees were regularly present. A 'student action group' coalesced and formed, allowing for more grassroots organising outside the formalised school EDI structures, and Cith acquired funding to pay members of this group for some of their time. In a podcast hosted by the Sheffield University Architecture Society (SUAS) some of the members of this group, as well as authors of the ‘Call to Action’, articulated some frustration at the institutionalised slowness in navigating the formal EDI structures to begin to implement actions clearly articulated within the original document.[9]

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[7] Gene Demby, 'Why Now, White People?', NPR, 16 June 2020, section Code Switch <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/16/878963732/why-now-white-people>.

[8] The phrasing of complicity provokes a defensive response. Less pernicious examples of complicity in unjust power structures, include my perpetuation of unhealthy email culture by replying to emails at 11pm on a Sunday, despite the "I do not expect you to reply to emails in my working hours" line in my email signature; being reluctant to give up certain practices such as buying imported food or having the occasional holiday abroad, despite my work on climate change. Often structures are so embedded that it is near impossible to not be complicit in them, locally grown organic food has a high cost, international flights can be more affordable than staycations. This has been illustrated in the popular Matt Bors comic strip 'we should improve society somewhat' (Matt Bors, 'Mister Gotcha', The Nib, 2016 <https://thenib.com/mister-gotcha/> [accessed 19 June 2021]).

I shared many of the frustrations articulated by the students, though of course was sheltered from the direct impacts of this institutional inertia. Through my involvement however, I had begun to understand the scale of the challenge, and the numerous institutional and structural barriers that had so far constrained action. Much of this had already been articulated in the ‘Call to Action’, including the lack of time allocated for partaking in EDI work to staff already overburdened by standard workloads and the additional pressures precipitated by the pandemic. The securing of nominal funds to pay the students involved has addressed some of this, but it is only a first step. Other structural issues became evident when looking into broadening the school’s outreach and “widening participation” (WP) work. Here the impact of marketisation on the sector became evident with, despite the sympathy of individuals within the central university WP team, the university’s primary focus being on measuring sucess through the number of students brought to the University of Sheffield. This meant that the existing outreach programmes targeted more privileged institutions who already had a good record for sending students to the university. There is little space within this structure for expanding the horizons of disadvantaged students, providing support, or empowering or inspiring them to pursue similar courses elsewhere.

‘Read, Read, Read – and Dance’[10]

Reflecting on my reticence to voice a meaningful contribution, aside from the doubt that it is my place to speak, the fear of saying something wrong weighs highly. This is an important concern, and a continued source of discomfort, and I have struggled to construct this piece and articulate my contribution without being anxious that I might use the wrong language or write something misjudged or problematic, as well as resisting the urge to lean on labour from black friends and colleagues for validation. Yet, as Ijeoma Oluo writes, it is okay to misstep: ‘it’s going to happen, and you should have these conversations anyway’, ‘it’s important to learn how to fail, to learn how to be wrong in a way that minimizes pain to you and others and maximizes what you can learn from the experience’.[11]

Despite the best intentions, it can be all too easy to say something that offends or causes hurt. If we cause harm, it is important that our reaction is to listen, to apologise, to grow. In worrying about hypotheticals of how saying the wrong thing might harm, we ignore the hurt and complicity that comes with saying nothing. As the activist Clay Rivers writes, the key to overcoming personal white silence lies in interrogating the intent of a contribution to the conversation: if one's contribution to conversations of race, as a white person, is one of defence, denial or jumping on the latest activist bandwagon, then there is a need for greater reflection, but if there is something 'constructive, insightful, instructive, productive' to add then the floor is there.[12] Tilly FitzMaurice writes of vulnerability as the product of reaching 'the edge of our known – or knowable – worlds'.[13] Recognising and acknowledging the limits of one's knowledge can be a radical act: 'we aren't here to learn what we already know'.[14]

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[9] SUAS, A Call to Action: Anti Racism at SSoA, Off The Drawing Board Podcast, 2021 <https://open.spotify.com/episode/2QzSPA4zD3QuwpFtxM3FVb> [accessed 19 June 2021].

[10] Emma Dabiri, What White People Can Do Next: From Allyship to Coalition (Dublin: Penguin, 2021), p. 109.

[11] Ijeoma Oluo, So You Want to Talk About Race (New York: Seal Press, 2020), p. 44; p. 48.

The academic and writer Emma Dabiri reminds us in her latest book that 'Google is your friend'.[15] It is not the duty of our racialised colleagues or friends to educate white people on how and why we should talk about race. Dabiri also outlines the power of reading, reading not just the plethora of recent "anti-racist" books, but reading Black fiction: reading James Baldwin; reading Toni Morrison; reading the postcolonial literature of Frantz Fanon, or Wole Soyinka; reading authors from the Black Radical Tradition like Angela Davis and Cedric Robinson; reading the poetry of Audre Lorde and Maya Angelou.

Recently I read the *Broken Earth Trilogy* by N. K. Jemisin.[16] I stumbled upon this incidentally, but later I realised that despite having spent most of my life as a prolific reader, this was the first novel I had read which was written by a Black woman. This had not been a conscious decision on my part (as it had not been to rectify this), but it prompted me to reflect on the structures that had led to me hitherto interacting very little with the works of Black authors. There is something of an identitarian trap in suggesting that diversifying existing structures and habits is enough to address systemic issues of racial injustice, but interrogating one's own consumption of culture and the extent to which it presents racial homogeneity is a step towards beginning to identify racist structures. Why had I never read a novel authored by a Black woman? Was it by chance? Was the massive underrepresentation of Black women in science fiction simply because Black women just aren't that into science fiction? Jemisin has frequently spoken about her place as a Black woman in science fiction, of her early experiences with publishers who were not sure where to 'fit her in the market', and of the confused response to Black authors creating a piece of work that says little about race other than, as Octavia Butler puts, 'Hey, we're here.'[17]

Aside from reading or consuming other forms of media, learning happens through doing. This can be through volunteering or activism, but also in the form of reflecting on one's own practices and unconscious biases, however uncomfortable this may be. As the 'Call to Action' asks: 'can you name 3 Black architects?'. Unlearning is not easy. This process necessitates kindness not only to others but to oneself – complicity in structural racism is not an indication of being a bad person and beating yourself up over something you said or did in the past that may have caused hurt is energy lost. Audre Lorde powerfully outlines the problems with “white guilt”:

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[12] Clay Rivers, 'As a White Person, Should You Write About Racism?', Medium, 2020 <https://medium.com/our-human-family/as-a-white-person-should-you-write-about-race-ad4cc429726e> [accessed 20 June 2021].

[13] Tilly Fitzmaurice, 'Precarity, Mastery, and Vulnerability: Some Thoughts on UCU's Recent Elections', UCU Commons, 2021 <https://ucucommons.org/2021/03/22/precarity-mastery-and-vulnerability-some-thoughts-on-ucus-recent-elections/> [accessed 20 June 2021].

[14] Kyla Wazana Tompkins, 'We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know', Avidly, LA Review of Books, 13 September 2016 <https://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2016/09/13/we-arent-here-to-learn-what-we-know-we-already-know/> [accessed 21 June 2021].

[15] Dabiri, What White People Can Do Next, p. 111.

[16] N. K. Jemisin, The Fifth Season (London: Orbit, 2015).

[17] 'NK Jemisin: "It's Easier to Get a Book Set in Black Africa Published If You're White"', The Guardian, 2 May 2020, section Books <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/may/02/nk-jemisin-its-easier-to-get-a-book-set-in-black-africa-published-if-youre-white> [accessed 20 June 2021]; Raffi Khatchadourian, 'N. K. Jemisin's Dream Worlds', The New Yorker, 2020 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/01/27/nk-jemisins-dream-worlds> [accessed 20 June 2021].

> *‘[Guilt] is a response to one’s own actions or lack of action. If it leads to change then it can be useful since it is then no longer guilt but the beginning of knowledge. Yet all too often, guilt is just another name for impotence, for defensiveness destruction of communication; it becomes a device to protect ignorance and the continuation of things the way they are, the ultimate protection for changelessness.’*[18]

Recent years have witnessed the spectre of “cancel culture”, mostly fuelled into parody by right-wing rhetoric, but there is a certain tendency of some progressive voices to take glee in the unearthing of problematic past incidents. Whilst it is important to hold public figures to account for any hurt they may have caused in the past, this should not deny space for genuine atonement and growth. If we forgo that possibility then how can we begin to dismantle the systemic structures that have precipitated such events in the first place? Of course, whether someone who has caused significant hurt should continue to enjoy privileged platforms, suffer little consequence of their actions, or be afforded ‘forgiveness’ from the communities they have harmed is a different matter, but to suggest that they cannot personally develop and begin to actively challenge such harmful structures and practices themselves permits these structures to persist.

Whose Place?

Not my place becomes a proxy for “I do not want to intervene because it makes me uncomfortable”, a bystander effect, an absolution of accountability, a denial of complicity. It not being my place, as a white person, to write about racism, implies that it is for racialised minorities alone to advocate for compassion, their right to representation, their right to equal pay, their right to exist. As Audre Lorde emphasises, relying on people of colour to teach about racism is ‘a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought’.[19] It falls upon all white people then to overcome our defensiveness, recognise the multidimensionality of our privileges, interrogate our practices and be uncomfortable. Listen, don’t speak over, elevate voices, but don’t be silent, don’t fall into inaction.

I now recognise the problems of my initial response to the invitation to get involved within the school’s EDI program in feeling the need to predicate my email with an apology for “not being marginalised enough”, to justify taking up space I felt perhaps I should not as a white queer person. Besides the erroneous assumption that there is a limited amount of space within these open forums, by centring my discomfort I diverted energy away

[18] Audre Lorde, ‘The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism’, in Your Silence Will Not Protect You (London: Silver Press, 2017) pp. 107-118 (p.114).

[19] Audre Lorde, ‘The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House’ in Your Silence Will Not Protect You (London: Silver Press, 2017) pp. 89-93 (p. 93).

from empowering myself and advocating for my own queer community, let alone advocating for other marginalised groups. Dabiri calls on us to 'listen to [our] own voice, that little one inside that perhaps [we] silence because, according to the new gospel of "privilege", only the most oppressed… feel any pain.'[20] She continues with the provocation: 'why is it that despite all of your "privilege", you still feel overworked, underpaid, exhausted, and quite possibly spiritually bereft? You can console yourself with the fact that you are not oppressed by racism, but I would argue that you are hoodwinked by the "whiteness" that tells you that you are superior to black people, as a distraction from all the pernicious effects that "whiteness" wreaks.'[21]

This guilt manifests as a form of imposter syndrome and the construction of a normative hierarchy of oppression which impacts us all. This is not just limited to those of us who benefit from whiteness, but experienced by the Brown woman who feels the legacy of the systemic racism she suffers from is a few hundred years shorter than that of her Black sister, the Black man who was born into familial wealth on the West Coast of Africa and cannot presume to speak to the experiences of his African-American brothers, or the Black trans woman who is seen to "pass" and thus is spared much of the abuse levelled at her sisters. Oluo writes about the privileges of her class and education, and how the denial of these would mean her activism leaves many behind.[22] However, she does not dwell on this guilt, emphasising instead that these privileges afford us the opportunity to reflect on how they have shaped our experiences of the world. Chances are that if you are reading this you will have an intersection with some form of underprivileged identity, and even if you do not it shouldn't mean you can't leverage your own privilege, redistribute it and raise up those with less.

Structural racism is embedded in our society and so permeates through the architectural sector, UK Higher Education, and the Sheffield School of Architecture. The 'Call to Action' kickstarted a conversation of how the SSoA community can begin to challenge this within our shared institutional environment, but it is only the beginning. The road is long and it is for all of us to take. Whilst elevating and platforming marginalised voices continues to be important, this can't mean remaining comfortable in white silence. The work to dismantle racist structures should not and cannot be left to our racialised friends, colleagues and peers. We must build coalitions and lift ourselves and each other up.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my friend Jordan Thomas for a thoughtful discussion on a previous draft of this piece, as well as the students of the SSoA EDI committee from 2020-21 for continuing to inspire.

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20 Dabiri, What White People Can Do Next, p. 148.

21 Ibid, p. 148.

22 Oluo, 'Why am I always being told to "check my privilege?' in So You Want to Talk About Race, pp. 52-67.

Biography

Ben Purvis is an early career academic working in and around fields of sustainability science, urban studies, and science and technology studies, currently taking a critical approach to the use of simulation in climate mitigation studies. Ben has written about interdisciplinarity in the contemporary university and the intersections of their identity as a queer person with their academic identity. Outside of his research, Ben is a trade union representative and officer, and believes strongly in building an equitable higher education system centred on principles of justice.

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Conceptualising an Anti-Racist Approach in Architecture

Juliet Sakyi-Ansah

Introduction

Black in Architecture research unit is a new research community exploring racial equity in UK architecture. This article discusses anti-racist pedagogy in the context of architecture and my response to the 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' as a former student at the Sheffield School of Architecture. The article questions the status quo and discusses the concept of Black in Architecture as a work in progress, experimenting with other and more collaborative ways of embodying anti-racism in architecture. I provide my thoughts on the open letter to SSoA contained in 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' as a former student of the school. I also provide an account of the ongoing work on the 'Black in Architecture' research unit and initiate dialogue on how we might collectively enact change through shared power *with* racially oppressed groups in relation to systemic racism in UK architecture. I summarise the article with an outline of the issues the research at Black in Architecture has lifted up on racism and systemic racism in UK architecture.

Where has race been in this narrative? I was working on the 'Black in Architecture' research unit in the summer of 2020 following the murder of George Floyd when I received an invitation to comment, share my experience and add my signature to 'Antiracism at SSoA: A Call to Action.'[1]

As a former student of the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA), I was surprised to be invited, and even more so to learn about the school's interest in racial matters. I studied for both my RIBA Part 1 (BA) and Part 2 (M.Arch) at the school between 2002 and 2010. Yet this was not only the first time I was being invited to contribute to the school but also the first time I was seeing the topic "race" coming from Sheffield School of Architecture. My critique considered that it had been ten years since I completed my studies at the school, and seven years since initiating 'The Architects' Project', an initiative that has been widely shared online and within my academic and professional network. 'Black in Architecture' was conceived by myself and enabled through 'The Architects' Project Collective' (/tap Collective).

One aspect of the 'Call to Action' offered some food for thought around the number of manifestos and statements for change I had read since the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests.[2] What gave me some hope with this particular work was the word "Action". However, this hope did not rid my concerns of the hastiness at which systemic racism was suddenly being addressed from all corners of architecture, including education, practice, research institutions, museums and governing bodies. For 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' in particular, my question was twofold: 1) who is going to take the action? and 2) how do you take action on such an under-studied subject at the school? As a Black person, an architect and a PhD candidate in Architecture and the Built Environment, who teaches architectural design and runs an organisation in architecture, there was a need for me to unpack this concern.

> The ideology of Antiracist Pedagogy has, as its basis, the development of consciousness related to how society operates with regard to race. Development of this consciousness is the result of an in-depth comprehension of the impact of racism and the experiences of racism. This also allows for the development of a voice for expressing the impact of racism, which in turn allows analysis of racism. [3]

This article discusses antiracism[4] in the context of architecture and my response to the Antiracism at SSoA: Call to Action. The article questions the status quo and reflects on the concept of Black in Architecture as a work in progress, experimenting with other and more collaborative ways to embody anti-racism in architecture. I provide my thoughts on 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' as a former student of the school with an account of the ongoing work at Black in Architecture research unit. This is an effort to initiate dialogue on how we might collectively enact change through shared power with those who are impacted negatively as a result of racism in UK architectural education and practice.[5] The article concludes with a summary of what the research at Black in Architecture has lifted up

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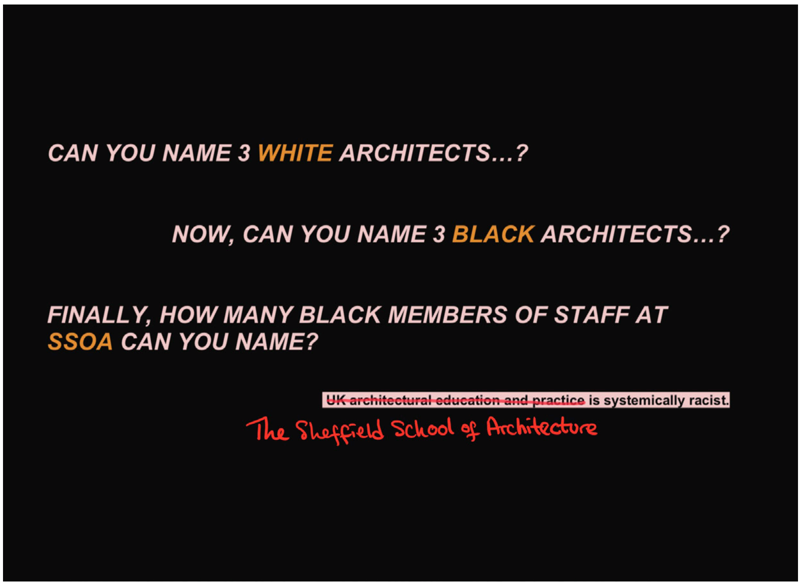
1. Ella Jessel, 'Black in Architecture: New research team to draw up charter on race,' Architect's Journal, 6 August 2021 <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/black-in-architecture-new-research-team-to-draw-up-charter-on-race> [accessed 13 October 2021]; BBC News, George Floyd: What happened in the final moments of his life, BBC News, 16 July 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52861726>, [accessed 24 October 2021]
2. Aleem Maqbool, 'Black Lives Matter: From social media posts to global movement,' BBB News, 20 July 2020, < https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-53273381> [accessed 24 October 2021]
3. Alda M. Blakeney, 'Antiracist Pedagogy: Definition, Theory, and Professional Development', Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, (23 September 2011), 2,1, pp. 119-132 (p. 121) <https://doi.org/10.1080/15505170.2005.10411532>
4. Blakeney.
5. Blakeney, p. 92.

through the gathering of lived experiences of racial in/justice to inform demands for action.

Towards? Anti-Racism at SSoA



CAN YOU NAME 3 WHITE ARCHITECTS...?

NOW, CAN YOU NAME 3 BLACK ARCHITECTS...?

FINALLY, HOW MANY BLACK MEMBERS OF STAFF AT SSOA CAN YOU NAME?

~~UK architectural education and practice~~ is systemically racist.

The Sheffield School of Architecture

Figure 1: Front cover of 'Anti-Racism at SSOA – Call to Action', 2020. Adapted by the Juliet Sakyi-Ansah. (Illustration: by permission Jasmin Yeo and others, 2022)"

> We need to focus on creating better definitions for the language we use, better modes of expressing that language, and stronger accountability for how that language and the expectations it contains are implemented in our design processes. [6]

I start my response to the 'Call to Action' with a probing thought: the cover of the 'Call to Action' reads 'UK architectural education and practice is systemically racist'. *What if* it read 'The Sheffield School of Architecture is systemically racist?' This provocation considers that the 'Call to Action' is aimed at ensuring 'SSoA commits to being actively anti-racist in future academic years'. [7] I am also mindful that my provocation here might be due to how I understand the language that is used – the English language. Regardless, there is an urgent need for us to be explicit in our language and framing of issues. With the premise of the 'Call to Action' contextualised at SSoA, it is important to frame the issues within the school to allow clear and transparent conversations that can ultimately drive positive change.

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6. Deem Journal, 'Deem co-founder Marquise Stillwell (@quisenyc) offers his perspective on equity for the opening pages of Issue Three'. Instagram 23 November 2021 <https://www.instagram.com/p/CWoHE5MvWqu/?utm_medium=copy_link> [accessed 24 November 2021]

7. Pidsley and others, 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action', p. 8.

That said, the 'Demanded Action' is clear on how SSoA is systemically racist. [8] It is almost dangerous to anti-racism work if we were to sweep this very specific call for SSoA to take action under the broader context of UK architecture. Most critically, we must raise our consciousness on the urgent need for anti-racist pedagogy as a start in taking action towards social school of architecture that addresses injustices faced by different racially oppressed groups. [9]

George Floyd's murder was a historical injustice and so was Stephen Lawrence's murder. Whilst Floyd's murder sparked the Black Lives Matter global protest and indeed amplified consciousness surrounding race and class we can also look a lot closer to home and strongly reference the murder of Stephen Lawrence in a racist attack here in the UK. [10] Furthermore, the Stephen Lawrence Bursary Award gives opportunities to a number of ethnic minority students and students from low-income backgrounds at SSoA and other architecture schools across the UK. The significance of the bursary and the work associated with the bursary scheme (including mentorships, exhibitions and placement schemes) must be acknowledged in conversations and new work that focuses on race and class. It is also worth noting that whilst there have been many opportunities provided through the scheme, there have been many missed opportunities on the part of architecture schools when it comes to the nurturing and supporting of bursary recipients following RIBA Part 1 for later stages of architectural training. This gap is an example of a real lack of conscious effort to shift the paradigm, a lack of effort to take action towards change and in maintaining the status quo on diversity.

When bursary recipients have been given further support after graduating from RIBA Part 1, it is often through the means of additional labour from the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust (SLCT), now 'Blueprint for All'. The trust has worked with several practices and educational establishments to foster inclusion, diversity and equity. The SLCT Bursary Scholar Exhibition has been hosted by Scott Brownrigg Architects for some years. Here, graduate RIBA Part 1 students come together to help curate an exhibition that showcases their work. It includes a placement scheme to provide RIBA Part 1 graduates work experience and portfolio reviews over each summer. It was aimed at Black people and all other underrepresented ethnic groups. However, having once taken part in the exhibition and having applied for the placement scheme myself, my own experience was evident of how the selection criteria for the placement scheme meant Black people are still left out of such opportunities. Whilst these efforts can be meaningful and intentional, there is an undeniable element of "White Saviour" complex perpetuated through the practices and architecture schools' focus on the idea of doing good through charitable acts instead of working to achieve social justice. To truly challenge the narrative, people from racially oppressed groups should be given the autonomy to explore their agency, have their voices amplified and their work considered fairly

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8. Pidsley and others, p. 8.
9. Pidsley and others, p. 21.

in the context of the systems they have had to navigate to arrive at the same stage as their white counterparts.

To some extent, we must reflect on why it took many other social injustices, many other Black lives to be lost both here and across the pond in the US for us to raise our consciousness on race and class. Floyd was not a martyr and neither was Lawrence. [11] This reflection must extend to how we have perpetuated the system for so long even after Stephen Lawrence's murder, before reaching where we are now. There is much work to do individually and institutionally. However, there is already work that has been done for decades by racially oppressed groups and work that is still being done and these can be part of the narrative for change. That in mind, it is important for such work to be credited and acknowledged accordingly. It is important for the work of underrepresented and racially oppressed groups to exist in their own right and to have fair opportunities to be absorbed by the profession, including academia. Recently, the work of groups such as Sound Advice and DECOSM have been working in this capacity. [12] The Stephen Lawrence Research Centre, which 'aims to drive forward conversations that will shape and influence how we think about race and social justice' provides hope for a more critical lens on race and class matters. [13] Further, it is important to foster economic approaches towards change-making initiatives through our collective labour. It is important to work in ways that ensure our efforts can be sustained. Another point to note here might be better phrased as a question: why has it taken the work of the oppressed (e.g. BLM) for the UK architectural education and practice to acknowledge the need for transformative change and consciousness surrounding race and anti-racism practice? [14]

Work undertaken by individuals, groups and organisations in the context of social justice have been – and continue to be – taken for granted or worse, overlooked. The Architects' Project, which I speak more about in 'Navigating architectural education spaces as Black students, researchers, and educators' is one such example.' [15] Again, the concern for the fragmented and seemingly hostile context of social justice [16] work resurfaces in this type of work where boundless personal investments and sacrifices are required. *What if* there was a collective and self-governed platform for a socially just architectural education and practice? I am curious about new possibilities for a future where we can use each other's resources, respond to manifestos, and be accountable for actions and inactions and so on and so forth.

Such hope eliminates the need or expectation of people from oppressed groups having to educate those perpetuating racism and/or benefiting from systemic racism. For example, the demands set out in 'Anti-Racism at SSoA' positions the role of architecture in people's lives and the world, connecting it to why it is 'critical to ensure that the individuals who take it upon themselves to contribute to the profession, reflect the diversity of

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10. Aleem Maqbool, Black Lives Matter: From social media posts to global movement,' BBB News, 20 July 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-53273381> [accessed 24 October 2021]; Pidsley and others, 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action', p. 4; Jamie Grierson, 'Stephen Lawrence: a timeline of events since the teenager's murder', The Guardian, (11 August 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/aug/11/stephen-lawrence-timeline-events-since-teenagers-murder> [accessed 24 October 2021].
11. Britni Danielle 'George Floyd Did Not Sacrifice Himself to Make America Better', Shondaland, (21 April 2021), https://www.shondaland.com/act/a36189241/george-floyd-verdict-sacrifice/ [accessed 24 October 2021]
12. Sound Advice, <https://www.instagram.com/sound_x_advice/?hl=en [accessed 24 October 2021]; DECOSM, <https://decosm.world/> [accessed 24 October 2021].
13. Stephen Lawrence Research Centre, <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/centres-institutes/stephen-lawrence-research-centre/index.aspx> [accessed 24 October 2021]
14. Margaret Ledwith and Jane Springett, 'Participatory practice: Community-based action for transformative change,' Policy Press, 2010; Pidsley and others, 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action,' p. 4.
15. The Architects' Project, < http://thearchitectsproject.org/> [accessed 24 October 2021]; Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye and others, Navigating architectural education spaces as Black students, researchers, and educators, Field Journal, [2022].

the society that they serve'. [17] Surely this is one of the main underpinnings of architecture and one of which we already had consciousness.[18] Has there been an architectural education and practice that intentionally and consciously minimises the important role of architecture in the lives of certain members of society and of a certain world? The decades of learning and practicing from 'Eurocentric and imperialist perspectives' does warrant the question: do Black Lives Matter in Architecture? [19] If we accept that 'the current pedagogy at SSoA fosters an environment where discourse surrounding gender equality and feminism is supported and engrained across the curriculum', then what should we be calling for or demanding from our architecture schools – an anti-racist pedagogy? [20]

Collectively Enacting Change

Black in Architecture is experimenting with how we might collectively conceptualise an anti-racist approach in architectural education and practice in a context where much work is undertaken by oppressed groups. Within this same context, those perpetuating and/or benefiting from racism and systemic racism are issuing statements of allyship and solidarity rather than taking action towards a more *just* and equitable society. As a work in progress, Black in Architecture is framing its work towards a possible framework for anti-racism in architectural education and practice, and one that brings together the work of and voices of POC (person of colour). This is being achieved through collaborative methods of working as an agency with the intention to open dialogue on race in architecture. At its early stages, Black in Architecture research unit experiments with how we might collectively enact change through shared power *with* people (bottom-up) rather than power *over* (top-down) approaches. [21]

A Case for Research

How do we dismantle the institutional structures which give rise to racism when we lack a deeper understanding of the root cause of racism and how it affects the people seeking justice? As an agency for research and a catalyst for change, Black in Architecture aims to establish, over time, an annual report on racial in/justices in the field of architecture by gathering the voices and lived experiences of those who experience racial oppression in architecture. This qualitative research is critically juxtaposed with more statistical and quantitative surveys that are carried out on equality and diversity in the profession.

16. Purnima George, Bree Coleman and Lisa Barnoff, 'Finding hope in a hostile context: Stories of creative resistance in progressive social work agencies,' Canadian Social Work, 9, (2007), 66-83, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272831377_Finding_hope_in_a_hostile_context_Stories_of_creative_resistance_in_progressive_social_work_agencies> [accessed 24 October 2021]
17. Pidsley and others, 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action', p. 8.
18. Vikas Shah, 'The Role of Architecture in Humanity's Story', Thought Economics, (18 June 2012), <https://thoughteconomics.com/the-role-of-architecture-in-humanitys-story/> [accessed 24 October 2021]
19. Pidsley and others, 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action', p. 5.
20. Pidsley and other, p. 5.

Collaboration

As part of the objective to approach work that seeks to enact change using ‘bottom up’ approaches, Black in Architecture collaborates with institutions and organisations that have the capacity to host the research unit and deliver research impact activities. It is hoped that this will help to increase the potential impact and legacy of the work carried out through the research unit. It entails the establishment of a steering committee on both sides of the collaboration and the development of a research programme that embodies the aims and objectives of Black in Architecture as a collective research agency.

A carefully curated programme of research impact activities might begin to provide the platform for an anti-racist pedagogy. Initiating a UK-wide architecture symposium that gathers the work of those who face racial oppression in architecture can be considered as an approach towards claiming spaces. This can apply to academia and to the broader narrative of architectural education and practice. This method of claiming spaces might also begin to address the damage caused by centuries of erasure from the narrative.

As well as collaborating with organisations and institutions, the concept for Black in Architecture as a research unit that gathers lived experiences will involve the invitation to contribute lived experiences and share voices through collaboratively curated programmes. Whereas the gathering of lived experiences can be hosted on collaborative working platforms such as Miro and Jamboard to provide reasonable safeguarding, research impact activities such as reading and writing sessions can be integrated into platforms within the wider architecture community and curriculum.

However, regardless of safeguarding protocols, in order to create an environment where people can narrate their lived experiences, the research unit, along with its collaborating partners, must nurture spaces and apply methods that encourage voices to be expressed without fear of being ostracised. Here it is important to also consider the impact of reliving trauma and how such work calls for ethical considerations. This aspect of the research unit highlights a case for empowering and amplifying work by people who face racial oppression, as often, work on social and environmental activism is heavily co-opted in architecture.

Racial Equity Framework and a Charter for Racial Justice

I am suggesting that the architecture community holds itself accountable rather than hold others accountable by subscribing to a charter. These elements of Black in Architecture form the foundation for a more unified and collective approach to anti-racism.

Whilst the gathering of lived experiences is ongoing, the key issues stemming from them echoes those outlined in the 'Demanded Actions' of 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action'. As part of my own work at Black in Architecture, I have lifted up and responded to each main issue with a task, action, question and/or 'food for thought'. These initial findings might begin to indicate what is required from us all if we are to proactively address race and racism in architecture here in the UK.

Representation and misrepresentation	
Culture and identity in architecture	Eradicate outdated narratives of "primitive, chaos, poverty, illiteracy" and so on in the representation of Black culture in art, architecture and the built environment.
	Visibility – we should be seen.
	Access to architecture should be diverse.
	Black architects should be given fair opportunities to work in senior positions and it should be clear why white counterparts are promoted.
Role models	Advocacy: where are the Black architectural educators at the different stages of architectural education?
	Successful and renowned Black architects should be visible at education and practice level because they do exist.
	Mentorship programmes should represent the diversity of those subscribing to them – avoid the "White Saviour" narrative.
	Let's have more relatable mentors.
	Educators with some experience in non-western architecture.
Stereotypes and the model architect	Model student image: skin colour or physical features should not dictate the privilege to study architecture.
	What might an architect really look like?

Marginalisation and segregation	
Privilege	The privilege to choose to study or work in architecture should be enjoyed by all.
	Passion and enthusiasm should be embraced, not dismissed.
	Opportunities such as being able to work on competitions and to work on extracurricular activities should be an aspect of education that is open and transparent in terms of how students are selected to participate.
Markings and assessments	Finals should be blind reviewed to avoid students being marked down because of their profile.
	Inclusive working and studying spaces and activities should be encouraged.
	Assessment design and methods should reflect the diversity of students wherever possible.
	Recognition of the real impact of inequality – tolerance and acceptance of differences.
Architecture as a career choice	
Exposure and networking	To make the possibilities in the profession attainable – exposure and network-building using methods and approaches that are familiar and sensitive to Black and other cultures and identities.
Role of privilege	Education and practice of architecture should acknowledge privilege.
Support systems	
Transparency	Transparency in who and how people are selected or are given the opportunity to receive financial support.
	Transparent support systems to avoid racial and socio-economic bias.
Credits	How do we fairly measure distribution of workload and how are we given fair acknowledgment to our work?

	The right to be fairly credited, publicly or otherwise, for the work we do e.g. in schools of architecture and as part of the companies we work for.
Safe spaces	Invest accessible and safe spaces and systems to support each other as a community of Black people.
Mentoring and support	Invest in Black-led initiatives that are providing one-on-one mentoring and support.
Mental health	Signpost relevant spaces of healing and make support systems explicitly visible, available and accessible to groups that face racial discrimination.
Safeguarding	
Protection from abuse	We have the right to feel and be safe at all times when studying, working and carrying out other relevant activities without coming under threat or experiencing racial slurs and attacks.
	All students should have adequate protection from racial slurs and discrimination.
	Safety of Black people should be carefully considered during field trips.
	Provide clear and practical guidance on how racial attacks/ abuse might be handled during and after the occurrence of such incidents.
	Provide safe and inclusive spaces for people to thrive.
Employment and Career Prospects	
Networking	Professional networking systems should be incorporated into the curriculum.
	Educational institutions should incorporate accessible and inclusive professional networking opportunities as part of the curriculum at both RIBA Part 1 and Part 2 stages.
	People from racially discriminated groups who are in leadership positions should be made visible in architecture education/curriculum.

Respect and trust	
Staff, students and peers	Respect works both ways – staff can be held equally accountable as students and partiality should be closely monitored in staff/senior colleagues.
Architecture organisations	Organisations whose work is related to architecture must practice respect and inclusivity at all times.
	Black people are not charity cases and architects who identify as Black should be given the same respect as their white counterparts.
Architectural education	
Architectural education	Actively work with urgency to address ignorance surrounding race and in particular systemic racism.
	Contributions and voices of people from racially discriminated groups should be amplified wherever possible.
	People from racially discriminated groups should be given the opportunities to be heard in spaces where their contributions are valued.
	Architectural history should include African architectural history and the histories of other cultures, shifting away from the erasure and omission of non-western history in architecture.
	Make a conscious effort to discourage false narratives.
	Architecture syllabus should reference colonialism.
	Diversify studio philosophy.
	Expand the reading list to cover non-western literature on architecture, design and art.
Identity	
Identity	Our identity matters – we should be free to present our physical and cultural identities.
	Criteria for assessing performance should be fair and unbiased.

	Discourage actions that perpetuate stereotypes.
	Create a curriculum that includes the identity of people from racially discriminated groups.
Erasure	
Credits and reward for labour	Credit work and distribute rewards fairly.
	Provide fair access to career progression.
	Philosophers who are flexible – not the 'white middle-class professor' scenario.
	Create safe spaces for conversations on race to take place.
Advocacy and campaign	Terminologies used in racial justice matters should clearly define the context of the term to avoid misalignment with other areas of change such as gender equality.
	Racial equality is not the responsibility of those who face racial injustices.
	Conversations on race, equity and architecture should be encouraged in the field.
	Explorations of racial injustices can be and should be encouraged in both education and practice, including NGOs, government and industries whose work relate or include architecture.
	Reading lists and references should extend beyond western architecture.
	Tutors and those in influencing positions should reflect the diverse experiences in architecture and communities.
	Explore the impact of race and gender on professional growth.
The curriculum	
	Allow social and political themes to be addressed through architecture.
	Practice and advocate for architecture beyond western ideals.

	Students and architects should be encouraged to draw from other experiences and knowledge pools that are representative of their heritages and identities.
	There should be transparency in awards related to student performances.
	Work undertaken by marginalised groups should be supported fairly.
	Embrace the diverse perspectives that people from racially discriminated groups can bring into architecture.
	Support the entrepreneurial activities of groups facing racial injustices.
	Encourage peer support amongst students and architects.

Conceptualising an Anti-Racist Approach

In the article, ‘Architectural education works against minority ethnic candidates,’ Tszwai So engages in a conversation with Timothy Brittain-Catlin and Felicity Atekpe on how architecture performs when it comes to Black Lives Matter. [22] Whilst the image of the architect often suggests that their success is all due to their effort as an individual, the reality is different. We work with others as architects and that work contributes to the whole of a project. Having experimented with different ways of working with others over the past decade on the /tap Collective platform, I am intrigued by how our inherent collaborative approaches as architects can be amplified in the way we teach architecture and how we respond to urgent matters such as implementing an anti-racist approach in architecture.

> The old image of a successful architect’s career was of a super gifted young male, setting up his own practice in his 20s or early 30s with true grit and immense talents, and winning successive prestigious projects along the way.[23]

The critique of ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA’ was largely sparked by questions I wanted to explore as someone who identifies as a Black person, an architect and a PhD candidate with experience of teaching on architectural design courses in the UK. I am often curious about who does what to effect change and the processes we use to achieve progress. Whilst I acknowledge the scale of the work I often do is relatively small, for people like myself whose interests lie in building platforms to empower and amplify the thinking and doing of others, there is meaning in grounding the work I do in places where I can identify with the people. This often means working at

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21. Nicholas Ind & Nick Coates, ‘The meanings of co-creation’, European Business Review, 25, 1 (2013), 87-95 (p. 92), <https://doi.org/10.1108/09555341311287754>
22. Tszwai So, ‘Architectural education works against minority ethnic candidates’, The RIBA Journal, 25 June 2020, <https://www.ribaj.com/intelligence/inclusion-change-architectural-education-post-george-floyd-blm-bame-brittain-catlin-felicity-atekpe-apprenticeships> [accessed 13 October 2021]

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a scale that allows my own thinking and doing to happen in collaboration with others. Black in Architecture seeks to do just that. The intention to engage with established institutions on the one hand and remain autonomous on the other hand is key, as is the intention to use processes that can be sustained. I often highlight the level of personal, financial and career sacrifices that social justice work requires and why it is instrumental for the thinking surrounding the work to be receptive to the changing economic and political climate, as well as to our changing mindset. Embracing the process of change itself is often transformative in the sense that it opens up and connects us, collectively lifting up our shared and sometimes untapped knowledge and experiences of the matters at hand.

My curiosity about how we might conceptualise an anti-racist approach to architecture is heightened now more than ever as I embark on the first Black in Architecture collaboration with a school of architecture. Perhaps part of practicing anti-racism can be centred on creating an environment that enables questions to be raised and conversations to be had, ideas to be developed and actions to be taken and reflected on, all the while reminding ourselves that 'equity is a process, not an outcome'. [24]

Biography

Juliet received her BA and M.Arch from the Sheffield School of Architecture and completed her RIBA Part 3 at the Architectural Association School of Architecture. She is the Founder of The Architects' Project and a current Architecture and the Built Environment PhD Candidate at Oxford Brookes University. Her PhD focuses on BIM-based capacity building for local community participation in settlement upgrading.

Juliet experiments with collaborative pedagogy and design practice as part of an interdisciplinary community at The Architects' Project. More broadly. More broadly, she explores architecture and design through her emerging creative space Studio OASA.

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[24] Deem Journal, 'Deem co-founder Marquise Stillwell (@quisenyc) offers his perspective on equity for the opening pages of Issue Three'. Instagram 23 November 2021 <https://www.instagram.com/p/CWoHE5MvWqu/?utm_medium=copy_link> [accessed 24 November 2021]

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Homemade Prototypes: Deconstructing Domestic Decorum

Zahraa Essa

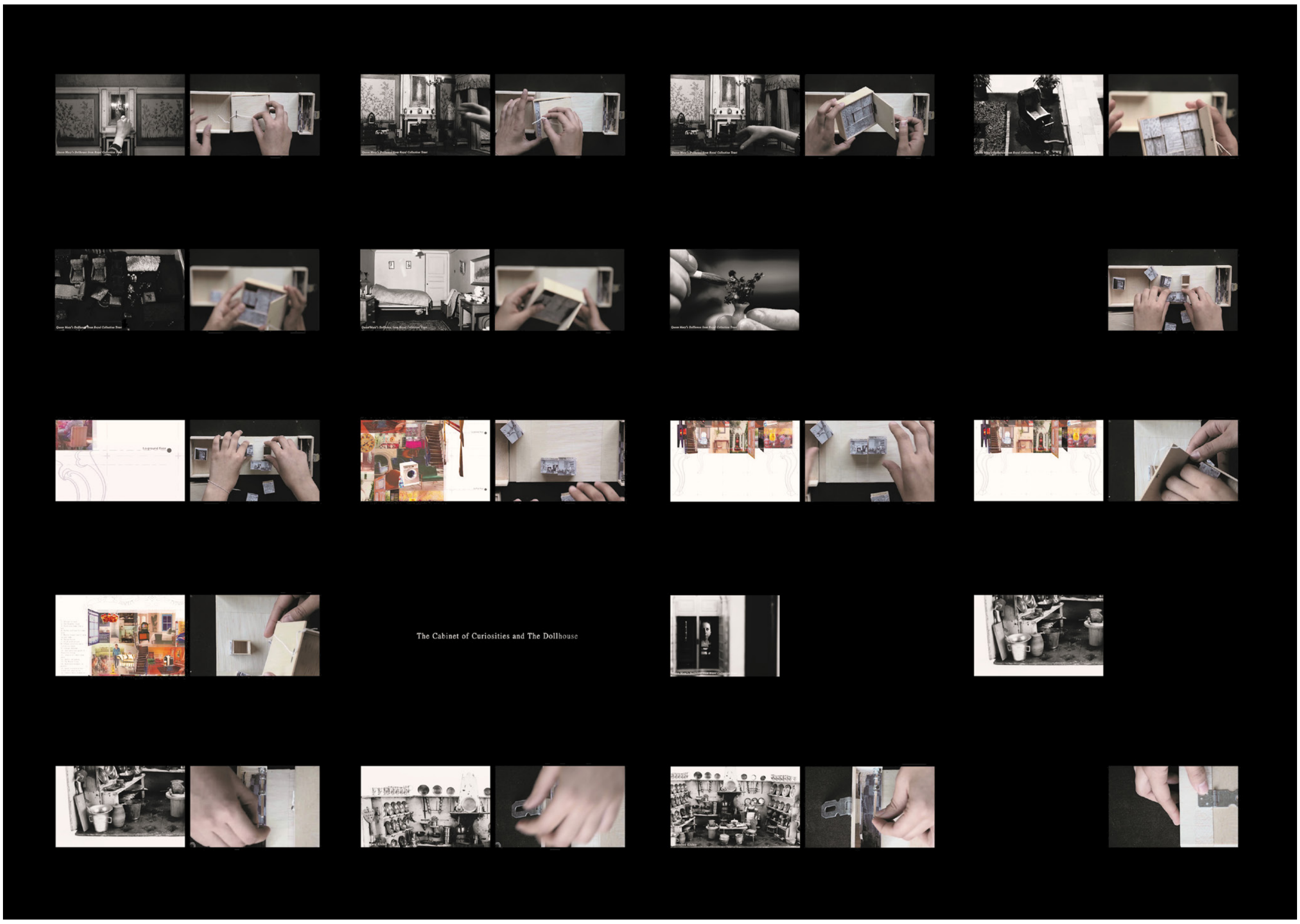
Please scan or click the code to access 'Homemade Prototypes'

bell hooks (1990) writes in Homeplace (a site of resistance) that during the times of white supremacy and racial segregation in America, one's "homeplace" was seen as a place where one could freely challenge the issues of politics and humanisation. Home, as argued by bell hooks (1990) may be associated with forms of protest and power. While Leslie Kanes Weisman (2000) describes home as a highly gendered realm where a woman is always in service of a husband or child. The creation of miniature domestic scenarios dates to models found in ancient Egyptian tombs illustrating what daily life in Egypt was like. However, versions of seventeenth-century dollhouses in Northern Europe are reflected as small-scale replicas of the homes they were situated in, as a display and direct representation and "mini monuments" of wealth and social status. Thereafter, dollhouses become co-opted tools to teach young girls how to run a household and adopt traditionally gendered roles. The project uses the dollhouse through which to prototype and navigate six rooms in the heteropatriarchal South African Indian Muslim home. It deconstructs the constituents in the rooms to reveal the 'hauntings' (Gordon 2008) of the colonial legacy which are instituted and becomes a way of seeing wider influences of trade, empire, economic and societal changes.

> "A homemaker has no inviolable space of her own. She is attached to spaces of service. She is a hostess in the living room, a cook in the kitchen, a mother in the children's room, a lover in the bedroom, a chauffeur in the garage."[1]

The above quotation is taken from a manifesto for women's environmental rights from the 1980s. It describes home as a highly gendered realm, where a woman is always in service of a husband or child. Rozsika Parker states that in the nineteenth century, embroidery was considered "natural" to femininity, signifying respectability and obedience – a love for the home, and life without work outside the home.[2] Typically, artefacts created using the acquired "feminine skills" passed down through time are metaphorical connectors, linking maternal generations together.

It may be argued that while certain practices of "homemaking" which produce artefacts and traditions may relate to cultural and religious practices, others might be drawn from colonial ideals of the home or wider influences – anti-apartheid community cookbooks, ancient Egyptian archaeological finds on cooking and domesticity, empire linked to Silk Road trade networks, early twentieth-century modern kitchens, domestic labour, economic and societal changes and hierarchies of material culture – all of these are registered in the spatial organisation of the home. This research argues that in the process, as practices become hybridised and creolised, home always speaks to that which is intimately present and simultaneously "away," diasporic, or absent. These absences could be understood as "hauntings," always present yet often unacknowledged.[3]



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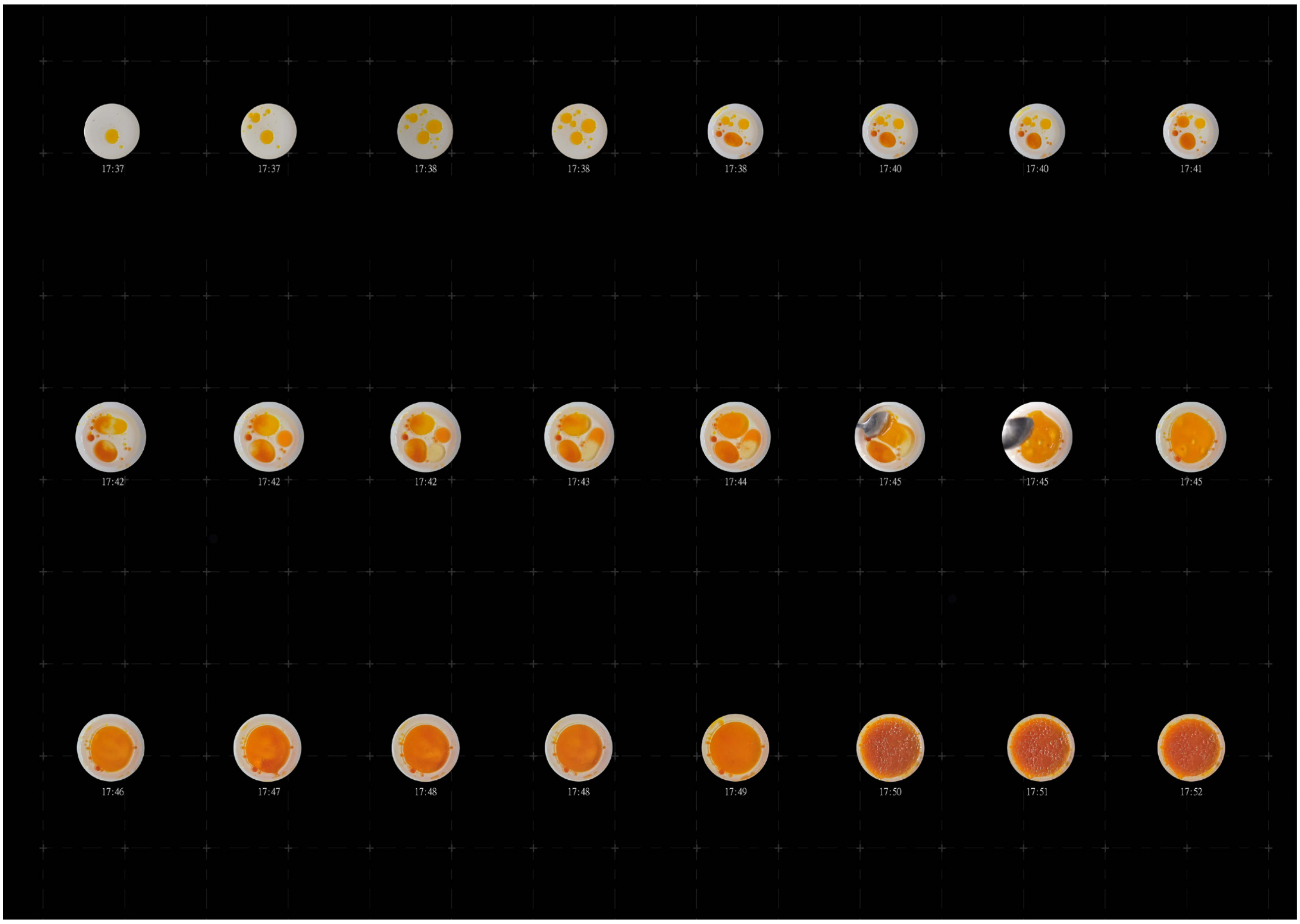
[1] Leslie Kanes Weisman, 'Women's Environmental Rights: A Manifesto', in Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction, ed. by Iain Borden, Barbara Penner, and Jane Rendell (London: Routledge, 2002).

[2] Rozskia Parker quoted by Shonisani Netshia, '"The Same but Not Quite" : Respectability, Creative Agencies and Self-Expression in Black Middle-Class Soweto Homes', Image & Text: A Journal for Design, 29.1 (2017), 55–71 <https://doi.org/10.10520/EJC-a785c14c3> .

[3] Avery Gordon, Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).



The project uses the doll's house as a prototype to unpack the constituents and "hauntings" of the colonial legacy within the heteropatriarchal South African Indian Muslim home.

Institutions require the labour of instituting to be produced and reproduced. The project, therefore, takes as its starting prompts different forms of domestic labour mentioned in the quote above by Weisman, essentially containing four enactments in domestic space, namely: cooking, cleaning, childcare and décor.[4] It investigates how domestic practices and the arrangement of domestic space reinforce issues of power dynamics and colonial ideals in the home.

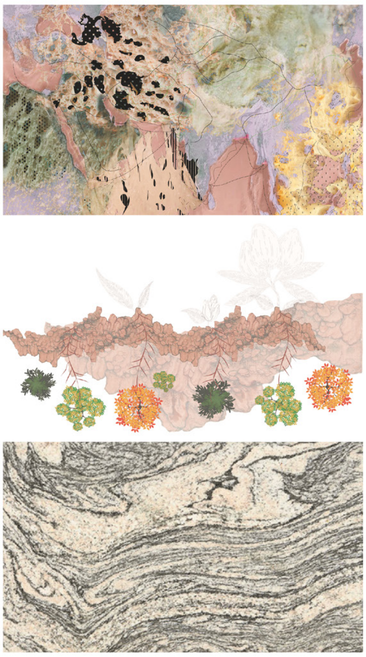
The project draws on multiple understandings and definitions of home, homemaking and homeplace. It understands home as an institutional space that is reproduced in different ways in different contexts. In addition to Weisman's description of home as a 'spatial and temporal metaphor,' as discussed above, bell hooks discusses her definition of "homeplace" as a space of resistance and protest defined in distinction to "home" as a generic label, while Margaret Schütte-Lihotzky's Frankfurt Kitchen is discussed as an example of a feminist architectural project after World War Two.[5]

[4] Weismann, 'Women's Environmental Rights: A Manifesto', p. 2.

[5] bell hooks, 'Homeplace: A Site of Resistance', in Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics, 2nd edn (Boston: South End Press, 1990), pp. 41–49 (p. 41); Juliet Kinchin and Aidan O'Connor, 'The Frankfurt Kitchen', MoMA | Counter Space <https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/counter_space/the_frankfurt_kitchen/#highlights> [accessed 9 December 2021].

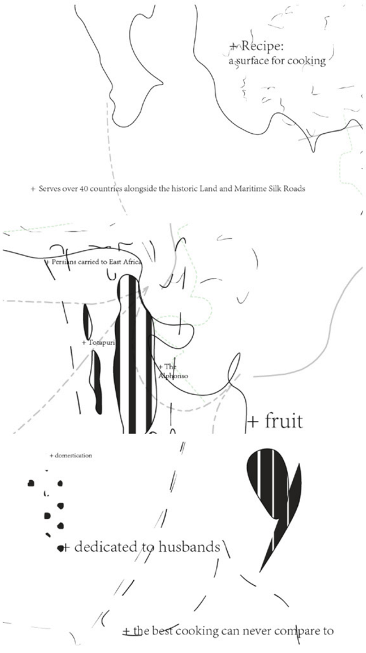
bell hooks argues for the recognition of “homeplace” as a space created by Black women. Writing of the segregated South in the US, she articulates that “homeplace” was a space to be free from white supremacy. She argues that while many Black women worked as domestic workers in white homes, they still found the time to create “homeplaces” as spaces to care for and nurture their own families. For hooks, “homeplace” is simultaneously a safe space and political space. The structure of the homeplace is not defined by sexist norms, but more by the struggle to uplift and resist racism and oppression. However, hooks suggests that despite this history, more recent efforts of patriarchy have changed the subversive homeplace into a space where women are viewed as subordinate. This shift in perspective, towards the home not being viewed as a site for political engagement, has had a negative impact on the construction of Black female identity. It has devalued the importance of the Black female labourer teaching critical consciousness in the domestic space.

In a very different approach, one of the most well-known examples of a “modern kitchen” is the Frankfurt kitchen, designed by Margaret Schütte-Lihotzky. The design is based on theories of workflow and productivity and



Granite Counter-Top

Making Bread


+ Recipe:
a surface for cooking
+ Serves over 40 countries alongside the historic Land and Maritime Silk Roads
+ Persians carried to East Africa
+ Totapuri
+ The Alphonso
+ fruit
+ domestication
+ dedicated to husbands
+ the best cooking can never compare to

Manual

described as a laboratory or a factory. The Frankfurt kitchen is an example of design influenced by post-traumatic circumstances of World War Two as well as modernisation.

Each kitchen came complete with a swivel stool, a gas stove, built-in storage, a fold-down ironing board, an adjustable ceiling light, and a removable garbage drawer. Labelled aluminium storage bins provided tidy organization for staples like sugar and rice as well as easy pouring. Careful thought was given to materials for specific functions, such as oak flour containers (to repel mealworms) and beech cutting surfaces (to resist staining and knife marks)."[6]

Following World War Two, the Frankfurt kitchen was seen as a radical project that made women's work easier through the use of "scientific" ideas of productivity and an easier kitchen with modern appliances. Yet the kitchen was still understood as a woman's space.

Home may be seen as a "politically neutral space" because domestic practices are considered "ordinary." Robin Evans mentions in his article on 'Figures, Doors and Passages' that the architectural layouts of modern homes are viewed as "ordinary" typologies 'catering for basic human needs.'[7] However, "ordinary" may suggest neutrality, when in fact viewing domestic practices and rituals as "ordinary" hides the power that they have on our lives and at the same time conceals the institutionalisation of domestic customs and arrangements.

Navigating through the heteropatriarchal South African Indian Muslim doll's house, colonial histories and present-day remnants clearly manifest. The prototype allows us into literal and figurative "curiosity cabinets" identifying and deconstructing important spatial organisations influenced by power dynamics, race and gender, that are often disregarded when we discuss the postcolonial condition in South Africa.

Biography

Zahraa Essa is a Candidate Architect, having obtained her Masters in Architecture at the Graduate School of Architecture, Johannesburg, 2020.

Living in Johannesburg all her life, she is curious and observant of human intuition and resilience and is interested in how hybrid cultures unfold identities, objects and influence social environments - particularly in the city where the landscape and lifestyle are transforming due to capitalism and modernisation.

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[6] Kinchin and O'Connor, 'The Frankfurt Kitchen', pa. 5.

[7] Robin Evans, 'Figures, Doors and Passages', in Translations from Drawing

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Apartheid: Past And Present In Cape Town, South Africa

Aisha Sillah

Preface

My first introduction to apartheid was as a naïve African child learning about Nelson Mandela as the epitome of leadership. As a budding architect confronting my Blackness in the 'white man's land' (UK), I ponder colonisation and how deeply entrenched it is in the makeup of societies. With an interest in politics, people and urbanism, South Africa provides a good framework to explore the spatial manifestation of racism through design and politics.

'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' was written by a group of students advocating for change in the operation of Sheffield School of Architecture. As a contributor reflecting on my personal experience, it was the first time I truly confronted the themes of racism, Islamophobia, and sexism and what these meant to me. My interest in inclusivity in architecture led to my study on the spatial implications of racism in South Africa. It is a study that presents design from a different perspective to the predominantly westernised version we are used to, as highlighted in the letter.

Other issues drawn upon from the 'Call to Action' letter include the disadvantages created by white hegemony in design and the exclusion of Black representation in key roles to enact positive change. Both documents call for anti-racism, with the special study accurately demonstrating the real life implications of racism in design. My article serves as a response, exemplifying the exact outcomes brought about when architecture and design are not treated as holistic disciplines catering to the needs of all communities.

Conversations and academic writing about race have been minimised in SSoA. The article has therefore shown the significance of such discussions as many are unaware of how severely racism can covertly manifest through design. Finally, change can only be achieved through continuous discourse on such topics and increased representation as the 'Call to Action' writers have called for.

Introduction

Is colonialism truly a thing of the past? The common belief in the independence of African countries concluding the colonial epoch is one which South Africa heavily contests as a country whose colonial history is deeply embedded into the fabrics of its society. This essay points towards the existence of contemporary colonialism in South Africa, as imperialism rests a sustained reality on its marginalised communities.[1]

Within its 'settler-colonial cities,' for example Cape Town, the remaining legacies of colonisation are still spatially felt due to the implementation of an apartheid regime – a remorseless ramification of imperialist ideologies utilised as a social engineering tool to impose racial segregation.[2] David Harvey argues 'The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is [...] one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.'[3] Reflecting on this within the given context, this essay will explore this often neglected right as a result of a capitalist and racist government whose ethics and morals come under heavy scrutiny.[4]

This essay interrogates the role of design in perpetuating patterns of spatial injustice despite a movement towards a more democratic era post-apartheid.[5] As the urban response to this question cannot be divorced from its larger political and economic implications, this essay goes through a historical study of colonisation and apartheid and analyses its remaining spatial and socio-economic repercussions in modern day Cape Town.

Colonisation – A Precedent for Apartheid

Introduction to the Cape

The history of European engagement in South Africa dates as far back as 1486. Portuguese explorers had discovered *Cabo Tormentoso* (meaning Cape of Storms, now modern-day Cape Town) and renamed it *Cabo da boa Esperanza* (Cape of Good Hope) in anticipation of future opportunities.[6]

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[1] Elliot Ross, 'The Past is Still Present: Why Colonialism Deserves Better Coverage', The Correspondent, 2019 <The past is still present: why colonialism deserves better coverage - The Correspondent> [accessed 7 April 2021].

[2] Libby Porter and Oren Yiftachel, 'Urbanizing Settler-Colonial Studies: Introduction to the Special Issue', Settler Colonial Studies, 9.2 (2019), 177-186, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2017.1409394> (p. 177).

[3] David Harvey, 'The Right to the City', New Left Review, 53 (2008), 23-40 <NLR 53, September–October 2008 (oclc.org)> (p. 23).

[4] Lesley Naa Norle Lokko, (ed.), White Papers, Black Marks: Architecture, Race, Culture, (London: Athlone Press, 2000), p. 76.

[5] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Apartheid', Britannica, 2020 <apartheid | Definition, Facts, Beginning, & End | Britannica> [accessed 19 December 2020].

[6] Helena Liebenberg, 'Introduction to the Resolutions of the Council of Policy of Cape of Good Hope', Tanap, 1-57 <INLEIDING (tanap.net)> (p. 27).

The Cape of Good Hope remained its name for centuries, and is found on the earliest maps of Cape Town. Its discovery paved the way for other European voyagers looking to expand commercial trade, principally the British and the Dutch who became the earliest European settlers in 1652.[7] This continuous interaction began the subtle process of "remaking" the existing landscape in their mould and erasing indigenous rights over the territory. A key example amongst others is the *Hoerikwaggo* (called Mountain in the Sea by the natives) renamed *Tafelberg* (Table Mountain), a name still used in modern day Cape Town.[8]

Indigenous People

The indigenous people consisted of two tribes: the Khoikhoi and the San (Khoisan), the earliest South Africans and original owners of the land. Their subsistent way of life was farming and hunting, engendering the Europeans' use of the derogatory term *Hottentot* (bushman) to refer to the native tribes.[9] The Khoisan people could first be traced along the western half of the Cape (currently Cape Town), later displaced by the invasion of the Dutch. Through the seizure of arable land, the Dutch created their own farms lending them the upper hand to subjugating the Khoisan people into toiling on land that was once theirs – exploration becomes exploitation.[10]

The *Natives Land Act* (1913) legalised the segregationist plans of the Union government (formed earlier in 1910). 8.9 million hectares of land (one eighth of South African land) was defined as 'native reserves' for four million Africans, while a mere 1.25 million Europeans exploited land seven times this size.[11] With three times as many "natives" in an area seven times smaller, the shocking disparity meant that for every twenty-one Africans in a hectare of land there was one European. The erasure in the coloniser's mind of the indigenous entitlement to their own spaces – the myth of 'empty land' alongside the use of cartography in the creation of colonies proved that both spoken and graphic language used to describe space and territories was key in the first stages of colonialism, creating the foundations for apartheid.[12]

Colonisation and Urbanism – City as a Space of Social Control

There is a profound relationship between a city's urban development and its nation's colonial past. By 1948, the National Party (founded by J. B. M. Hertzog) officially introduced apartheid, legalising racial segregation.[13] This was achieved through the amalgamation of well defined nationalist laws and design strategies by the Group Areas Board. South African cities became governed by 'grand' and 'petty' apartheid laws, which operated at macro and micro levels respectively, to divide the city into various nation states and subsequently control the spatial operation of native communities.[14]

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[7] A.J. Christopher, The Atlas of Changing South Africa, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 9.

[8] Gary Hartley and Tessa Coetzee, 'Table Mountain Has Graced Cape Town For Nearly A Quarter Of An Eon,' Cape Town Magazine, 2019 <Table Mountain Has Graced Cape Town With It's Beauty For Nearly A Quarter Of An Eon (capetownmagazine.com)> [accessed 17 April 2021]; 'Who Gave Table Mountain Its Name', News24, 2012 <Who gave Table Mountain its name? | News24> [accessed 17 April 2021].

[9] Andrew Thompson, 'What to Know About the Khoisan, South Africa's First People', Culture Trip, 2018 <What to Know About the Khoisan, South Africa's First People (theculturetrip.com)> [accessed 15 February 2021]; Oxford Reference, 'Hottentot', in the Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable <Hottentot - Oxford Reference> [accessed 29 January 2020].

[10] Christopher, p. 9.

[11] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Native Lands Act', Britannica, <Native Lands Act | South Africa [1913] | Britannica> [accessed 16 February 2021].

[12] South African History Online, 'The Empty Land Myth', South African History Online, 2019 <The Empty Land Myth | South African History Online (sahistory.org.za)> [accessed 18 April 2021].

[13] South African History Online, 'National Party (NP)', South African History Online, 2020 <National Party (NP) | South African History Online (sahistory.org.za)> [accessed 28 December 2020]; Christopher, The Atlas of Changing South Africa, p. 46.

Grand Apartheid

The Population Registration Act (1950) was one of the first racially motivated laws that classified society into: White/European, Indian, Coloured, Black/Bantu/African.[15] Complementing this was the Group Areas Act which delineated the country into racial zones to control the acquisition and occupation of land.[16] Dr T. E. Donges (Minister of the Interior) described the Group Areas Act as 'one of the major measures designed to preserve white South Africa.'[17] A key question is what is a 'white' South Africa? All hands point back to colonialism.

'The white man has no magic in himself which makes him superior.'[18]

The Group Areas Act was 'an instrument of racial domination' where Bantu communities were pushed towards the peripheries in the native reserves.[19] With a deeper intent to control Africans – who as the largest population group were a threat to white supremacy, a 'divide and rule' system was employed to establish ethno-linguistic distinctions.[20] Unsurprisingly, this led to the forced removals of families already living in the newly proclaimed white areas.[21]

The aim was to achieve the 'model apartheid city' informed by the Hoyt Sector Model.[22] The group areas were divided according to socio-economic class. Surrounding the financial hub were the middle to high income white group areas and opposite the railway tracks were the lower income white group, who, supposedly due to their subsidiary status, were made to live closer to the other groups. The buffer zones were thirty metre wide man-made barriers to restrict movement and contact between population groups. A large industrial zone and road further distanced Africans, leaving access to the Central Business District (CBD) solely for employment.[23]

The city centres were specifically integrated into the white areas to uphold this concept of racial purity, thereby limiting Black business opportunities and social progression.[24] By 1960, Cape Town had conformed to this discriminatory model, with urban development remaining in the inner city. Subsequent maps of the city specifically highlight this development whilst excluding the native areas, suggesting they belong to the homelands and no longer to inner Cape Town.

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[14] Angela Thompsell, 'Grand Apartheid in South Africa', ThoughtCo., 2019 <Grand Apartheid in South Africa (thoughtco.com)> [accessed 7 November 2020].

[15] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'The National Party and Apartheid', Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/The-National-Party-and-apartheid#ref480731> [accessed 15 January 2021].

[16] Patricia Johnson-Castle, 'The Group Areas Act of 1950', South African History Online, 2021, <The Group Areas Act of 1950 | South African History Online (sahistory.org.za)> [accessed 2 February 2021].

[17] Christopher, p. 103.

[18] The Heart of Apartheid, dir. by. Hugh Burnett (BBC One, 1968) <BBC iPlayer - Tuesday Documentary - The Heart of Apartheid> [accessed 7 December 2020].

[19] Wilmot G James, 'Group Areas and the Nature of Apartheid', South African Sociological Review, 5.1 (1992), 41-57 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44461355/> (p. 41).

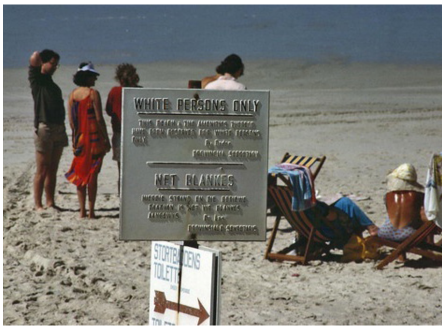
[20] Christopher, p. 69.

[21] Christopher, p. 112.

[22] Christopher, p. 103.

[23] Christopher, p. 103.

[24] Christopher, p. 83.



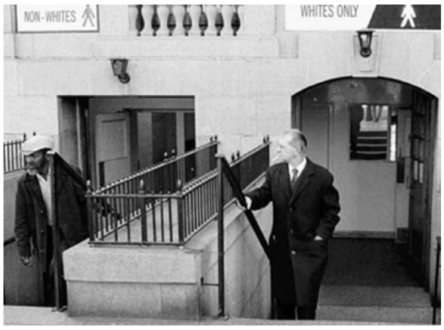


Figure 1. Digital Photograph, Apartheid - A Crime Against Humanity, United Nations Photo (1 January 1985). Creative Commons CCBY

Figure 2. Digital photograph, Apartheid Signs, (1982). (Photo: by permission Eric Miller, 9 January 2022)

Petty Apartheid

> 'What annoys us is the petty apartheid that is being practiced everywhere, that I can't use a passenger lift in any building which is marked European because I am Indian.'[25]

The Pass Laws Act (1952) was pivotal to the oppression of Black participation in the city, legally requiring Africans over the age of 16 to carry passbooks granting entry into CBDs for a specific amount of time.[26]

Robert Park argues that the city is

> man's most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in … But, if the city is the world which man created, it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live. Thus, indirectly … in making the city man has remade himself.[27]

Through the making of the city that one belongs to one can reshape oneself – an experience granted only to the whites (Fig 1). Using this argument, if a man is forced to the outskirts and compelled to live a life he did not choose, then that man has no control of the city and is unable to reshape himself, and thus subjected to a "low-class life". As one of many oppressed voices expressed: 'As a Black man I have come to realise that the animals have better freedom than the Black people of this country.'[28]

The Separate Amenities Act (1953) ensured the racially distinguished use of facilities and entrances to public buildings.[29] Grander hospitality was awarded to the whites through articulations. For instance, the ornamented keystone and the arch accentuate the entrance through a greater sense of height and hence importance (Fig 2). Whilst there is similarity in the widths, one must note that 'whites' denotes one population group whereas 'non-whites' represents three. This demonstrates architecture as a divisive tool.

Racial separation extended past spatial relations into intimate and sexual relations through the Ban on Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immorality Act (1957) to prevent the staining of "white purity" in human form. Multiracial families were shunned, and mixed-race children forced to classify under the racial group of their ethnic parent and live within the 'coloureds' reserves.[30]

> 'Buried here are the silent non-white bones of those of us on the wrong side of the colour line in life, still separated from the white man in death.'[31]

Finally, after a life of humiliation and struggle, apartheid followed the Black man in death, 'the heart of apartheid.'[32] Whites were rewarded with well-preserved cemeteries with decorative tombstones surrounded by attractive scenery, in the white proclaimed areas such as Simon's Town.[33] In contrast is the Khayelitsha township graveyard characterised by unadorned wooden crosses as headstones against the disagreeable row of shacks in the backdrop. It is commonly understood that 'if you're buried here, it's as if they threw you away.'[34]

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[25] Burnett.

[26] South African History Online, 'Pass Laws in South Africa 1800-1994', South African History Online, 2019 <Pass laws in South Africa 1800-1994 | South African History Online (sahistory.org.za)> [accessed 31 January 2021].

[27] Robert E. Park, On Social Control and Collective Behaviour (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967) p. 3.

[28] Burnett.

[29] Christopher, p. 142.

[30] Anonymous and Evan V. Symon, '5 Realities of Being A Mixed-Race Child When That's Illegal', Cracked, 2016 <5 Realities Of Being A Mixed-Race Child When That's Illegal | Cracked.com> [accessed 19 March 2021].

Contemporary Colonialism – Apartheid in Present-Day Cape Town

The overturn of apartheid in 1994 was to many the revolutionary end of a heavily oppressive regime. However, many years after, it is apparent that this is untrue – apartheid still lingers.[35] To use the Population Registration Act delineation, the coastal city is home to 4.4 million of whom 15.7% are white, 38.6% Black, 42.4% coloured, 1.4% Asian and 1.9% other.[36] Cape Town's unique landscape, characterised by mountainous land and its proximity to the sea, make it a suitable tourist destination.[37] While the city generates economic growth, it is still located in the most unequal country where the top 1% own 70.9% of the nation's wealth as the bottom 60% collectively control only 7% of the country's assets.[38] This inequality is argued to be 'permanently carved into the city's urban form.'[39]

With the African National Congress inheriting years of damage from the preceding government, a few political strategies were adopted, most of which were unsuccessful. A notable policy was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) subsidy housing as a response to the post-apartheid housing crisis to provide better quality housing in the townships.[40] The RDP houses were erected on top of destroyed shacks, adhering to the existing urban grain.[41] The main issue with the scheme and possibly the reason for its failure was the government's rush to provide a quick solution to a prolonged problem.

While the houses were indeed upgrades from the typical shack (Fig 3), one must note that speed does not make quality, and a house does not make a home. The uniformity and what the residents dubbed a "matchbox" appearance, did not necessarily make the houses aesthetically pleasing nor desirable for living in.[42]

Hout Bay and Imizamo Yethu – 'A Tale Of Two Cities'

As the early apartheid model had intended, the townships are still "out of sight and out of mind". However, Imizamo Yethu differs as it is not an apartheid era township and is closest to the CBD.[43]

'Architectural apartheid is violence!'[44]

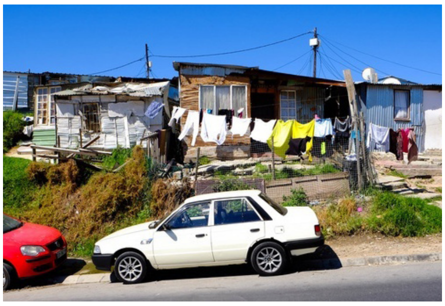

Figure 3. Digital photograph, Imizamo Yethu Township, Cape Town, RSA, (Photo: by Serena Tang, 18 December 2015), Creative Commons CCBY

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31 Burnett.

32 Burnett.

33 Simon's Town Historical Society, 'The History of Simon's Town', Simonstown.com, [n.d]. <Simons Town |> [accessed 16 April 2021].

34 Diana Saverin, 'Cape Town's Death Industry: 'If You're Buried Here, It's As If They Threw You Away', The Guardian, 2015, <Cape Town's death industry: 'If you're buried here, it's as if they threw you away' | Cities | The Guardian> [accessed 13 April 2021].

35 Elizabeth Rebekah Trail, 'The Spatial Form of Post Apartheid Cape Town', (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 2006) p. 2.

36 World Population Review, 'Cape Town Population 2021', World Population Review, 2021 <Cape Town Population 2021 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs)(worldpopulationreview.com)> [accessed 1 April 2021].

37 Trail, 'The Spatial Form of Post Apartheid Cape Town', p. 2.

38 Jason Beaubien, 'The Country With The World's Worst Inequality Is…', NPR, 2018 <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/04/02/598864666/the-country-with-the-worlds-worst-inequality-is#:~:text=%22The%20country%20was%20very%20unequal,in%20charge%20of%20southern%20Africa> [accessed 13 April 2021].

39 Oliver Wainwright, 'Apartheid Ended 20 years ago, so why is Cape Town still "a

Imizamo Yethu's physical proximity to the white suburb Hout Bay is juxtaposed with its vast distance from the accompanying wealth. A compelling picture of spatial apartheid is evident. Hout Bay (left) is characterised largely by sporadically situated houses nestled deep within the greenery. On the right barricaded by a foliage of trees is Imizamo Yethu composed of narrow roads between repeated units of RDP housing (south) and metal roof shacks (north). Imizamo Yethu's formation in 1991 during a time of political change when the apartheid laws were repealed, begs the question with why was its design largely informed by the township model of a regime from which the country was loosening its shackles?[45] Had a new model been devised to match the existing context, perhaps the current injustice would not persist as shown.

Imizamo Yethu is arid, with barely any potential for planting as compared to the green Hout Bay. The location of Hout Bay at the mouth of the Atlantic Ocean allows stimulating views and access to beaches whereas the black community, completely landlocked by the affluence of Hout Bay have restricted views out. On one side they are met with the towering presence of the Table Mountain and on the next, poking out of the greenery is a constant reminder of their inferiority to the white man and to the system – the city's past becomes its present.

The population density of Imizamo Yethu is significantly greater than that of Hout Bay, illustrating the spatial injustice that is apartheid in concentrating a similar population in an outstandingly smaller area of land. It is worth bearing in mind that true population data is rarely extracted for shanty towns due to their informality, therefore the real figures may suggest an even greater disparity.[46]

The township is characterised by abject poverty as people live in 'precarious conditions' in self-made shacks typically of sizes two to four metres wide by three to five metres long, built with corrugated steel, wood, plastic and whatever else found in the vicinity.[47] These materials are mostly unfit for building use after being destroyed by fires which the community is frequently subjected.[48] Excess belongings are placed on the roofs due to a lack of space but also as a means of ensuring stability during strong winds, unfortunately adding to the disfigurement of the township. These issues, alongside the limited access to basic amenities, expose the locals to environmental hazards and high health risks as demonstrated in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic where social distancing is made impossible in the cramped townships.[49]

In comparison, Hout Bay's contemporary houses (Fig 4) are offered full protection against the elements with a brick/concrete masonry and pantile roof systems. A great sense of arrival is afforded to such buildings whose entrances cater for outdoor areas and defensible space adorned with gardens and trees, as opposed to Imizamo Yethu shacks whose fight

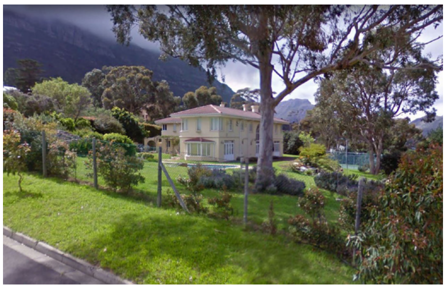

Figure 4. Google Streetview of 5 Saddlers Close, Hout Bay, Cape Town, Digital image, Google

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paradise for the few"?,' The Guardian, 2014 < Apartheid ended 20 years ago, so why is Cape Town still 'a paradise for the few'? | Cities | The Guardian> [accessed 22 February 2021].

[40] Clive K. Corder, 'The Reconstruction and Development Programme: Success or Failure>', Social Indicators Research, 41.1 (1997), 183-203, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27522262> (p. 185).

[41] Steven Robins, 'Informal Settlements Can Be Better Planned', Ground Up, 2020 <Informal settlements can be better planned | GroundUp> [accessed 6 April 2021].

[42] Andrew Skuse and Thomas Cousins, 'Spaces of Resistance: Informal Settlement, Communication and Community Organisation in a Cape Town Township', Urban Studies, 44 (2007), 979-995, <http://dx.doi.org/Spaces of Resistance: Informal Settlement, Communication and Community Orga...: EBSCOhost (oclc.org)> (p. 981); Robins, 'Informal Settlements Can Be Better Planned' <Informal settlements can be better planned | GroundUp>.

[43] Wendy E. Harte, Iraphne R.W. Childs and Peter A. Hastings, 'Imizamo Yethu: a Case Study of Community Resilience to Fire Hazard in an Informal Settlement Cape Town, South Africa', Geographical Research, 47.2 (2009), 142-154, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-5871.2008.00561.x> (p. 144).

[44] Not in My Neighbourhood, dir. by. Kurt Orderson (Azania Rising Productions, 2017).

for space prohibits such detailing. Other luxuries enjoyed by Hout Bay residents include large back gardens, sport pitches and pools – a very active function of apartheid forbidding Blacks the basic living necessities whilst awarding whites a luxurious life.

The socioeconomic contrast between the two neighbourhoods may also encourage a continuing "master-servant" relationship as the racially inferior search for employment in the white suburb. This argument is further supplemented through street views where Black workers are seen toiling in Hout Bay. This legacy prolongs the ghettoisation of Black neighbourhoods – there is no opportunity to move out of the townships as people are geographically constrained and no incentive from the white population to change this.

Although spatial apartheid has predominantly sustained the grand apartheid legacies as discussed, there is a case for the more obscure manifestation of petty apartheid. The physical exclusion of Black participation in everyday life has now become intangible where the positive correlation between Blackness, poverty and periphery living, assuredly bans Black people from upward social mobility and hence their full participation in society – a 'growing unrest' that will continue to 'put pressure on the government.'[50]

Social Responsibility of Designers

Dr Mpho Matsipa, describing the origins of apartheid says the 'city planners are white' and the inner city was understood to be (quoting Herzog) the 'white man's land in barbaric territory'.[51] The majority of academics who discuss township experiences and future improvements are again, predominantly white.[52] While racism may not presently be a prevailing factor, their social class exempts them from experiencing the bitter life in townships; and by extension should disbar them from being the sole planners.

A housing backlog in Cape Town has forced Black communities to take to the streets protesting for the release of unused government-owned land within the CBD to provide housing for up to 67,000 households – the history of Black struggle/activism repositions itself in society.[53] This housing opportunity could reduce the need for travel and improve the economic prospects of the community; hence the need for Capetonian designers to also use their platform and strengthen the advocacy for change. Cape Town's Development Action Group (DAG) was founded to enact change by questioning the constitutional mandate's hold against cities to create equal opportunities for all citizens and through urban regeneration strategies including the creation of continued links between

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45 Orderson.

46 Charles Kahanji, Richard S. Walls and Antonio Cicione, 'Fire Spread Analysis for the 2017 Imizamo Yethu Informal Settlement Conflagration in South Africa', International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, 39 (2019), <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2019.101146> (p. 2).

47 Eric Toussaint, 'From the BRICS Countries to the Townships: Racial and Social Segregation Continues', MR Online, 2019 <From the BRICS countries to the townships: racial and social segregation continues | MR Online> [accessed 5 April 2021]; Kahanji and others, 'Fire Spread Analysis for the 2017 Imizamo Yethu Informal Settlement Conflagration in South Africa', p. 2.

48 Toussaint.

49 Harte, 'Imizamo Yethu: A Case Study of Community Resilience to Fire Hazard in an Informal Settlement Cape Town, South Africa', p. 143; Astrid R.N. Haas and Victoria Delbridge, Africa's High Density Urban Settlements: Cut The Red Tape and Slash the Cost of Housing, The Conversation, 2020 <https://theconversation.com/africas-high-density-urban-settlements-cut-the-red-tape-and-slash-the-cost-of-housing-142577> [accessed 14 April 2021].

50 Trail, 'The Spatial Form of Post Apartheid Cape Town', p. iii.

51 Not in My Neighbourhood, Orderson.

52 Lesley Naa Norle Lokko, 'A Minor Majority', Architectural Research Quarterly, 21.4, (2017) 387-392 < http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1359135518000076> (p. 70).

53 Ameline R. Turpin, 'Cape Town Has Huge Tracts of SANDF Land Lying Unused, Enough For 67,000 Households', Daily Maverick, 2020 <Cape Town has huge tracts of SANDF land lying unused, e... (dailymaverick.co.za)> [accessed 18 February 2021].

communities and government, and policies to keep land prices sensitive to marginalised citizens. [54]

Whilst public movements attempt to address the need for transformational change in the built environment, education is a department in which there are still severe setbacks, owing to the lack of material founded on improved access to universities.[55] The ability for education to create opportunities for Black students in spatial disciplines is one that should not be overlooked as this could mould generations of practitioners with a sensitivity towards excluded citizens.

One must realise, however, that all efforts to be inclusive of disenfranchised students will be rendered useless if there is no decolonisation of the existing pedagogy. There is still an overreliance on westernised planning principles, which have little to no place in the local context and a lack of situated knowledge inevitably leads to an inability to address deep-rooted issues.[56] It has been argued that most South African universities are reluctant to address socio-economic issues in planning, which is self-contradictory as town planning is never achieved in a vacuum, and its cities' urban grain make it even more necessary to shift the teaching of history and planning to achieve greater realism by recognising and implementing African planning concepts.[57]

Other means of enacting change is through participatory planning, a concept which has grown to be associated with negative connotations in South Africa.[58] Despite inclusive planning becoming a component of planning legislation to create a new 'institutional attitude towards town planning,' Cape Town is still home to many tried and failed government initiatives, such as the RDP subsidy housing; the common factor being the forfeiture of inclusive planning methods for rapid delivery of housing.[59]

Government commitment to participatory planning is argued to be 'tokenistic' with no political will to see this through.[60] Ultimately, while this objective has failed on a governmental level, the absence of community trust towards the state has also grown, forcing them to turn to foreigners for help.[61]

The Niall Mellon Foundation Trust (now Mellon Educate) was founded in Ireland in 2002 for the purpose of improving communities and their spaces, and now provides 175,000 homes in South Africa's townships.[62] The trust first visited Imizamo Yethu in 2002 when the first set of volunteers arrived to construct twenty-five homes. This scheme included the community in all phases of the building process whilst providing permanent employment (hence a steady source of income) for 'more than 2,000 people from the local townships' and training where necessary.[63] Such opportunities are exactly what is needed in the townships and where government intervention fails. Through this, younger children become

[54] Development Action Group, DAG, n.d <What drives us | Development Action Group (dag.org.za)> [accessed 29 October 2021].

[55] Carin Smith, fin24, 2018, <7 ways to 'decolonise' urban planning in SA – academic | Fin24 (news24.com)> [accessed 18 October 2021].

[56] Smith.

[57] Asanda Ngoasheng, 'Debunking the Apartheid Spatial Grid: Developing a Socially Just Architecture Curriculum at a University of Technology', Journal of Asian and African Studies, 56.1 (2021), 135-149 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909620946856> (pp. 135-137).

[58] Adam Andani, 'Alternative Approaches to Community Participation Beyond Formal Structures: Evidence from Langa Within the Municipality of Cape Town', Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, 20 (2017), 83-97 <http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/cjlg.v020.6084> (p.85).

[59] Rebecca A. Hillyer, 'Planning for Inclusion in a South African Town: A Case Study of Informal Trading in Stellenbosch Municipality' (unpublished Master's thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2018) p.16; Philipp Horn, and others, 'Towards Citywide Participatory Planning: Emerging Community-led Practices in Three African Cities', Global Development Institute, (2018), pp. 2-32 <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3225770> (pp.18-19).

[60] Hillyer, p. 19.

[61] Hillyer.

[62] Mellon Educate, Mellon Educate, n.d <Education Charity Projects in Africa - Mellon Educate> [accessed 26 October 2021].

[63] Educate.

exposed to spatial work, although formal education would prove more successful longer term.

Although NGOs may alleviate the pain suffered by communities, there is a real concern about entrusting foreigners to rid the city of its segregationist past. An unnamed volunteer for Mellon Educate has disclosed that after work some volunteers engage in antisocial behaviour as a result of irresponsible drinking. The argument is that if the charity work continues, other exchanges between foreigners and locals are fine, regardless of their form, thereby presenting an issue of ethics and morals.[64]

There is also regret in foreigners recognising that they are the best option for the people of townships:

And so, as a nation, we have our drunken and disorderly moments and our lapses of judgement, but overall, we are the greatest of all hopes for the people of the informal settlement around the rubbish-strewn side streets of the corrugated iron township in the scorching African sun.[65]

This comes as a devastating blow to the government, leaving it to the hands of outsiders to correct a long-seated issue, which ironically, was initiated by outsiders. It therefore begs the question as to whether the country has truly healed from its white saviour complex.

Conclusion

When politics is married to design, the outcome is stronger, whether for the benefit or detriment of the city's population. The tool of colonial design has been exploited to create the Cape Town many know today, from the use of cartography to exclude indigenous representation on maps, fuelling the removal of native presence from the coloniser's mind to the creation of the 'model apartheid city' – a dystopia still causing pain and suffering after so many years. Finally, design is utilised in townships to create an authoritarian urban pattern to control the marginalised.[66]

'Eventually you become groomed to a specific way of thinking which people term as the "township way of thinking" because your horizons shrink.'[67]

It is therefore clear that independence, in its sincerest form, has not been achieved in South Africa. The majority still lack the freedom to establish themselves in their cities of birth, thereby failing to reshape their cities and themselves. Evidence also shows that successful campaigning, NGOs' participatory processes and passing of democratic laws do not grapple with the root of the issue. Education needs to be thoroughly enhanced to be inclusive of marginalized students and the histories that built the cities. As argued by Lesley Lokko, the often-mentioned topic of 'diversity

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64 Alison O'riordan, Independent.ie, 2009 <The untold darker side of charity work in South Africa - Independent.ie> [accessed 27 October 2021].

65 O'riordan, Independent.ie, 2009.

66 Trail, 'The Spatial Form of Post Apartheid Cape Town', p. 11.

67 The Heart of Apartheid, Burnett.

68 Lesley Lokko, The Architect's Newspaper, 2021 <Lesley Lokko discusses race, academia, and the

and inclusion' in the sphere of the built environment is one that everyone simply pays 'lip service' with no real determination to follow it through.[68] Whilst it is understood that diversity in its truest form would take years to achieve in the education and profession of spatial disciplines, the effects of ignoring this paradigm shift have already been seen and felt in South Africa – and is thus something that can no longer be ignored by governments, designers and all other spatial agents.

As professionals in the built environment, our duty is to the people; to foster a way of thinking where design is only adopted as an instrument towards the improvement of life and not the opposite. South Africa must therefore re-weave design and politics into one, to take an active stance in sterilising its cities of a sinful past and faithfully progress its movement towards the democratic era it deeply yearns for.

Biography

Aisha Sillah is a recent BA Architecture graduate from the University of Sheffield, Sheffield School of Architecture where she has developed an interest in the social aspects of design. Her keenness to positively transform spaces has been inspired by her work within the university community, particularly her strong advocacy for diversity and inclusion within architecture and SSoA. Aisha has an ever-growing passion for the intersection of politics, cities and people and the role of designers in managing this relationship. She looks forward to the opportunity to learn and grow whilst demonstrating this passion in her new role as an Architectural Assistant at Adjaye Associates.

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A Conversation on Race and Gentrification: a response to ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action’

Michael Ford with Rebecca Acheampong

Please scan or click the code to access the conversation

Introduction

My aim for this conversation is to explore and highlight some of the issues surrounding race and class within the built environment. I use my MArch dissertation – ‘Perry Barr: An Exploration of Commercial Gentrification’, which explores issues between commercial gentrification and its effects on community and identity through lived experience. With this as a point of reflection, I aim to present and collaboratively reflect with students at Sheffield School of Architecture on issues surrounding race and equality in the hope of continuing conversation around race and acknowledging the importance of difference. Moreover, the article is used as a catalyst to gauge conversation between students of architecture in relation to race and education. Whilst my time at the School of Architecture has seen efforts to create an inclusive environment, the conversation surrounding race has not been as widely acknowledged.

This recording, a conversation between myself and Rebecca Acheampong, is generated from photos taken from my dissertation research and discusses the effects of commercial gentrification on independent Black-, Asian- and minority ethnic- (BAME) owned businesses in Perry Barr, Birmingham. Comparative case studies look at businesses that have been displaced and communities that have been impacted. These are used in conjunction with personal reflection, interviews and narratives.

Biographies

Michael Ford is a sixth year MArch student from the University of Sheffield School of Architecture. With experiences of and a special interest in social inequalities, in addition to understanding place through the lived experience of local communities and our urban environments, he wrote the dissertation, 'Perry Barr: An Exploration of Commercial Gentrification', as a catalyst to further explore ideas around race and social inequalities, commercial gentrification, its effects on community and identity through the lived experience.

Rebecca Acheampong, also a sixth year at the School of Architecture, is of Italian and Ghanaian heritage. She has been invited to respond to this dissertation highlighting her personal experiences and speaking from her own position. She has a background in community and participatory design, particularly amongst underrepresented migrating community groups and acknowledges the importance of offering her experiences within the built environment in response to the 'Call to Action'.

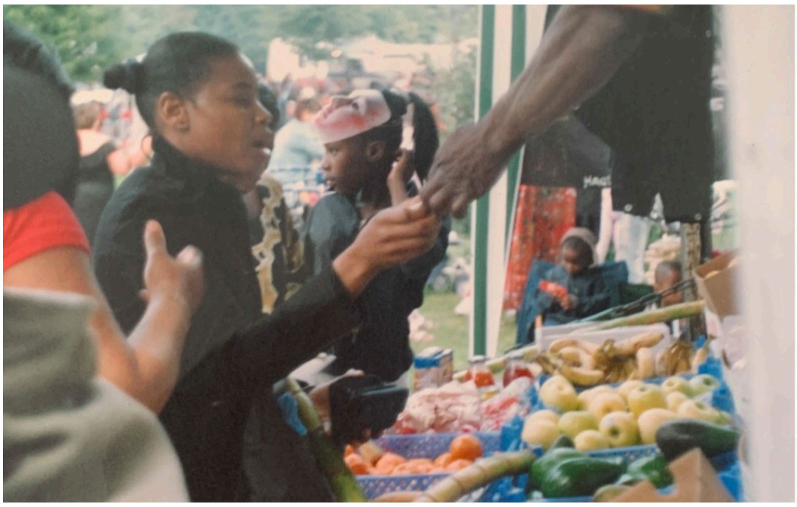

Fig 1. Photo of my father selling to customers from his Caribbean food van at the Birmingham Carnival. Photographer unknown, n.d.

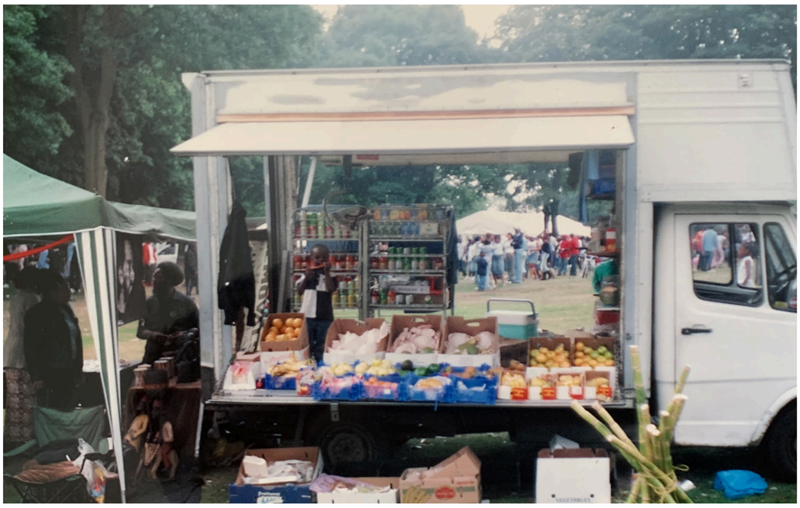

Fig 2. Photo of myself stood eating watermelon in my father's Caribbean food van at the Birmingham Carnival. Photographer unknown, n.d.

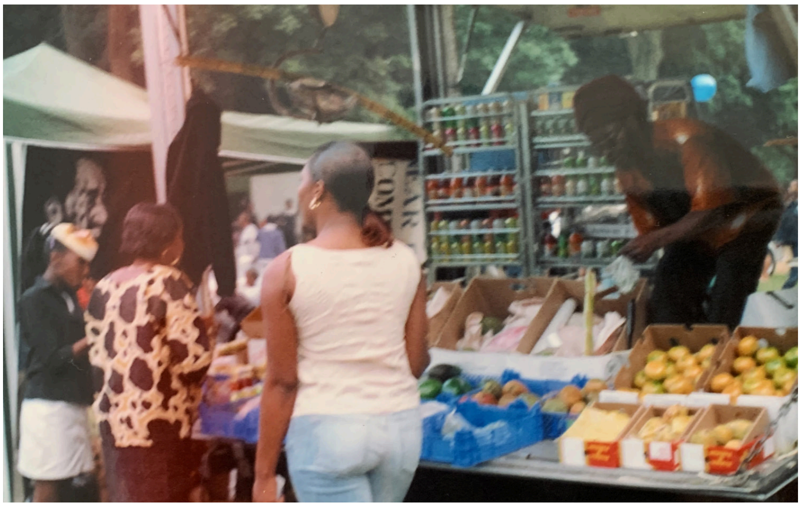

Fig 3. Photo of my father preparing sugarcane for customers from his Caribbean food van. Photographer unknown, n.d.

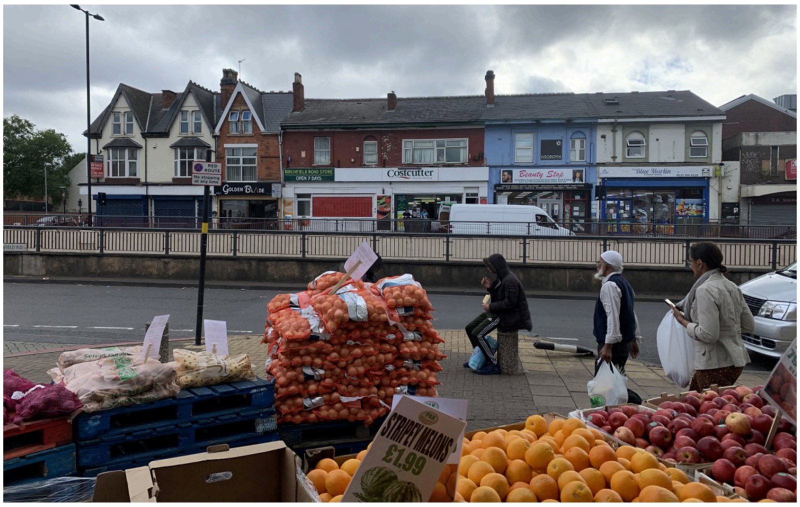
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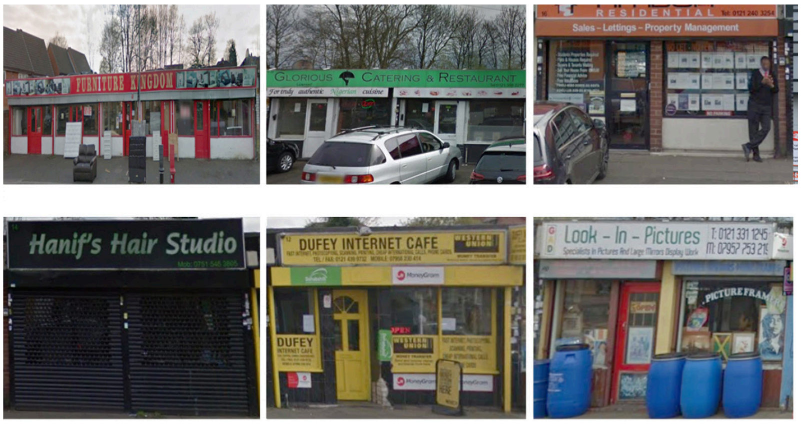
Fig 4. View of independent BAME owned businesses located within Perry Barr. Photographer Michael Ford, 2020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DUFEY
MoneyGram
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PICTURE FRAMING

Fig 5. Photographic survey of local BAME owned businesses in Perry Barr. Photographer Michael Ford, 2020

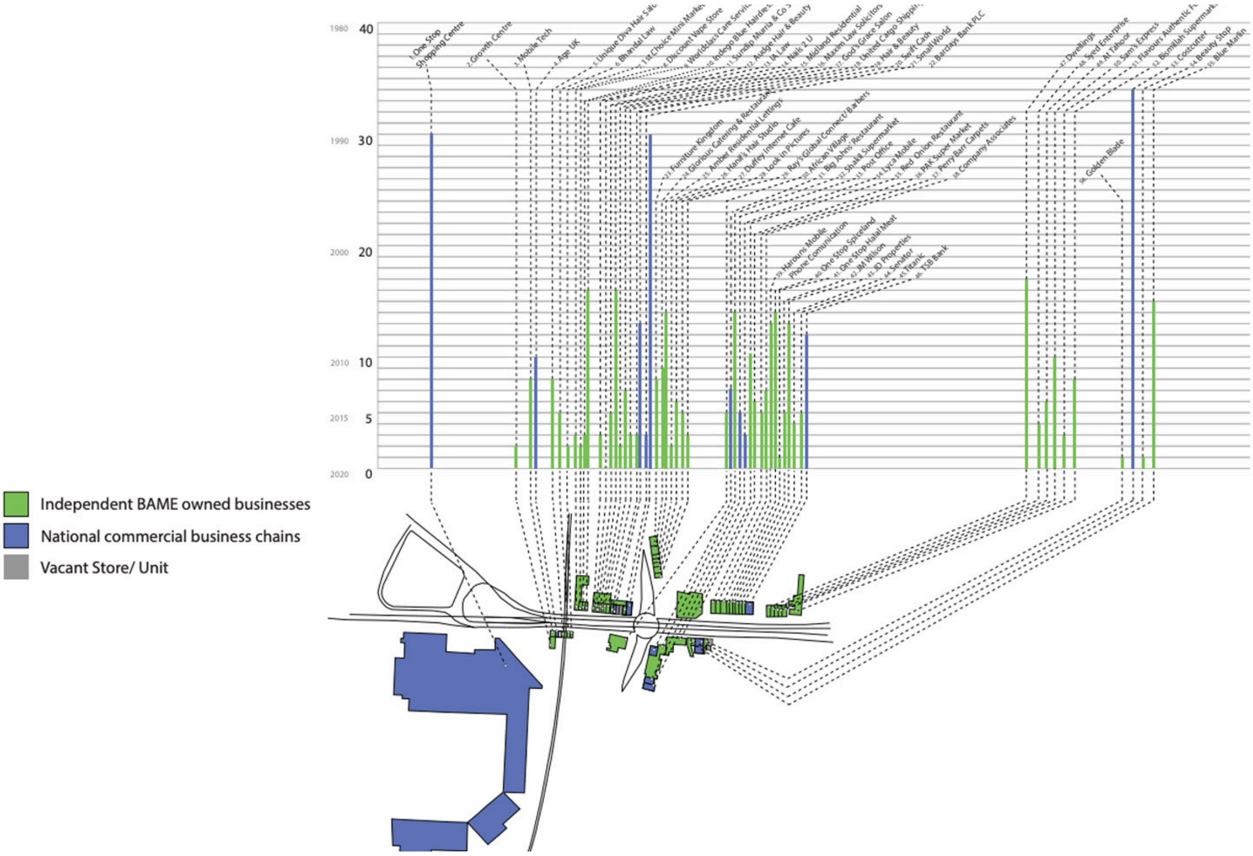

Fig 6. Site plan diagram to illustrate the relationship between national commercial business chains and independent BAME owned businesses. Image by Michael Ford, 2020

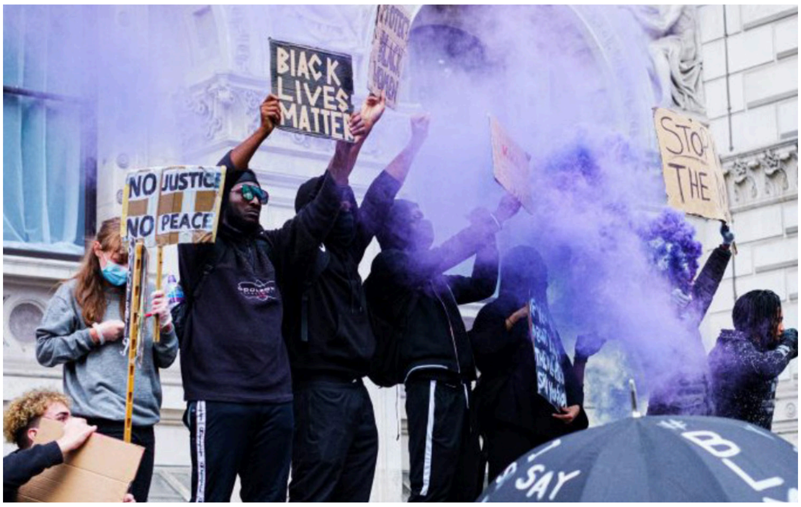
BLACK LIVES MATTER
NO JUSTICE NO PEACE
STOP THE
SAY
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Fig 7. London Black Lives Matter Peaceful Protest from Vauxhall to Westminster. Photographer Michael Ford, 2020

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Indians on the Plantation Frontier of British Malaya

Anonymous

Introduction

British colonial rule played a critical role in creating and sustaining divisions within the multi-ethnic fabric of Malaysian society. British control over the nation through emphasis on the Malay character resulted in racism entrenching itself in the legal fabric of the independent nation-state, its legacy persisting through Article 153 of the Constitution of Malaysia. Apart from the 'safeguarding' of the 'special' positions of Malays, this clause expounds on the establishment of quotas within the civil service, public education and public scholarships; the discussion of its repeal being illegal.[1] Fundamentally, the roots of these 'affirmative actions' lie in the legal fiction of Malay supremacy fuelled by the British to exclude Indians and Chinese from effective power. Thus, 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' in many ways echoes the appeal by minorities in Malaysia for equality, albeit within divergent contexts.

Against this backdrop, the relevance of this study on the plight of Malaysian Indians lies in its ability to provoke a rethink on the relationship between architecture and power in response to the 'Call to Action' and its endeavour to equalise and diversify the curriculum. As part of a Masters dissertation, this exploration of colonisation and the making of "race" offers an alternative perspective of the relationship between architecture and colonialism; architecture taking on a broader social meaning in place of the outdated outlook predominantly taught. Essentially, it explores racism as the foundation of the built environment and the role of colonialism in this process, reinforcing intersectionality and acknowledging the diverse range of lived experiences often unrepresented in mainstream architectural education.

Prologue

In Malaysian society, race is a fundamental organising principle, a signifier of difference and an ascribed identity. At birth, one's race is determined as 'Malay', 'Chinese', 'Indian' or 'Other', inscribed on one's birth certificate and eventually on an identity card – an unchangeable aspect of identity.[2] Critically, its foundations lie in the political economy of British colonial rule in the region and its influence in the postcolonial imagining of the nation continues to reverberate in the repeated articulation of race as a reliable category of difference.

As a Malaysian of Indian descent, I seek to investigate the notion of race in relation to space, and their intertwined aspects from a perspective often overlooked in contemporary discourses on discrimination. Since the built environment is inevitably shaped by bodies of knowledge and philosophy, an appreciation for the complex microhistories that influence the knowledge of such bases is fundamental. In many ways, this essay's nuanced exploration of race rooted in the structuring of the colonial economy urges one to interrogate the often unacknowledged impact that racism has on the creation of place and space – imploring a rethink on our understandings of architecture and the legacy of colonisation.

Indians on the Plantation Frontier of British Malaya

Malaya's pivotal position along the shortest sea-route between India and China has made it, since ancient times, an arena for conflicting foreign interests, each leaving an indelible influence on its history. Diffusion of Indian culture in the region led to the flourishing of Indianised kingdoms, reaching their zenith with the Malacca Sultanate (A.D. 1400-1511).[3] The Portuguese conquest of Malacca in the early sixteenth century marked the emergence of colonial control in the region; a period that would last over four centuries; comprised predominantly of British dominion.[4] The unparalleled transformative process of Malaya from jungle into highly developed agricultural landscape during the British colonial era stands as a reminder of the contributions of Indians to the nation. (The term Malaya will be used throughout instead of Malaysia to denote the pre-independence focus that this narrative emphasises.)

In present-day Malaysia, categories of race and naming – whilst losing their salience on the ground – continue to be mobilised by the state as a lens to view society.[5] Escalating tensions challenge the country's paradigm

[1] Article 153 – Special Position of Bumiputras and Legitimate Interests of Other Communities 1957 (Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Part .XII), (Malaysia: The Commissioner of Law Revision, 2006), p.142.

[2] Sharmani P. Gabriel, 'The Meaning of Race in Malaysia: Colonial, Post-colonial and Possible New Conjunctures', Ethnicities, 15.6 (London: SAGE, 2015), pp.782-809 (p.783).

[3] Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.2.

[4] Sandhu.

[5] Sharmani P. Gabriel, 'The Meaning of Race in Malaysia: Colonial, Post-colonial and Possible New Conjunctures', Ethnicities, 15.6 (London: SAGE, 2015), pp.782-809 (p.782)

of pluralism, generating space for critical reflection on the meaning of race and its foundations in British colonialism. At the forefront of these conflicts lies the country's large Indian minority – their beginnings characterised by large scale migration to the region in the 1900s as crucial components of the plantation economy.[6] The remnants of a system deeply rooted in colonial policy and the manufacturing of racial perceptions continues to echo in new tragedies – their contributions now largely forgotten.

References to the nation's 2 million Indians (or 7% of the population) as 'immigrants', 'squatters' or even 'trespassers' demonstrate their unchanging and unchangeable historical identities; distancing minorities from their national-cultural identity as Malaysians.[7] Existing precariously at the juncture between old empire and new state, they resemble victims of colonialism and nationalism. The former plantation community grapples with issues of broken families, single mothers, addiction, violence, gangsterism and hopelessness.[8] Systemic oppression and racism that plague the region have resulted in this community finding itself on the margins of society – opportunities for legitimate success and upward mobility being scarce.

Evidently, the categorisation of citizens by their ethnic origins has made them immigrants in their own homeland – a constant reminder of their presence in Malaysia but not of Malaysia. Several generations later, the predicament of this diasporic community recalls that of their immigrant forefathers who found themselves 'unassimilated to the emerging structures of institutional power, [and] rejected by the established order.'[9] The synonymity of Indian identity with rubber plantations is a poignant reminder of an unshakeable past that continues to define perception, policy and urbanism in the Malay peninsula. My initial investigation of rubber plantations as the seat of Indian life and agency establishes a crucial link in understanding the origins of Malaysian-Indian identity and its formation.

An analysis of four pivotal facets of Indian engagement in the plantation economy underpins the approach to understanding the intricacies of this theme, based on historical research and archival materials complemented by oral histories. Drawing upon Ravindra K. Jain, who asserts that the plantation was a 'total institution' – the lives of Indians defined by its boundaries,[10] my masters thesis explored the establishment of rubber estates and labour recruitment (which I have entitled 'Establishment of Space'); the study proceeds to explore the shifting status of labourers ('Transition in Space'), their confinement within the estate domain ('Confinement within Space') and concludes with the decline in the rubber industry and post-independence dissolution of estates ('Dissolution of Space'). This essay will delve into a more focused analysis of the critical relationship between the colonial economy and race through the lens of rubber plantations, offering a nuanced perspective on race from the complex microhistories of colonialism.

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[6] Kernial Singh Sandhu and A. Mani, Indian Communities in Southeast Asia (Singapore: Times Academic Press and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), p.162.

[7] Sharmani P. Gabriel, 'The Meaning of Race in Malaysia: Colonial, Post-colonial and Possible New Conjunctures', Ethnicities, 15.6 (London: SAGE, 2015), pp.782-809 (p.800).

[8] Dashini Jeyathurai, 'Labouring Bodies, Labouring Histories: The Malaysian-Indian Estate Girl', The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 47.3 (London: SAGE, 2012), pp. 303-323 (p.305); Edward Wadie Said, Culture and Imperialism (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), p.402.

[9] Edward Wadie Said, Culture and Imperialism (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), p.402.

[10] Clarence E.Glick, review of South Indians on the Plantation Frontier in Malaya, by Ravindra K.Jain, Journal of the American Oriental Society, 93.2 (Ann Arbor: American Oriental Society, 1973), pp.252-253, p.252.

Rubber Estates

Indian overseas migration to Malaya was a phenomenon that predated the period of colonial rule in the region, evidenced by the unmistakable similarity between Malay culture and that of ancient India.[11] Nevertheless, colonisation can be perceived as an inevitable force that caused a shift in patterns of migration and to the demographics of groups of migrants. The Industrial Revolution coupled with the advent of large scale manufacturing in Britain drew attention to the prospect of exploiting colonies as sources of raw materials.[12]

Colonial attraction to the soils of Malaya as a source of revenue catalysed the development of the plantation economy in the region, leading to the establishment of rubber estates across the peninsula. Symbolically, this marks the emergence of settlements comprised predominantly of Indians who laboured on these plantations; their manual labour sowing the seeds of prosperity for the British Empire. The flourishing of these rubber estates will be analysed in conjunction with the plantation economy as its impetus and patterns of labour recruitment that followed while delving into concepts of racial perception throughout.

Stemming from the colonial state's active encouragement to exploit the lands, rubber estates began to proliferate in the Malayan landscape from the late 1800s.[13] Plantations, often located in the depths of the hinterlands as a response to environmental conditions and transportation links, resemble capitalist production nodes; they were industrialised in both form and function. In contrast to the largely dispersed and sprawling settlements of indigenous communities, Indian settlements are and have been significantly nucleated – a direct consequence of a system that divided labour along racial lines.[14] Patterns of settlement were spatialised based on convenience (labourers grouped in dwellings closely situated to staff quarters and offices) and have remained largely unchallenged since its inception; further accentuated by resettlement programmes during the Malayan Emergency on the pretext of security.

Tracing these striking patterns of nucleated settlements suggests a connection to the traditionally nucleated villages of India from where labourers originally migrated – a re-enactment of spatial occupation transcending space and time. Regardless, this pattern of settlement remains predominantly within the confines of the rubber estates whilst urban centres are laid out with little or no resemblance to the traditional town patterns of India.[15] Essentially, these urban spaces were set out as centres of administration and the gathering of goods for export – the

[11] Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.297.

[12] Richard B. Sheridan, 'The Plantation Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, 1625-1775', Caribbean Studies, 9.3, (Washington: Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1969), pp.5-25, p.7.

[13] J. Thomas Lindblad, Foreign Investment in Southeast Asia in the Twentieth Century (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 47.

[14] Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.218.

[15] Sandhu, p.219.

state and its peoples reduced to a commodity and patterns of habitation designed to elicit control.

Inevitably, the plantation economy necessitated the acquisition of cheap land. Often such lands were in isolated frontier areas, spatially and socially segregated from urban centres and the mining settlements of Chinese communities – a transformation of virgin jungle into ethnically homogenous clusters.[16] To this end, the plantation became the 'boundary of existence' for the Indian worker – trapped in a cycle of dependency and poverty.[17]

The Plantation Economy

Malaya as a land suited to the development of crops paved the path for its unforeseen economic prosperity, albeit at the expense of the colonised. Kernial Singh Sandhu, author of Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957, affirms the shift of focus to the soils of colonies, stating that 'their thoughts thus turned, quite naturally, to the soil as an outlet of their surplus capital'.[18] Perceptions of Malaya by officials as an 'undeveloped estate' essentially fuelled the process of land acquisition for plantations – exacerbated by the gifting of land to pioneers.[19] Ultimately, the "gifting" of "colonised" land exemplifies colonial conceptions of superiority and authority over their subjects, reaffirming the "civilising" role of colonisation.

Commercial agriculture took precedence over other forms of enterprise, bolstered by fears of depleting tin supplies, the primary source of dependence thus far. It is this active encouragement that created a favourable climate for the capital from within and beyond the country to flow into commercial agriculture. Robert Home aptly attributes the establishment of the British Empire through the 'planting' of colonies' – a notion reinforced by previous references to the Colonial Office as the Board of Plantations.[20]

Under these circumstances, the cultivation of crops such as spices, pepper, sugar and coffee were soon overtaken by rubber – a consequence of the rubber rush of the 1900s.[21] Land in Malaya's countryside was swiftly reclaimed by a plethora of companies and individual planters seeking the fortunes offered by the "white gold". In this regard, Malaya's landscape and its peoples were perceived as nothing more than a resource to be exploited – the profits flowing to the treasury of the Empire.

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[16] Alec Gordon, 'Towards a Model of Asian Plantation Systems', Journal of Contemporary Asia, 31.3 (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2001), pp.306-330 (p.319).

[17] Amarjit Kaur, Connecting Seas and Connected Ocean Rims: Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans and China Seas Migrations from the 1830s to the 1930s, ed. by Donna R. Gabaccia and Dirk Hoerder (Boston: BRILL, 2011), p. 164.

[18] Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.48.

[19] Jack Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, Africa and the Victorians (London: Macmillan and Company, 1961), p.396.

[20] Robert K. Home, Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities (London: Spon, 1997), p.12.

[21] G.D. Babcock, History of the United States Rubber Company (Indiana: Indiana University, 1966), p. 419.

The Labour Gap

Fundamentally, the lack of labour-saving mechanical equipment necessitated the employment of gangs of labourers to perform the simple and repetitive tasks involved with rubber cultivation.[22] Calling almost exclusively for unskilled workers, the climate of the peninsula allowed for year-round growing requiring a constant high demand for labour throughout the year with nominal change to the workload. Owing to the training period of at least a year before a labourer could be productive, it was envisaged that a labourer should stay on a plantation for at least several years or ideally for the rest of their life.[23] As natives and 'owners of the soil,' the indigenous Malays were seen as a group less inclined to work fixed hours of the labour day – appearing content with their self-subsistent rural lifestyle – thus discouraging their involvement in the plantation economy.[24] Such circumstances inevitably contributed to the necessity to turn to immigrant labour.

Whilst African slave labour had been abolished by the early 1800s, white labour was an unimaginable concept since 'they would insist on decent wage standards'.[25] Ultimately, the prestige of the Europeans had to be upkept, hence their involvement in the agricultural economy as common labourers was inconceivable. Upon assessing various sources of potential labour, the Indian became indispensable – particularly the South Indian peasant who, according to some of the accounts that Sandhu uncovers, was 'malleable, worked well under supervision and was easily manageable'.[26] Colonial attitudes towards this specific demographic coupled with their low standard of living in the motherland secured a source of labour deprived of self-respect, designating their place in society. Beyond the realm of economics, Indian immigration into Malaya can also be viewed as a desirable political move to counterbalance the growing Chinese influence in the region – ensuring British interests throughout.

Intrinsically, the impoverishment of the poorer classes of the Madras Presidency by British imperialism left peasants and artisans desperate to earn a livelihood and inclined to accept risks associated with temporary migration to foreign lands.[27] Essentially, 'the labourers were recruited from areas where the destruction of local industry, famines or political unrest had led to widespread hardship', providing an easily manipulated resource for the colonial state to exploit.[28]

Poverty and desperation in rural colonial India becomes an apparatus to stimulate a mass migration – a legacy of lives bound in servitude to the Empire. A community, largely from the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, characterised by their lowest rank in the discriminatory caste system of the subcontinent was perceived to be appropriately suited to labour with little resistance to migrating under the pretext of a better future. Sandhu succinctly describes this as the imperative to ensure a copious flow of

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[22] Committee on Work on Plantations, Basic Problems of Plantation Labour (Geneva, International Labour Organisation, 1950), p.25.

[23] Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.52.

[24] Sandhu.

[25] Sandhu, p.53.

[26] Kernial Singh Sandhu and A. Mani, Indian Communities in Southeast Asia (Singapore: Times Academic Press and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), p.152.

[27] Michael Roger Stenson, Class, Race and Colonialism in West Malaysia (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1980), p.17.

[28] Michael Roger Stenson, Industrial Conflict in Malaya (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.1-2.

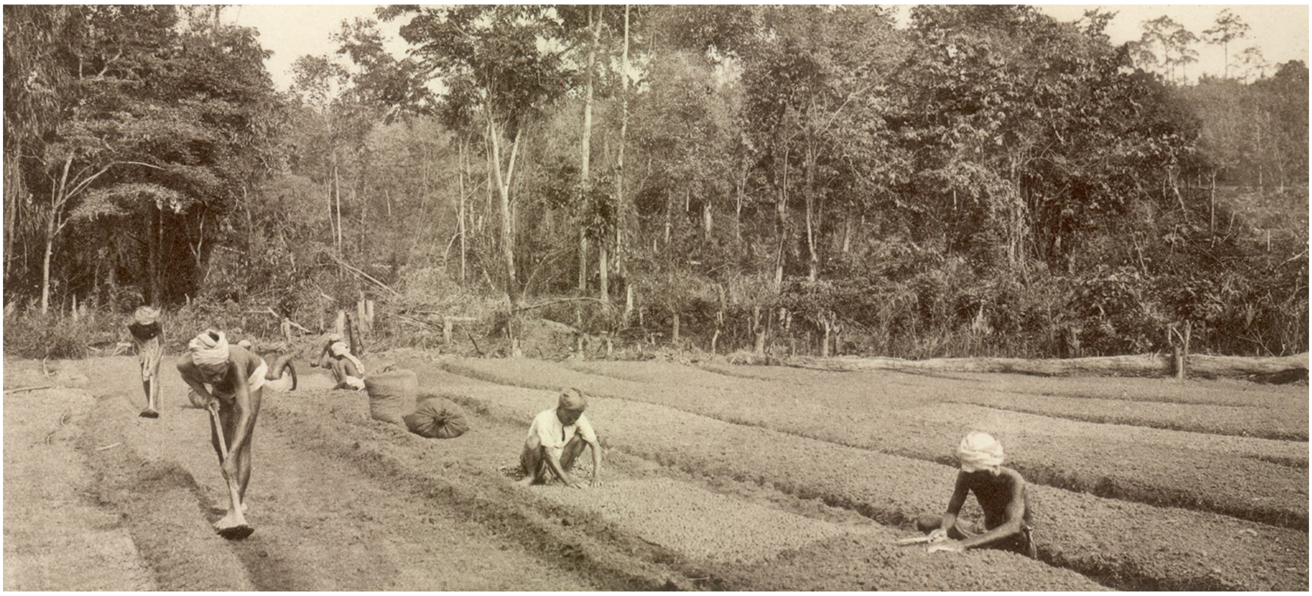

Figure 1: A group of labourers sowing rubber seeds circa 1905. Extensive manual labour was a crucial component in the 'success' of the plantation economy in extracting profits through exploitative processes. Photo: Public Domain, Leiden University. https://picryl.com/media/kitlv-101110-kleingrothe-cj-medan-seed-beds-of-a-rubber-plantation-in-sumatra-3fa3f8 [accessed 23 September 2021]

labour – of cheap labour that can sustain the development of British Malaya, 'a death trap yawning to engulf the surplus population of India.'[29]

However, existing patterns of communal living within isolated villages scattered across South India would serve as a challenge in this process – generating a reluctance to surrender familiarity in exchange for uncertainty. Colonial policy on both Indian and Malayan governments aimed at encouraging migration would nonetheless soon materialise the expected mass movement of labour – setting the scene for the inevitable proliferation of rubber estates across the peninsula.[30] Accordingly, propaganda to project a favourable image of Malaya in the minds of potential South Indian labour was intensified; Malaya being referred to as 'the land of opportunity and plenty' in various South Indian languages.[31] Such pressures of recruitment and inducement applied at appropriate psychological moments in the context of dire poverty in rural South India successfully overcame the non-existence of migratory mobility in the Indian peasantry – fuelling the Imperial economy across every stage.[32] Ultimately, this unlimited labour supply would be its own downfall; the Indian labourer having 'neither value nor price'.[33]

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[29] Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.60.

[30] Sandhu.

[31] Sandhu, p.62.

[32] Lanka Sundaram, International Aspects of Indian Emigration (London: East and West, 1930), p.4.

[33] K.A. Neelakandha Aiyer, Indian Problems in Malaya: A Brief Survey in Relation to Emigration (Kuala Lumpur: Indian Office, 1938), p.61.

Employment

Labour recruitment in the early phase was primarily through indenture, a system akin to slavery wherein labourers serve their employers for a fixed period paying off the debt of immigration costs.[34] Indenture can be viewed as the bargaining away of a labourer's personal freedom for an extended period – the agreement renewed only if the worker is still productive or terminated if they were not. Whilst slavery had infamy written upon its terminology, indenture was a system that disguised itself whilst emulating the worst abuses of its predecessor, slavery. Such systems not only served the economic motives of the Empire but more importantly they restrained labourers from acquiring social mobility. A labourer needed their employer's permission to change employer and any attempt at absconding was a 'crime' which would need to be paid off in the form of unpaid work.[35] Other infractions including the 'lack of proper respect' for an employer or 'failure to work diligently' were punishable by means such as flogging, clearly indicating the inhumane treatment of labourers, seen as unworthy of dignity.[36]

Employers' abilities to extend the labourer's period of indenture and exceedingly low wages would soon result in resentment towards their employment in the land of fortunes, tales of their suffering in Malaya filtering back to India. Britain's Anti-Slavery Society's efforts bore fruit in 1910 when indentured labour was officially abolished; its replacement being the kangani system.[37] In this system, a kangani, or headman, on behalf of his employer, recruited labour from his village in the Indian subcontinent – the labourer having confidence in his master due to their shared lived experiences, crucial in expediting labour recruitment.[38] Nonetheless, this system was only a variant of the indenture system since the debt (and thus the labourer) would be sold to a planter, illustrating the unmistakable forced nature of labour recruitment in rubber plantations. Such forms of employment thus bound labourers in a cycle of debt and servitude to the Empire; their freedom assured only upon the clearance of their debt. Critically, these aspects of bondage and servitude that exemplify the plantation economy were indispensable in sustaining the Empire.

Labour force

Until the 1920s, the labour force was predominantly comprised of males – married men discouraged from emigrating due to low wages and unsuitable conditions on the plantation frontier for families.[39] Changes in policy, however, caused a marked shift in immigration patterns with women entering the labour force. Significantly, this marks the point at which the rubber estate morphs from a workplace to a microcosm of Indian existence in Malaya. The transitioning form of estates through the lens of the status of labourers was defined by colonial policy and the

Figure 2: The rubber plantations of British Malaya became the place where the Indian working class grew up, received education, laboured, reproduced and died - completing the cycle of life within the plantation confines. Public Domain, from the British Library's collections, 2013. https://picryl.com/media/image-taken-from-page-101-of-camping-and-tramping-in-malaya-fifteen-years-pioneering-242c7f [accessed 18 October 2021

navigation of emergent hierarchies. Ultimately, changing policies on the pretence of ensuring a more settled population of Indians exemplifies the essence of the existence, reproduction and replenishment of bonded labour within the plantation economy, under capitalist conditions.

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[34] Ravindra K. Jain, 'Tamilian Labour and Malayan Plantations, 1840-1938', Economic and Political Weekly, 28.43 (India: Sameeksha Trust, 1993), pp.2363-2370 (p.2364).

[35] Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.85.

[36] Alec Gordon, 'Towards a Model of Asian Plantation Systems', Journal of Contemporary Asia, 31.3 (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2001), pp.306-330 (p.315).

[37] Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.86.

[38] Ravindra K. Jain, 'Tamilian Labour and Malayan Plantations, 1840-1938', Economic and Political Weekly, 28.43 (India: Sameeksha Trust, 1993), pp.2363-2370 (p.2365).

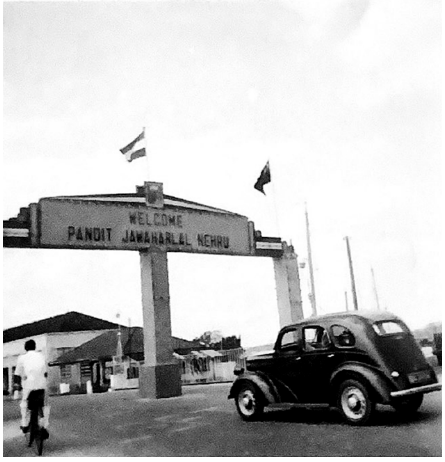

Figure 3: A gateway into a rubber estate with a welcome notice to India's first Prime Minister. These gateways and fences symbolically demarcated the extent of the labourer's existence in Malaya. Photo: Author's family archives, circa 1950.

Post-independence pressures from the plantation capital to rationalise production through mechanisation and the sales of estates by departing European companies essentially made Indian labour redundant in the rubber industry.[40] Alienated, fractured and marginalised, these powerless workers were expelled into urban slums with little compensation and scarce government support.[41] The repressive weapons of imperialism, capitalism and racism forced this ex-estate labouring community to eke out a living on the periphery of the informal economy – hardship, depression and despair synonymous with their existence. Their unequal partnership in the new nation was reflected in policies that alienated minorities from a share in the nation's economic prosperity – their constitutional legitimacy effectively curbed.

Escalating racial tensions and the riots that ensued in 1969 marked the point at which policies to promote greater equity and participation in the country's development were drafted.[42] Ultimately, this took the form of the controversial New Economic Policy of 1971, a socio-economic restructuring of society by invoking the inalienable rights of Malays as 'sons of soil'.[43] Evidently, the institutionalised segregation of the colonial state was replicated by the postcolonial government – a reproduction of the same harmful systems that the independence movement allegedly resisted. Ultimately, inequality was the price that minorities had to pay for a stake in the country that they contributed phenomenally to – its legacy echoing across generations.

> ' The idea of race is a situational imperative; if it is not there to begin with, it tends to develop in a plantation society because it is a useful, maybe even necessary, principle of control.' [44]

Colonial rule inevitably brought with it European racial theory, especially within the context of a racialised labour force. Charles Hirschman, author of the article 'The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology', argues that distinction in skin pigmentation, initial cultural differences and belief systems played a lesser role than institutional systems of exploitation requiring ideological justification in the construct of race.[45] Prior to British colonisation, racial constructs may have centred on ethnocentrism, the belief of superiority of one's own peoples and culture, instead of a racial ideology of inherent differences. Crucially, the former permits absorption whilst the latter demarcates caste lines – evidenced by intermarriage that demonstrates the relative openness of ethnic relations prior to British rule.[46] European images of Asian peoples and their consequent effect on inter-ethnic relationships can

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[39] Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement 1786-1957 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.82.

[40] Viswanathan Selvaratnam, 'From Servitude to Underclass: The Empire's South Indian 'Coolies' in Postcolonial Malaysia', Economic & Political Weekly, 59.18 (Mumbai: Athena Information Solutions Pvt. Ltd., 2021), pp.43-50 (p.48).

[41] Selvaratnam.

[42] Sharmani P. Gabriel, 'The Meaning of Race in Malaysia: Colonial, Post-colonial and Possible New Conjunctures', Ethnicities, 15.6 (London: SAGE, 2015), pp.782-809 (p.792).

[43] Daniel P. S. Goh, 'Arrested Multiculturalisms: Race, Capitalism, and State Formation in Malaysia and Singapore'. In Multiculturalism in the British Commonwealth: Comparative Perspectives on Theory and Practice, ed. by Richard T. Ashcroft and Mark Bevir, 1st ed. (California: University of California Press, 2019), pp.191–211 (p.202).

[44] Edgar Tristram Thompson, 'The Plantation as a Race Making Situation'. In Plantation Societies, Race Relations, and the South: The Regimentation of

thus be seen as a justification to spread and maintain colonial rule in the region.

Conclusion

“Race” is not inherently natural but rather a construct; a social and political mechanism by which imperial capital established and maintained its authority in the colonial state. Despite Malaya having gained independence from the British in 1957, persisting concepts of race and division continue to impact the lives of minority communities in the region. Ultimately narratives of a “plural” society were devised for the systematic extraction of profit from the exploitation of migrant labour whilst the built environment of the colonial era was reorganised to accentuate racial divergences.

Segregation of the region’s population into distinct spatial environments based on ethnicity ultimately shaped Malaya’s social and economic geography – one defined by partition and separation. Crucially, the colonial plantation system had the power to confine the region’s Indian community within specific territorial units – its identity erasure exemplified through the dissolution of estates. A century of manual labour that changed the fortunes of the country may now be forgotten but for every Indian labourer who succeeded in rising to the ranks of petty capitalist or professional, this legacy lives on. Essentially, the meaning of race takes different forms in varying cultural and social contexts, thus appreciating these complex histories provokes a rethink on the power structures and colonial constructs that continue to define postcolonial societies.

As a third-generation descendant of immigrants who had to ‘fill roles invented for them’ on the rubber plantations of British Malaya, my fixed identity as ‘Indian’ or ‘Malaysian-Indian’, at best, conveys the enduring legacy of colonial taxonomies of naming.[47] My connection to the ancestral homeland need not be shunned but the political and social implications of accepting my “recognition” as “Indian”, the rhetorical “Other”, demonstrates the strong association of concepts of race in hegemonic discourses to narratives of “roots” and “original” homeland. Such concerns are exacerbated by legislation and discriminatory policies that afford benefits to those recognised as Bumiputera – the ‘sons of the soil’. Generations may have passed since the period of immigration to the region yet the cultural loyalty and affiliations of Indians to the nation are often perceived to be uncertain – a symbol of their irrevocable historical identities that serve to dissociate the “Others” from a fully-vested identity as Malaysian.

Populations: Selected Papers of Edgar T. Thompson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975), pp.115-117 (p.117).

[45] Charles Hirschman, ‘The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology’, Sociology Forum, 1.2 (New Jersey: Wiley, 1986), pp.330-361 (p.332; p.332).

[46] Charles Hirschman, ‘The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology’, Sociology Forum, 1.2 (New Jersey: Wiley, 1986), pp.330-361 (p.332; p.338).

[47] Preeta Samarasan, Evening is the Whole Day (Boston: Mariner Books, 2009), p.21

Biography

Growing up in postcolonial Malaysia, my experiences of being sidelined for my ethnicity and the social implications of “being Indian” have made me acutely aware of the consequences of disclosing my identity. Despite being born and raised in Malaysia, discriminatory practices towards Indians are synonymous with the community’s existence. Whilst I am expected to be grateful for being able to call Malaysia my home, I am constantly reminded of my family’s migratory past and my corresponding identity as an “immigrant” through the crippling racism that affects the lives of the ones who can never be ‘sons of the soil; the ‘Non-Bumiputeras’.

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Navigating Architectural Education Spaces as Black students, Researchers, and Educators

Text introduction and recorded conversations by Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye, Juliet Sakyi-Ansah, Michael Badu, Alisha Morenike Fisher and Nana Biamah-Ofosu

Please scan or click the codes to access the conversation

Introduction

This is a two-part conversation between five voices to respond to and think with the ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action’. Juliet Sakyi-Ansah, Michael Badu, and Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye previously studied at Sheffield School of Architecture, Nana Biamah-Ofosu delivered a guest lecture at the SSoA Theory Forum, and Alisha Morenike Fisher delivered a guest lecture in the Trajectories module of the MA Urban Design programme. Our conversations move between our experiences of race and racism in architectural study, research and teaching, and we think through overlapping themes that span our times and experiences at SSoA (and other architectural educational institutions and spaces) to also affirm the demands vocalised in the ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action’.

In two recorded conversations, we talk together about our experiences as Black students-researchers-educators in predominantly white architectural institutions (in both representation and knowledge orientations). We come from different heritages and lived experiences of Blackness, but share across our encounters structural and interpersonal antiblack racisms within architectural education, both at the SSoA and other spaces in the UK. This practice of coming together, sharing and learning from each other exposes the multiple interpersonal and structural racisms that we encounter and experience. Our sharing provides yet further evidence of the ways that SSoA and similar architectural spaces are structured by racism.

Through the format and approach of collective conversation, we reflect on the 'Call to Action' and our own individual experiences and draw on our own racialized experiences. We question the SSoA and other architecture schools' narratives of teaching, research and learning. We bring together our reflections on the narrative of SSoA as a 'Social' School of Architecture in these two conversations, drawing on our diverse experiences and accounts of the embedded issues of racism and systemic racism in architecture. This contribution is a testament to the urgency that the SSoA needs to place on holding conversations on race within teaching, studying and researching experiences. Whilst we perform emotional labour here by telling our experiences of racism, we also seek to acknowledge and critique the role white fragility plays in discouraging these important and urgent conversations. Within this context, Juliet adds that a critical element that must be included is culture: 'The richness and powerfulness of our culture and heritage, which we continue to hold on to, against Eurocentrism. That's our fight.'

We structure this collective conversation as a practice of coming together to share our experiences, to build relations and understandings between our different Black subjectivities, and to shape together critical perspectives and offerings on what embodying an antiracist architecture must look like. We curate these conversations as deliberately safe spaces between the five of us, to learn from and to affirm each other. In order to produce this contribution, we discussed and settled on the format (an audio-recorded conversation propelled by individual contributions we shared with each other). In our discussions, we shared together freely between us, and then Victoria edited, shortening the length of the recordings and respecting what we chose to make public.

The first recorded conversation is between Juliet, Michael, Alisha and Victoria. The second is between Nana and Victoria. The provocations that inform the discussions are provided below, followed by a list of references that include the individuals, readings, and inspirations mentioned in the discussions.

Juliet's Provocation: Space

After reflecting on my experience at SSoA and the work I embarked upon leaving SSoA (The Architects' Project), I raised some questions based on our collective general critiques as Black people in these architectural spaces. The visual provocation (Space) sparked my thinking on the following:

Image of the Carina Nebula from the press release “ESO’s VLT reveals the Carina Nebula’s hidden secrets. This broad image of the Carina Nebula, a region of massive star formation in the southern skies, was taken in infrared light using the HAWK-I camera on ESO’s Very Large Telescope. Many previously hidden features, scattered across a spectacular celestial landscape of gas, dust and young stars, have emerged”. ESO / T. Preibisch, 2012 CCBY.

Being visible, being heard, and being valued

Spaces for critical and creative discussions.

Spaces where we can be our whole selves.

Spaces for sincere dialogues, for discourse.

Spaces created by Black and minority ethnics, valued and recognised as part of the system.

Spaces that can place themselves as part of the system and also as alternative or belonging to their creators, i.e. outside the system.

Spaces for our voices and experiences to be heard, considered and acted upon.

Spaces that are invested into by the system.

Where space can be considered as physical, psychological, emotional, intellectual and TIME!

Michael’s Provocation

Reflecting on a teaching experience:

“So I’ve just come out of external exams, and this was the actual discussion. So our top student, it wasn’t about a building for her... she was looking at something bigger. And it’s really funny, there were two white males [examiners], they were like ‘Why is this student marked so highly, she hasn’t done a complicated building.’ One of them said even, ‘I want to see the screw heads lined up.’ I think that says so much about the problems that we are facing. I guess what I want to kind of provoke is, is there something white about that? I think there is something white about that. The idea that you have to have something physical, there has to be an object, it has to have an aesthetic appeal. Whereas for people of the Global South and Black people in particular, our way of engaging with the world is different.

Alisha’s Provocation

Excerpt from Down Second Avenue, by Es’kia Mphahlele (London: Penguin, 1959).

‘And the Black man keeps moving on, as he has always done for the last three centuries, moving with baggage and all, forever tramping with bent back to give away for the one who says he is the stronger. The Black dances and sings less and less, turning his back on the past and facing the misty horizons, moving in a stream that is damned in shifting catchments. They yell into his ears all the time: move, n*****, or be fenced in but move anyhow.

They call it a slum clearance instead of conscience clearance - to fulfill a pact with conscience which says: never be at rest as long as the Black Man’s shadow continues to fall on your house.’

Victoria’s Provocation

Excerpt from ‘African Space Magicians’ by Lesley Lokko (in ...And Other Such Stories, edited by Yesomi Umolu, Sepake Angiama and Paulo Tavares. Chicago Architecture Biennial in association with Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2019).

‘Several years ago I visited Jo Nocro’s prizewinning Red Location Museum near Port Elizabeth, South Africa, which now stands dilapidated and permanently closed. Located in the neighborhood where the African National Congress was founded, it won several prestigious architectural awards, but local residents have accused the city of “building a house for dead people” while they continue to live in squalor. At the time of my visit, undertaken with architecture students from the University of Cape Town, the museum was pristine, awaiting inauguration. I noticed that the signs were in three languages – English, Afrikaans and Xhosa – and that the Xhosa translation of “standard” museum signage – Entrance, Exit, Shop, Restaurant, and so on – were sometimes four or five words long. Curious about the exact translations, I asked a security guard to explain why the phrase for “museum exit,” for example, appeared to be a completely different phrase from “museum entrance.” He was baffled by the question at first but grasped what I was trying to ask: “What is the Xhosa word for museum?” He consulted a colleague for a few minutes, then returned.

“Actually, we don’t have a word for that.”

“So what do you call a place like this?” I gesture to the building around me.

They exchange a quick glance. “This place,” his colleague interrupts coldly, “is a place for white people.”

“So what do you call the building where you go to remember something?” I ask after a moment.

They look at me incredulously. “Madam, we don’t need a building for that.”

It remains one of the most powerful conversations I have ever had about architecture, anywhere.’

In this excerpt, the security guard points out that the design has completely missed the grounded ways in which his (Black South African) Xhosa people engage with remembrance of past histories, peoples and knowledges. The idea that these things need to be enclosed in a material edifice – a museum building – is part of a long racialized colonial history in which knowing must be categorised and presented in particular and material ways in order to count as “architecture.” The implication for us is to understand how architectural practice, research, and teaching reinforce this – the assumption that you need a building in which to house, to capture, to hold this knowledge, that this is necessarily something to be designed (and designed in a particular way, usually grounded in westernised spatial considerations and aesthetics). That the Black security guards says the building “is a place for white people” reads South Africa’s seemingly post-apartheid past as present. The building’s concept and design assumes an entrance, an exit, a shop, a restaurant, the western orientations of exhibiting artistic pieces and artefacts. These westernised orientations are impressed on this African space, and the translations into Xhosa assume that is all that is needed to make it "work" in this context. It assumes so much! Also it misses and forecloses so much, too.

In the 'Call to Action', the authors write that at SSoA '[c]onversations about race have been consistently minimised, resulting in the propagation of largely Eurocentric and imperialist perspectives.' Avoiding these conversations on race, or treating them as optional add-ons or afterthoughts, separates race, which fundamentally informs inequalities in our society, from our engagement with society through design. This practice of not seeing race (re)produces racialised inequalities and erasures, particularly in a highly racially unequal city like Sheffield, and also in SSoA's engagements beyond Sheffield. Either we are reproducing coloniality, or we are actively working to learn, and then addressing and repairing our racial history and present of design, through teaching/pedagogy, our research, our study, our treatment of our students, staff, researchers, their ideas and knowledges.

In the 'Call to Action', the authors demand action through 'more actively engag[ing] in outreach within local communities.' When I read this excerpt, I am reminded of a chance conversation I had with a community resident who is a person of colour and who had been engaged as part of a SSoA project. They described their experience as "colonial." I imagine what architecture and urban design might look like if community feedback and review of projects were structured into how students' projects were assessed. I wonder what it would mean if community residents and organisations could talk back to SSoA on its projects in the ways that this Black security guard speaks back on this museum. What would the school have to hear?

Nana's Provocation

Excerpt from 'Architectural critique - "form and what else?"' by Nana Biamah-Ofosu and Shawn Adams, (Architecture Foundation email newsletter, 8 October 2020)

When we critique architecture and design, it is largely an examination of its formal qualities and aesthetic value. But what stories are left untold? This absence is felt nowhere more strongly than in the popular architectural press where buildings are often described and merit ascribed on the basis of brick choice or the "right" architectural language or expression. This is not to suggest that these elements are not important, but what if we challenged this status-quo or introduced other ways of seeing 'good' architecture? What if, say, architectural awards and building reviews were based on a community's reflections about a building or space? What if we questioned the power structures, violence and displacement that often enable architectural production?

If magazines and journals neglect informal spaces, deeming them beyond the boundaries of architectural critique, then what injustices do we reinforce? There are great architectural writers whose work examines the formal and physical qualities of architecture, to quote an influential architectural critic, "Summerson, Rowe and Venturi," but what do old dead white men have to do with architectural critique today?

Biographies

Juliet Sakyi-Ansah is a practising architect at her Midlands-based Studio OASA. She has taught at the Birmingham School of Architecture and Design and has coordinated international architecture conferences, including at the UEL School of Architecture and SSoA. She founded and spearheads The Architects' Project. She also works on Narratives, a semi-academic publication space for research and projects exploring new and emerging ways of practice (thinking and making) and writing on planning, politics and policy in the field. Her current work is focused on Black in Architecture research. Juliet completed her RIBA Part 1 (2005) and Part 2 (2010) at SSoA and is currently completing her PhD in Architecture and Built Environment at Oxford Brookes University.

Michael Badu was born in South London and trained as an architect at SSoA, London South Bank and Cambridge Universities. Michael spent his formative years as an architect working in the public sector (Norwich County Council, education projects) and in the historic sector while working for Thomas Ford & Partners Architects before setting up Michael Badu Architecture in 2009. He now teaches at Kingston University while also working on a PhD in Architecture at London Metropolitan University.

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Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye is an urban planner and designer, researcher and writer. She has practice-based experience in Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa, where she has collaborated with architects, designers, planners, artists, NGOs and young people on community space interventions. She began a PhD in Architecture at SSoA in 2017 and contributed as teaching assistant and tutor on studio, theory and thesis modules in architecture and urban design. In 2020, Victoria changed PhD supervisors and transferred to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. Victoria has a Masters in Urban Planning from Columbia University (US), a PhD in Urban Studies and Planning from University of Sheffield, and is Lecturer in Geography at Sheffield Hallam University.

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Embodying Difference. An Initial Dialogue

Eva Sopéoglou and Catalina Mejía Moreno

One of the points that 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' calls for is the 'diversification and contextualisation of the teaching of architectural history' under the section of 'equalising and diversifying the curriculum in all aspects'. Throughout the academic year 2020-21, as Humanities and Environment and Technology Leaders, we had regular conversations to reflect, as well as to think how, from our positions, we responded to this call. Our presentation at a recent ACAN Tutor's Workshop was the platform where we publicly reflected on these initial discussions and suggested steps towards addressing some of the questions from the call in the Humanities and the Environment and Technology modules at the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield. However, sometimes our conversations went beyond the call, but also sometimes we found ourselves struggling. Sometimes our thoughts took us to different places and experiences, sometimes we ended up having conversations with some of the voices that have influenced our thinking. Most importantly, these conversations brought to the fore, once again, complexities and entanglements, lacks and gaps, legacies and hierarchies that we needed to recognise, acknowledge and embody, to have this conversation to then be able to embody and work towards anti-racism. This piece reflects one initial conversation between the two of us. Whilst we didn't wish to be named, the dialogue follows the fonts in the paragraphs. Moreover, some of the voices that have inspired and shaped our thinking and practice are also included, in red or quotations.

1. Anti Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' is an open letter to Sheffield School of Architecture staff and students written in 2020 by a group of students and alumni of the school, available online (https://feministssoa.group.shef.ac.uk/?p=1628). References to this document are made throughout.

2. Architects Climate Action Network (ACAN) Educators Workshop, 7 April 2021. The ACAN Education group's ongoing Climate Curriculum Campaign advocates the increase of climate literacy in schools of architecture (https://www.architectscan.org/education-toolkit).

Diversify and contextualise

Good morning! In this initial conversation we want to discuss ways of responding to and engaging with 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action'. One of the points addressed in this document calls for the 'diversification and contextualisation of the teaching of architectural history.' This urges an understanding of the intersections between race, class, gender identity and ability. We have been discussing this through the lens of critical frameworks of intersectionality and embodiment.

This need for diversification and contextualisation is not exclusive to Architectural Humanities, but should be addressed across all modules and programmes, as well as in the school's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee. To address it as an issue exclusive to the humanities speaks back to the question of "siloing" that we have been discussing at length.

If we silo issues and subjects they will remain a single topic in one module, rather than being embraced as more systemic and structural questions. I believe this relates to the question of anti-racism. It can't be siloed; the response needs to be structural. It cannot be only institutional. Changes cannot happen in just one module. We need all modules – humanities, technology, communication, professional practice – to engage the students in research, in terms of knowledge and anti-racist critical thinking, which then also manifests in studio.

But I also need to emphasise that it is also urgent to discuss it not only through the lens of content - 'diversification and contextualisation' - but to go beyond and ask ourselves what histories we want to teach - histories in plural! - which methods we will use, who will teach with us, whose voices we can and cannot represent as tutors amongst other pressing questions.

In architecture, there is something empirical about how students learn. If 'architecture is obsessed with making,' we suggest here a form of making that undercuts/opposes this empiricism. One can learn by reflecting, thinking critically, and doing critically. Discussions in the humanities or technology have a very important role in shaping critical thought, one of the strongest bases for anti-racism.

Embodying and knowledge

The key word here is "embodying" as proposed in the title of this field: issue. It prompts us to think about 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' in a specific way: we are interested in unpacking what embodying means. Embodying has also been a focal point of our discussions; it does not just imply knowledge acquired, or knowledge applied.

3. WAI Architecture Think Tank, 'Un-making Architecture: an Anti-Racist Architecture Manifesto', WAI Architecture Think Tank, 2020 <https://waithinktank.com/Anti-Racist-Manifesto> [accessed 21 May 2021].

I am interested in how this speaks to bringing one's personal experiences, by which I mean all sorts of lived experiences with regards to race, class and gender, inside the classroom and outside of it. The embodiment of experiences and how they are ethical practices is critical. Embodiment also speaks to resisting/avoiding silos.

> 'Before words are spoken in the classroom, we come together as bodies. We read each other through the gaze. As teachers, we are the focal point of a collective gaze before words are spoken. Our students are looking at us and wondering what our bodies have to say about who we are and how we live in the world. We see our students, too, as embodied presence. Even though all the ways we are trained as teachers encourage us to act as though we are disembodied, the truth of our bodies speaks to us. Being comes from the body.'

Yes. It makes no difference which module one is attending, or whether one is in a seminar, in university, or in school, or even spending time with friends. This is the kind of embodiment we aim for, and should aim for, collectively. An embodiment of anti-racism in everything we do in school and outside of it all the time.

This also points towards a critique of 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' as purely institutional; it is important that we address this discussion beyond institutional frameworks. We shouldn't aim for institutional anti-racism only: this is not anti-racism. Now, how can we work collectively with students in this direction, while proposing to understand embodiment as ethical and critical?

> 'Racism is a device whose aim is to create walls between people. These walls should not be made. We need to learn to un-make these walls.'

So, not just as students, or tutors, but as human beings operating and inhabiting the world.

Inhabit. I like this word. It implies embodiment, it is about a world that also lies beyond our academic roles.

The groups I am involved in outside of my academic role are extremely meaningful, for myself and for my academic role. It's the network of people, the lectures and workshops; it's these things that I find nurturing. Maybe because they are more open? Maybe because there, my institutional role is secondary?

Embodiment also requires bringing the work we are doing outside of academia into the school. And so, in that sense, we can collectively inform

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4. bell hooks, Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), p.153.

5. WAI Architecture Think Tank, 'Un-making Architecture: an Anti-Racist Architecture Manifesto.'

and transform what we're doing. This was one of the most important outputs of Fielding Architecture: Feminist Pedagogies for a Decolonised Pedagogy that we co-organised with Emma Cheatle in 2018. Finding allies, kinships and working together 'outside' to nurture the 'inside.'

I attended a talk by Gary Younge, a Professor of Sociology specialising in Black studies at the University of Manchester. Their main argument was that we should not be in the ivory tower. That we have to break the bubble of academia and engage with the world.

But I also think we can say that the world should engage with academia in its broadest sense as well, which to some extent is what we have also been discussing, and what the 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' in some way is also asking us to do.

I've heard again and again from students who feel that they don't belong in institutions. It is a fact that students often feel that they have been stripped of their identity the moment they step into the university. They realise this in their first year because of how totalising and unifying the experience during the first year can be. The curriculum needs to be mindful of this, or it can really handicap the students who are just trying to figure things out. And we want to nurture their experiences of how they have lived in the world.

> 'To teach in varied communities not only our paradigms must shift but also the way we think, write, speak. The engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with the world beyond itself.'

This speaks to anti-racism too. We strongly agree with the demand in 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' to reinforce an agenda that goes beyond design and content and into methodology as positioning, embedding and embodying anti-racism. What is important is that we assume this through individual and collective projects as a means of constructing paths to work together, and for multiple worlds to inhabit our spaces collectively.

Engaging in dialogue

Many schools (and tutors) have an ideal student in mind. For example, Sheffield School of Architecture is a "social" school. All of our students are encouraged to be socially aware and that is what makes a good student at the University of Sheffield. But what does that mean, if there are no opportunities for the students to discover what "social" means for them? In particular, we must understand how each student has varied lived experiences that others do not. How, then, can students be socially

6. bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress, (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 1994), p. 11.

aware, socially active and socially engaged from both an individual and a collective perspective? Students care for local communities. And we can also wonder, what room is there to make a productive difference, and to work ethically through this difference?

> 'When we are taught that safety lies always with sameness, then difference, of any kind, will appear as a threat […] The choice to love is a choice to connect – to find ourselves in the other.'

This brings us back to the question of anti-racism. As a school we must work on recognising how important the question of difference is. We need to keep encouraging and nurturing our students to think through difference. We acknowledge there is much work to be done in this aspect, and recently we have been working together on this, creating our classroom as a safe space for students and staff to engage in difficult conversations. But there is a long road ahead.

> 'Those classrooms were the one space where pedagogical practices were interrogated, where it was assumed that the knowledge offered to students would empower them to be better scholars, to live more fully in the world beyond academe. The feminist classroom was the one space where students could raise questions about pedagogical process. These critiques were not always encouraged or well received, but they were allowed. That small acceptance of interrogation was a crucial challenge inviting us as students to think seriously about pedagogy in relation to the practice of freedom.'

Some of our efforts have focused on adding questions of colonialism, coloniality and decolonisation. These cannot be seen as separate from the anti-racist project.

Decolonisation. I really struggle more and more with the way that the word and the term has been used, co-opted. In Architectural Humanities we have started examining the impacts of legacies of colonialism and imperialism, the privileging of Western knowledge, epistemologies, aesthetics and knowledge hierarchies. But this is just a first step, and bearing in mind your question of silos, maybe a siloed step. I get angry when hearing how decolonisation has become an institutional strategy, like the words diversity and anti-racism have.

> '… diversity can work as a branding exercise, a way of re-imagining the organisation as 'being diverse; through having us, those who embody diversity for them.'

One thing that I find very problematic is being indifferent to differences. For instance, take our international students and staff. The understanding of architecture is informed by where we all come from

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7. bell hooks, All about Love: New Visions, (New York: Harper, 2000), p. 93
8. hooks, Teaching to Transgress, p. 6.
9. Sara Ahmed, 'Embodying diversity: problems and paradoxes for Black feminists,' Race Ethnicity and Education, 12:1 (2009), 41-52 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320802650931> p. 45.

and our experiences can be so different. And this is something we can all collectively engage with. It is so beautiful when students share their knowledge and experiences, and others listen and learn from them.

I always think about bell hooks in Teaching to Transgress: 'The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy.'

> 'We must employ our ways of reimagining the world to question the one we have created. It is imperative that we use our critical faculties to deconstruct our ways of imagining the world. Other worlds are possible, urgent and necessary.'

Existing in diversity

A response to the 'Anti-racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' cannot take the form of institutional performance.

> 'In other words, by putting commitments in writing – as commitments that are not followed by other actions – such documents can be used as supportive devices, by exposing gaps between words and deeds ... Following documents around begins with an uncertainty about what these documents will do. They might, at certain points, even cause trouble.'

Diversifying module content, for instance, is only one of the dimensions of the anti-racist and decolonial project. There needs to be continued acknowledgement of colonial structures of power.

Exactly. Diversifying the curriculum doesn't just mean adding a couple of international case studies.

> 'Diversity is not a tick box, it is a necessity.'

We also need to talk in terms of equity and justice, amongst others. Together with the anti-racist project, these projects are urgent, but usually led by few, usually committed and working outside of their working hours, with peers and allies in different universities committed to make change happen. Working towards race equality is something universities ask for, but do not recognise in terms of, for instance, workload, and when work is being done, this free labour has, in some cases, been institutionally co-opted.

At a recent SUAS lecture, an archaeologist-architect spoke about the racist monuments in America, about what a monument is, drawing parallels to archaeological sites as places of the construction of history, elaborating on how to reconstruct history by deconstructing and

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10. hooks, Teaching to Transgress, p. 12.
11. WAI Architecture Think Tank, 'Un-making Architecture: an Anti-Racist Architecture Manifesto.'
12. Sara Ahmed, 'The Nonperformativity of Antiracism', Meridians, 7:1 (2006) 104-26 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40338719> p. 125.
13. Design as Protest, 'Anti-Racism Design Justice Index,' Design as Protest, 2020 <https://www.dapcollective.com/index> [accessed 23 September 2021].
14. Stephanie Edwards in Now You Know, ed. by Pooja Agrawal and Joseph Henry (London: Sound Advice, 2020), p. 71.

reconstructing the monuments. Some interesting emerging networks, like Dark Matter University, are deconstructing and reconstructing the method and content of architectural education.

And also, for instance, DAP (Design as Protest) Collective. They recently sent me their newspaper titled YOU ARE A(NTI)RACIST. It is great. It is a mandatory document for talking about anti-racism. Their Anti-Racist Design Justice Index is a 'living tool for architects, designers, planners, and activists committed to taking action against systemic racism within our practices, organisations, academic institutions, and local governments [...] The goal of the Index is to achieve liberation within design institutions by holding them accountable to their anti-racist commitments. It provides a visual means to tracking accountability and resources, guiding concrete actions towards the Design Justice Demands.' It focuses on equality, equity, justice and liberation, acknowledgement, accountability, representation, reparations, accessibility and influence. It is such a beautiful, powerful, complex and much needed index and document. I feel we are very far away from anything like this. But I also have to say I see 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' could set the ground for this.

Learning and unlearning

I'm a little disturbed with the discussions about diversity and equality and anti-racism, in the same way I am about discussions about sustainability. The definitions proposed are often too narrow, too deterministic. The most anti-racist thing that one can do is to open the concept's definition up rather than try to define it very narrowly. And this is a slight concern I have with this call and journal: that, after this issue of field: is published, we are all supposed to know what anti-racism in architecture is, and how to address it, or worse, that we might think we have addressed it. Because the problem is far deeper, structural. So, let's come back to teaching. With a Technology brief, or a Humanities brief, or a seminar, how can we invite students to input their unique critical and anti-racist research angles?

> *'Diversity becomes both a problem and a paradox for those who embody diversity.'*

What I see happening often, which is really interesting, is modules that are more critical and anti-racist in spirit taking place at Master's level. Perhaps the briefs and module descriptors and even the learning outcomes can be more open-ended there, because the courses have been less tightly defined by the regulatory bodies? If this is so, the challenge is at the undergraduate level, where the curriculum needs to comply with regulations and specific learning criteria. There is a real opportunity, even if we have to work under those limitations; how can we actually make a change? How can we

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15. SUAS is the Sheffield University Architecture Society; the lecture was by Caleb Lightfoot (Akefalos Architectures), from Oakland, San Francisco, USA.

16. Dark Matter University defines itself as a democratic academic network working to create 'radical anti-racist forms of communal knowledge and spatial practice that are grounded in lived experience' (https://darkmatteruniversity.org/).

17. DAP (Design as Protest) Collective, YOU ARE A(NTI) RACIST: Anti-Racist Design Justice Index Newspaper (DAP Collective, 2020).

18. Ahmed, 'Embodying diversity: problems and paradoxes for Black feminists', p. 42.

operate differently, how can we emphasise an anti-racist agenda within these constraints? The real question for us is how to operate within those structures of power and make a change. This is something we repeatedly discuss in the reading group I am part of, called 'Unsettling Subjects / Confronting questions' (also collaborating on this field: issue entitled Unsettled Subjects/ Unsettling Landscapes: Confronting questions of architecture in C. L. R. James's The Black Jacobins). It can be productive not to see constraints as a limitation, but as a potential ground for change.

For example, there is the challenge to provide undergraduate students with knowledge in the first place, since they know little about a given topic. At the same time, narrowly defining a topic and sharing a basic level of knowledge constrains the amount of critical, challenging thinking the undergraduate student is able or invited to contribute. I believe that it is necessary to go beyond imparting knowledge to thinking about teaching practices in terms of critical thinking, but also of unlearning.

The 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' asks us to reinforce an intersectional framework and dialogue. This has been our focus when discussing steps forward in Humanities and Environment and Technology studies. So how do we, from day one, set an agenda that sits across modules, and goes beyond content? But it also touches on methodology and ethics. How could we address racism and embody anti-racism from day one, how can we do this? Can we set an agenda that goes beyond the content, that goes into methodology, but that is intersectional and anti-racist in nature? I sometimes think that I don't have the tools, nor the language. Or even doubt if it is me who could lead the discussion within the space of the classroom or institution. We've all experienced racism in different ways, in my case and more strongly when arriving in the UK. But that is also very different to the experience of some students who have experienced less nuanced forms of violence.

We have all experienced forms of bias and, simultaneously, forms of privilege, which collectively, additively, over time, shape who we are and how we think. To come back to architecture, for me, it's about unlearning things I've learned in architecture school as well as in practice. And when I speak as the Environment and Technology leader, I need to unpack this too. And why not start from my own personal experiences, and how I have arrived at my opinions and knowledge? They play an important part in what and how I teach the subject.

It is also important to recognise how deeply racism is embedded in the discipline, and in so many multiple and complex ways.

Practicing anti-racism

That's true. In on-going conversations with colleagues at Kingston University where I used to work before joining the SSoA, rather than labelling them as an anti-racist or decolonial project, we narrate multiple stories and personal narratives, allowing students and staff to be themselves. The legacy of Mary Vaughan Johnson in shaping this practice cannot be overemphasized: this was her project. In her studio, the brief started with a text discussing the split between the body and the mind. This split can easily occur in academia: you can only bring your brain, but not allowed to bring your body.

We need to reinforce that there is no such split. This is something I have also been reminded of while working with environmental activists in Colombia, and has been so powerful.

In this studio, acknowledging the split was the starting point of the research. It proceeded to design exercises based on body organs. It was funny, but it was meant to be this open-ended playful process. We kept referring to embodiment because it also included intuition. And, again, intuition a lot of times comes with how one carries themselves, how one's body feels about it. And that's why the topic can be so difficult for some people. In Environment and Technology studies, for example, intuition is not considered a scientific method of arriving at knowledge. Similarly, institutions can move beyond portraying knowledge as the quest for a single universal architectural language or archetypal truth. These are words that tutors sometimes use to describe the way they teach, and they are problematic.

Part of embracing the anti-racist project is acknowledging that we need to enact change collectively and cannot be a bottom down approach. We also need to acknowledge our own positions of power and privilege. Have we done this? I don't think so. Maybe we have started some conversations around this. There is still so much work to do here.

Yes, we as tutors have to understand that we are in a position of power, and that's what 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' is also referring to. It is our responsibility, and it is also what students are asking us to acknowledge. Can we point to some of the gaps and practices? What does anti-racism look like to you?

Our anti-racist attitudes feature in our daily quotidian actions. I like to think about it as the place from where we speak, as humans, as tutors and students. But, as briefly mentioned before, to talk about anti-racism we need to talk about race. And this is something we are not doing. Race needs to be conceptualised, spoken, and discussed; embraced, and understood in its specific contexts. It is very different to talk about race in

19. Mary Vaughan Johnson, who passed away in March 2021, was the Head of Department of Architecture and Landscape at Kingston School of Art. Mary's teaching and leadership were actively embodying an anti-racist agenda. Mary Vaughan Johnson and Sohanna Srinivasan ran an optional studio at Kingston M.Arch in 2020-21. The text was from bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress (1994).

England than in South Africa, or Colombia, or Thailand, which also brings us back to the question of difference. This will allow us to speak about Blackness in the same way it will allow us to speak about whiteness, or even mixed-raced positionalities, just to give some examples. But also, to speak about who is listening and how we are being listened to. Everyone has a place to speak from. From an Architectural Humanities perspective, as I guess from all subjects, and as Architectural Humanities lead, it is also my responsibility to acknowledge student demands, to invite them and encourage them to be part of changing the curriculum. Quoting DAP's YOU ARE A(NTI)RACIST newspaper, to 'consider the force of design in liberation while recognising historic racism in the built environment' as well as to open spaces for critique and collective non-hierarchical learning.

> 'The future of democratic education will be determined by the extent to which democratic values can triumph over the spirit of oligarchy that seeks to silence diverse voices, prohibit free speech, and deny citizens access to education.'

This has been a very open-ended conversation, it has been meandering, we have been navigating concepts and realities that are entangled, that are difficult, and projects which are urgent. I would also like to talk about liberation. But we are running out of time, we are just starting today, this is just a (very messy, incomplete and fragmentary) beginning…

Biographies

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Catalina Mejía Moreno is a Senior Lecturer in Climate Studies at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. She is a spatial practitioner and architectural historian interested in practices of resistance, situated and critical spatial practice, environmental, racial and spatial justice, feminist and decolonial/anticolonial practice and thought. Before joining Central Saint Martins she taught at the University of Brighton and the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield where she led Architectural Humanities across the school. She holds a BA in Architecture

20. Djamila Ribeiro, Pequeno manual antirracista (Sao Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2019), p. 31.

21. DAP Collective, YOU ARE A(NTI) RACIST, p. 2..

22. hooks, Teaching Critical Thinking, p. 17.

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Unsettled Subjects/Unsettling Landscapes: Confronting Questions of Architecture in C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins*

By Unsettled Subjects

Introduction

We begin by acknowledging all those who live in present danger to their lives, their livelihoods and their loved ones: surviving and resisting the exploitation, subordination and marginalisation exacted by that system of racialised practices, structures and knowledges that we know of as colonialism. We acknowledge them in solidarity and recognise their struggle, offering as they do not just resistance but histories and practices of life. We will continue to seek counter-hegemonic socialist, feminist and decolonial knowledges, practices and affects in our work with one another as grounded beings in and of this only Earth.

The reading group Unsettled Subjects/Confronting Questions began at the University of Westminster, School of Architecture and Cities in the summer of 2020. The group was initiated in response to an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion "attainment gap" workshop, where it became clear that many of us working within architecture – as design practitioners and as educators – were ill-equipped to engage with the questions of structural racism, cultures of imperialism and colonialism (and their legacies), nationalism and ethno-centrism in and through their discipline.[1] In particular, a proposal to "decolonise the curriculum" was received in a relative vacuum. Most staff members had no idea what any such proposal for "decolonising" would entail.[2] Some misinterpreted the proposal as one of "expansion" – incorporating citations, references, and precedents from non-European architectural cultures – as if systemic racism could be addressed by a simple additive process.[3] Those staff who were already members of the University of Westminster's Black and Minority Ethnic Network (established to provide support and press for change across the institution) related the long, hard and stubborn road already walked for intellectual, pedagogical, and working-conditions change. The resulting complex of disquiet, disappointment and anger only gained intensity in the spring of 2020, when it became clear that the burden of the global pandemic would be borne unevenly along patriarchal, racialised and capitalist lines. The murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, and the global uprisings led by the Black Lives Matter movement, propelled the issues into the global consciousness.[4]

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[1] Nick Beech would like to thank Jess Moody of Advance HE, and Jennifer Fraser of the University of Westminster Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation (CETI) for their facilitation of this workshop. Details of the Unsettled Subjects/Confronting Questions reading group, and how to join (it is open to all) can be found here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/12DLbxtFfLE1fpjlMbDksA2-4E0TavmawdWsvx_RkcHU/edit> [accessed 30 October 2021]

[2] For an introduction to 'decolonising the curriculum', particularly in the British context, see: *Decolonising the University*, ed. by Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial and Kerem Nişancıoğlu (London: Pluto Press, 2018); and, *Rhodes Must Fall: The Struggle to Decolonise the Racist Heart of Empire*, ed. by Roseanne Chantiluke, Brian Kwoba, and Athingangamso Nkopo (London: Zed Books, 2018).

In this respect, the 'Call to Action' published by students at the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA) identifies, articulates and addresses problems recognisable at Westminster.[5] In particular, the diagnosis presented highlights: that 'conversations about race have been consistently minimised, resulting in the propagation of largely Eurocentric and imperialist perspectives'; that 'architecture remains a privileged profession, with economic barriers [...] that disproportionately affect[s] BAME students'; that 'an absence of confident, open discussion surrounding socio-political issues [...] impacts the intellectual rigour of students' work and the communities they are designing for'; and 'the lack of visible BAME role models in the school, as well as the profession'.[6] These resonate with the discussions at Westminster, amongst staff and students.

A reading group cannot address these concerns directly, but was considered a crucial step. If questions concerning race, class, ethnicity, sex, gender, colonialism, nationalism and imperialism were elided, marginalised or left unspoken in the design studios and historiography of architecture, how might staff and students generate a space in which these could be explored: explored fully, in depth and appreciative of the full range of inflections, nuances, subtleties and pain that such differential powers and experiences entail? In recognition of both the absence and the need for such a space and an alternative to architecture's given discourse, the key decision was made early on not to engage with literature that overtly develops architectural or urban projects, histories or critical analyses, but which emerges from the question of "race" itself. Or, as the original invitation for the reading group stated: 'We begin, not with architecture, or design, or space. We begin with language.'[7] Our supposition was that we should confront works by pioneering authors of Black political thought, and self-consciously begin with a selection of authors who wrote directly to and from the British imperial context.[8]

Open to all academic and administrative staff and students, within and beyond the university, Unsettled Subjects soon grew to encompass a wide range of readers from a diversity of locations: the “silver lining” of the global pandemic being the ubiquity of online conference calling. Regular attendees represent a diversity of subject locations and positions, encompassing heritages, histories, languages and experiences common only in their diversity. Meetings last two hours in which voices of the membership are heard, maintained by a relatively informal and convivial atmosphere. An ethos of studentship is maintained: all readers are students of the text; expertise is valourised for its bearing on interpretation, and is always heard and understood in relation to experience. In time, what had begun as a reading group expanded its activities and evolved into a collective, also known as Unsettled Subjects, with differing configurations of members opting in to participate in a range of work, including talks and panel discussions, a nascent research group, and writing and design.

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[3] Misunderstandings – to the effect that calls to "decolonise" are either "censorial" or simply "additive" – are sadly, worryingly, shared by the current Minister of State for Higher and Further Education, Michelle Donelan. See Christopher Hope, 'University Censorship is Fictionalising History says Universities Minister', *The Telegraph* (27 February 2021) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/02/27/censoring-reading-lists-bad-soviet-union-fictionalising-history/> [accessed 29 October 2021]

[4] Black Lives Matter was founded in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, see 'Herstory', *Black Lives Matter Newsletter*, (n.d.) <https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/> [accessed 31 October 2021]. For a history of the movement see Laurie Collier Hillstrom, *Black Lives Matter: From a Moment to a Movement* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2018); and, Barbara Ransby, *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the Twenty-first Century*, University of California Press (2018) <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvq4c011>

[5] Connie Pidsley, Emma Carpenter, Jasmin Yeo, Lucie Iredale, Mimi Evans, Sarah Rhule, 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' (n.d.) <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cRMQPFOjpw7UTD5RmH-ywWiNduAsB4Bf/view> [accessed 31 October 2021]

[6] Ibid, p. 5; p. 6; p. 6; p.7; The authors of the 'Call to Action' 'recognise and understand the limitations of acronyms like [BAME] and the way that they homogenise the individual experiences of distinct ethnic groups, which can be inaccurate and exclusionary' (p. 2).

[7] Unsettled Subjects/Confronting Questions (Summer 2020), <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XwMnM5BE3pJmiJeD3zKbXUw7vlw-aYjx----Amb0h4Y/edit> [accessed 31 October 2021] Our first text was *Stuart Hall, The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation*, ed. by Kobena Mercer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

[8] Following *Hall, The Fateful Triangle*, the group has read: Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (1987),

Though the readings chosen by the group thus far are in some ways tangential to “architecture”, spatial, architectural, urban and geographic themes have been consistently reflected on and an additional venture has resulted: to work collectively not only in our reading, but in our response, too. The following text is the product of our first steps writing and visualising collectively. It is based on our reading of C. L. R. James's study of the Haitian revolution, that momentous historical event, contemporary with the French Revolution, which established the first Black republic beyond Africa. James's *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* was a book we were alerted to by our prior readings of Jamaican-born public intellectual Stuart Hall and Black British political and cultural historian Paul Gilroy and the screening of Steve McQueen’s Small Axe series on television in the autumn of 2020.[9] James developed his history of the revolution through the 1930s. He first wrote a dramatic play (written in 1934 and performed in 1936), centering Toussaint L’Ouverture, the emergent leader of the revolution, and his relation to the “masses” (performed as a classical ‘chorus’).[10] The wider historical study (published in 1938) demonstrates the extent to which James continued to wrestle with the question of Toussaint’s role as ‘leader’ of a mass, revolutionary movement.[11] The book was further revised in 1963, following the Cuban Revolution, with a significant chapter (‘From Toussaint L’Ouverture to Fidel Castro’) appended.[12] It is still widely regarded as a fundamental text for understanding the Haitian revolution.

This reading introduced the members of the group to James's world historical perspective on the Haitian revolution, in which James centres the Caribbean in the history of modernity, radically foregrounds the role of slavery and plantations in the formation of capitalism (and the struggles of the enslaved as equal to, indeed vanguard in relation to, the European proletariat of classical Marxism) and the complex intersection of ‘race’ and class in the colonies and metropole of empire. As readers, we also identified in the text a rich strain of architectural and spatial practices –

Classics Edition with new Introduction (London: Routledge, 2002); C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938), with introduction and notes by James Walvin (London: Penguin, 2001); and Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), trans. by Richard Philcox (London: Penguin, 2021). We are currently reading Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Random House, 1981).

[9] The five part film series Steve McQueen (Dir.), *Small Axe* (London: Turbine Studios/BBC, 2020) originally aired 15 November–13 December 2020. The fourth film ‘Alex Wheatle’ includes a scene in which the eponymous Wheatle is introduced to James’s *The Black Jacobins* by his cellmate, the Rastafarian ‘Simeon’.

[10] The dramatic script has been published as *C. L. R. James, Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History, A Play in Three Acts*, ed. by Christian Høgsbjerg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

[11] The complex location of Toussaint in the revolution that James presents is most evident in chapter ten of *The Black Jacobins* – see James, *The Black Jacobins*, pp. 183–95.

[12] A good introduction to C. L. R. James and the book is given in Bill Schwarz interviewing Stuart Hall, ‘Breaking Bread with History: C. L. R. James and The Black Jacobins’, *History Workshop Journal*, 46.1 (Autumn 1995), pp. 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/1998.46.17> For the history of the text, see *The Black Jacobins Reader*, ed. by Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017); and, Rachel Douglas, *Making the Black Jacobins: C. L. R. James and the Drama of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019). A critical study of the 1963 revision of *The Black Jacobins*, is given by David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

both as mobilised by colonial practices, and by those, including Toussaint, who were resistant to them.

The following provides a record of our readings in which *The Black Jacobins* is treated as an index and archive of these architectures. Our purpose is to distinguish their respective material, spatial and discursive qualities. In doing so, we hope to share with you the astonishment, horrors, and excitement experienced when reading outside "architecture" yet within the analytical and speculative reason of a pioneer of radical Black political thought.

In writing, we wanted to retain the open, provisional readings of our meetings, acknowledging and valuing our different experiences, social and political formations and our intentions and locations in the academy (and/or beyond). The text that follows is necessarily uneven. Different moments of *The Black Jacobins* are pulled into relief and reflected on by different unsettled subjects. Some have analysed James's critical framework for understanding architecture and the urban; others have moved beyond James, thickening our understanding of the island of Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) or drawing from James's other spatial, geographical and temporal frames. In all cases, we have sought to treat James's text as generative for a critique of architecture and for alternatives to architecture. Both the visual and textual responses are critical-creative starting points – indicating the concerns that we wish to pursue in research and pedagogy and toward the transformation of our praxes.

Repairing Saint-Domingue's Indigeneity

Catalina Mejía Moreno

> Christopher Columbus landed first in the New World at the Island of San Salvador [...] The natives, Red Indians, were peaceable and friendly and directed him to Haiti, a large island (nearly as large as Ireland), rich, they said, in the yellow metal [...] The Haitian Indians helped him so willingly that very little was lost and of the articles which they brought on shore not one was stolen.
>
> The Spaniards, the most advanced Europeans of their day, [...] took the backward natives under their protection. They introduced Christianity, forced labour in mines, murder, rape, bloodhounds, strange diseases, and artificial famine [...] These

> and other requirements of the higher civilization reduced the native population from an estimated half-a-million, perhaps a million, to 60,000 in fifteen years.
>
> Las Casas, a Dominican priest with a conscience, travelled to Spain to plead for the abolition of slavery. But without coercion of the natives how would the colony exist? [...)]Las Casas, haunted at the prospect of seeing before his eyes the total destruction of a population within one generation, hit on the expedient of importing the most robust Negroes from a populous Africa; in 1517, Charles V authorised the export of 15,000 slaves to San Domingo, and thus priest and King launched on the world the American slave-trade and slavery.[13]

James brings our attention to the historical narrative of the plantation and slavery as modernising forces and pillars of modernity. As a Latin American architectural historian and spatial practitioner whose work confronts invisibility and marginalisation, and who engages with the entanglements that characterise Caribbean subjectivities, I want to bring attention to the apparent invisible place of indigeneity in the book. Whilst in the prologue James gives us insights into the indigenous presence in the Caribbean archipelago (as seen in the previous quote) in his following chapters indigeneity, or the presence of indigenous populations in Saint-Domingue, is silenced, as it has been in most anglophone accounts of the Caribbean archipelago. This historical silence constructed from the rapid genocidal extermination of the native population in Saint-Domingue (and neighbouring colonies) implies that indigeneity did not play the same significant role as historical actors in the post-1492 construction of the Caribbean as the enslaved and Creole populations did.[14]

The implications of such absence and historical inaccuracy in James's account are twofold. Firstly, it reinforces that the stripping away of the native modes of life that co-inhabited the landscape prior to the European encounter (construed as the Caribbean archipelago's foundational imperial myth) consolidates a narrative of aboriginal disappearance where Africans and their descendants replaced the original Antilleans and became indigenous – natives – to the Caribbean, reiterating the importance of the Caribbean in western narratives of modernity.[15] Secondly, it confines us to a history that measures Caribbean history's importance by proving that the Caribbean helped to constitute the "West", as historian Melanie J. Newton argues placing the Caribbean, 'as a place apart from the rest of the Americas, as well as from other parts of the "Global South"'.[16]

Although the indigenous are absent in James's text, I want to suggest that they contradictorily are present in his accounts of Saint-Domingue's landscapes and topographic depictions.

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[13] James, p. 3.

[14] See Melanie J. Newton, 'Returns to a Native land: Indigeneity and Decolonization in the Anglophone Caribbean', in *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, 17. 2(42) (2013), 110.

[15] In the words of the Jamaican cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter, 'The more total alienation of the New World Negro has occasioned a cultural response, which had transformed that New World Negro into the indigenous inhabitant of his new land. His cultural resistance to colonialism in this new land was an indigenous resistance. The history of the Caribbean islands is, in large part, the history of indigenization of the black man.' Sylvia Wynter, 'Jonkonnu in Jamaica: Towards the interpretation of folk dance as a cultural process', *Jamaica Journal*, 4.2 (June 1970), p. 35.

[16] Newton, p. 112.

> San Domingo is an island of mountain ranges rising in places to 6,000 feet above sea-level. From these flow innumerable streams coalescing into rivers which water the valleys and not inconsiderable plains lying between the hills. Its distance from the equator gives an unusual lusciousness and variety to the natural exuberance of the tropics, and the artificial vegetation was not inferior to the natural. Field upon field, the light green sugar-cane, low and continually rippled in the breeze, enclosed the factory and the dwelling houses like a sea; a few feet above the cane-stalks waved the five-foot leaves of the banana trees [...] The traveller of Europe was enchanted at his first glimpse of this paradise, in which the ordered beauty of agriculture and the prodigality of Nature competed equally for his surprise and admiration.[17]

As the quote above reads, Saint-Domingue is depicted by James as both a landscape of wealth extraction, as well as a tropical *paradise*. Whilst the landscape of wealth extraction speaks to forced labour and enslaved peoples, the tropical paradise is a landscape that, even if seemingly untouched, has been inhabited by indigenous peoples and speaks of the broader ecology of the Americas. It is this juxtaposition that I see as a point of colonial entanglement that needs to be recognised, and that needs to recognise that colonialism has left a legacy in the Caribbean as much to indigenous as well as to people of diasporic origins. My map *'Repairing landscapes of indigeneity'* is therefore intended as an act of repair that brings Saint-Domingue and the Caribbean archipelago back to the Americas.

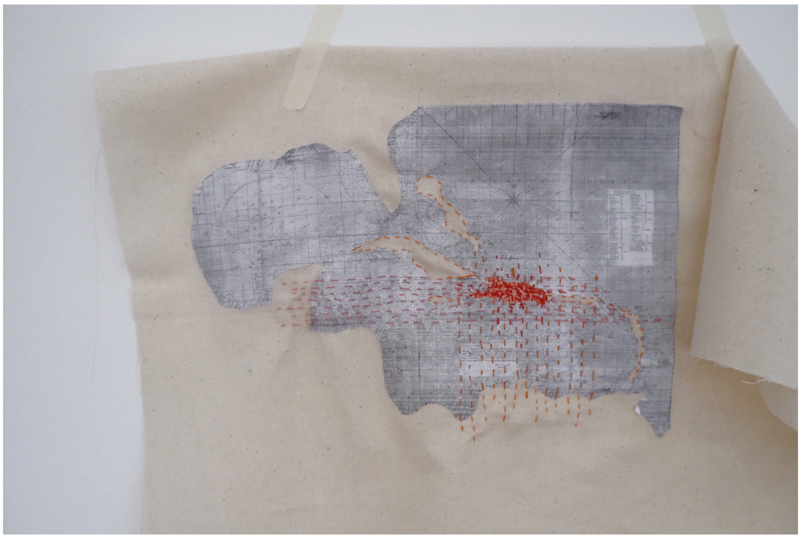

Figure 1. Catalina Mejia Moreno, *Repairing Landscapes of Indigeneity*, 2021.

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[17] James, p. 23.

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Forging Indigeneity through Landscapes of Force

Kavitha Ravikumar

I joined the reading group as part of my exploration around “norms”, how they take up space in our consciousness and their cultural and political antecedents. The complexity of language and its use has made me very interested in discovering different expressions of “being” or “knowing”, and how they can be both valid and valuable.

In *The Black Jacobins*, the entanglement of time, knowledge, space, perceptions and power seem to create particular kinds of artefacts, those that have both a tangible presence and also an intangible shadow that in turn moulds and directs narratives. James's narrative constructs both temporal and spatial awareness through an architecture of natural, cultural and colonial construction. Throughout history, landscapes have been explored and changed through human effort or ingenuity. However, Sarah Radcliffe speaks of indigeneity as relational, deeply historical, institutionalised and power inflected. Indigeneity appears with specificity of production that is gained through the exercise of power and resembles a sort of deliberate mapping, in being selective, codified and co-produced through routines and technologies, all with traceable consequences.[18] This deliberate intervention not only changes the nature of what “once was”, it then perhaps directly determines a different path to “what becomes”. The question then is not “what” is included in indigeneity but “when” does it become part of indigeneity?

The landscape of Haiti underwent a transformation from an equatorial, forested setting to the deliberate construction of a plantation island, one with insertions of sugarcane and coffee within the natural setting. The book describes this scenery as enchanting at first glimpse to the European traveller, inciting surprise and admiration.[19] However, this reworking of the landscape was the result of a brutality expended through the colonial system of slavery and plantation economics. The ongoing pressure led not just a new kind of landscape and accompanying repercussions, but a new configuration and layering of the strata of the population that then beget a particular historical chain of events.

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[18] Sarah A. Radcliffe, ‘Geography and indigeneity I: Indigeneity, coloniality and knowledge’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 41.2 (2015), 220–229. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132515612952

[19] James, p. 41.

> 'Haiti, a large island (nearly as large as Ireland), rich, they said, in the yellow metal'. 'Its distance from the equator gives an unusual lusciousness...'[20]

the lure of colour

the promise of wealth

green or gold?

> 'The sugar plantations demanded an exacting and ceaseless labour. The tropical earth is baked hard by the sun. [....] To cow them into the necessary docility and acceptance necessitated a régime of calculated brutality and terrorism.'[21]

the coin lay in sweet taste

fed with sweat, blood and death

in sweltering heat

> 'The traveller from Europe was enchanted at his first glimpse of this paradise, in which the ordered beauty of agriculture and the prodigality of Nature competed equally for his surprise and admiration.'[22]

glorious green, lush to the eye

a smokescreen

hiding the rot inside

Topographies of subordination and resistance

Robin Schuldenfrei

A topography can be understood in manifold ways – each definition germane to the rich visual, social and economic landscapes presented by James's *The Black Jacobins*: 'the relief features or surface configuration of an area; the features, relations, or configuration of a structural entity; a schema of a structural entity, as of the mind, a field of study, or society, reflecting a division into distinct areas having a specific relation or a specific position relative to one another.'[23] Spatial practices of colonial extraction were dependent on creating a multitude of overlapping systems of extraction and change upon several different topographies of Saint-Domingue, as reliant on social and physical structures of domination over a subjugated people as upon the landscape upon which those enslaved peoples were forced to toil. As an architectural historian who investigates social and political interactions between people, their objects and spaces, I approached *The Black Jacobins* with a materialist eye for how James's historical account paired the spatial scape with the diverse human and economic actions upon it.

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[20] James, p. 23.

[21] James, pp. 28-29.

[22] James, p. 41.

The opening of Chapter 2 ('The Owners'), begins with a description as lush in words as in the natural imagery that both *situates* the architectural objects in the landscape itself and in terms *gleaned from* that same surrounding topography. 'Field upon field, the light green sugar-cane, low and continually rippled in the breeze, enclosed the *factory and the dwelling houses like a sea*; a few feet above the cane-stalks waved the five-foot leaves of the banana-trees;' James continues, 'near the *dwelling-houses* the branches of the palm, crowning a *perfectly rounded and leafless column* of sixty or seventy feet, gave forth, like huge feathers, a continuous soothing murmur; while groups of them in the distance, always visible in the unclouded tropical air, looked like *clusters of giant umbrellas* waiting for the parched and sun-baked traveler.'[24]

As with the plantations James writes of the mountains, a topography described in equal measure as lavish in natural beauty, as in the potential for extracting wealth: 'Thousands of small, scrupulously tidy coffee-trees rose on the slopes of the hills, and the abrupt and precipitous mountain-sides were covered to the summits with the luxuriant tropical undergrowth and precious hardwood forests of Saint-Domingue.'[25] To the great houses, rich plantation fields, the productive mountains, James layers in additional distinct topographies – such as the ports which become key entities for successful military strategies.

The reader learns that: 'The traveller from Europe was enchanted at his first glimpse of this paradise, in which the ordered beauty of agriculture and the prodigality of Nature competed equally for his surprise and admiration.'[26] Yet this landscape soon reveals its difficult and unrelenting nature: 'The climate was harsh […] The burning sun and humid atmosphere took heavy toll of all newcomers, European and African alike.'[27] And the reader is made aware of the darker underside – revealed by these varying topographies is a dynamic as intent on the extraction of people as the land. The 'great' houses of the colonists, places of 'lavish hospitality', join the fields of the plantations to become additional sites of colonial extraction from 'the black and Mulatto women who competed so successfully for the favours of [white French women's] husbands and lovers.'[28] Pulled from the land are goods of an exceedingly high quantity and quality, James totals in 1767 alone the exportation of 72 million pounds of raw sugar, 51 million pounds of white sugar, a million pounds of indigo, and two million pounds of cotton, as well as hides, molasses, cocoa, rum and coffee.[29]

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[23] Entry for 'topography', *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* [dictionary.com], accessed 6 July 2021.

[24] Emphasis added. James, p. 22.

[25] James, p. 22.

[26] James, pp. 22-23.

[27] James, p. 23.

[28] James, pp. 23-24.

The spatial practices of colonial extraction in *The Black Jacobins* are closely tied to a spatial economy made up of land acquisition and management, coerced labour, the destruction of crops in the waves of war, and the subsequent replantings. Enmeshed in the physical topographies of Saint-Domingue aisre a configuration of what can be understood as *social topographies* – structural entities in relation to one another: social relationships (planter, enslaved), racial relationships (between Black, Mulatto,[30] 'big whites', and 'small whites'[31]), power relationships, labour relationships (manager, steward, overseer, enslaved, free Blacks), and relationships creating a political economy (beyond the plantation system, also that of the French bureaucratic system, the maritime economy of colonial merchants and, as James reminds the reader, an intense smuggler trade).

A central argument of *The Black Jacobins* is that the basis of France's wealth and power lay in the slave-trade and the colonies and its growing prosperity led them to chafe under the economic restrictions enforced by France, leading to revolt and insurrection.[32] Therein James makes his ground-breaking contribution to our understanding of the entwined topographies of economy and society: that the 'slave-trade and slavery were the economic basis of the French Revolution.'[33]

In August 1791, on the North Plain and in and around the town of Le Cap, in a coordinated effort, enslaved people murdered their enslavers and burnt plantations to the ground, resulting in a horizon that James describes as a '*wall* of fire', the burnt embers of cane straw making it difficult, for nearly three weeks, to 'distinguish day from night.'[34] The end of white domination occurs, James posits, at the moment when ten thousand Blacks 'swooped down from the hills' and the counter-revolutionaries were forced to flee to the harbour; as a fire engulfs Le Cap, burning 'two-thirds of the city to the ground' and 'destroying hundreds of millions' worth of property', ten thousand whites flee onto vessels, never to return to Saint-Domingue.[35] Resistance began on the literal and social topographies that extractive processes had built. James melds politics and warfare, economy and agronomy: 'A growing army and the confidence of free black labourers meant power. But the revolutionary leader Toussaint L'Ouverture saw early that political power is only a means to an end. The salvation of [the island] lay in the restoration of agriculture.'[36]

Thus James brings together what might be understood as three key intertwining spatial-social topographies which, in turn brought about the only successful independence movement led by formerly enslaved peoples, that is: the tactical use of the *geographical topography* of the hills and the terminus of the sea ('the relief features or surface configuration of an area'), a *topography of economic interests* that were burnt to the ground in towns and on plantations ('relations, or configuration of a structural entity'), and the *social topography* of Saint-Domingue in which Black inhabitants resisted and overcame white oppressors ('reflecting a division into distinct areas having a specific relation or a specific position relative to one another').[37]

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[29] James, p. 2.

[30] For James on the Mulattoes as a distinct group, see James, pp. 30-36.

[31] Included in the category of 'big' whites were plantation owners, affluent merchants, and the maritime bourgeoisie (p. 26). The 'small' whites were composed of plantation managers and stewards, local town lawyers, notaries, clerks, artisans and grocers as well as a surprising shadowy 'underworld' of 'city vagabonds, fugitives from justice, escaped galley slaves, debtors unable to pay their bills, adventurers seeking adventure or quick fortunes' (pp. 26-27).

[32] James, p. 38. What had revolutionary France to do with the slaves, James asks, rhetorically, concluding 'Everything. The workers and peasants of France could not have been expected to take any interest in the colonial question in normal times … But now they were roused. They were striking at royalty, tyranny, reaction and oppression of all types, and with these they included slavery' (p. 98).

[33] James, p. 39. To make his claims, James cites eye-opening figures of mid-eighteenth century economic activity based in France, but resulting from the colonies, including the '50 millions' that Nantes merchants had invested in the West Indies and the sixteen factories in Bordeaux that refined 10,000 tons of raw sugar from Saint-Domingue annually (p. 39).

[34] James, p. 71.

[35] James, p. 103.

[36] James, p. 126.

'Your ship is not big enough for a man like me.'

Emily Mann

So Toussaint L'Ouverture retorted when the captain of the boat that had brought French Commander Hédouville to Saint-Domingue told him 'how pleased he would be to take him back to France in the same vessel'.[38] When another assured him how honoured and welcome he would be there, Toussaint – James tells us – touched a shrub in the garden and replied: 'I shall go when this is big enough to take me.'[39]

This assertion of power, resistance and autonomy subverts a crucial piece in the architecture of colonial subjugation, violence and extraction that James here – at the heart of *The Black Jacobins* – raises forcefully to the surface: the ship. In these brief lines, the French ship and France are reduced; the building of a Haitian ship and state projected. The colonial commander soon flees onboard a boat in the harbour of Le Cap (its natural protection previously so prized by the French) and Toussaint proclaims his own authority in a speech at Fort Liberté. 'Toussaint had burnt his boats', as James writes at the end of the next chapter, 'Toussaint Seizes the Power'.[40]

The material and metaphorical vehicle of the ship that moves through these passages arrested me, in particular, as an architectural historian concerned with researching and teaching Europe's colonial past and present beyond the discipline's still-strong traditional bounds. The emergence of the ship in James's text, as both physically and mentally produced space, reminded me of Édouard Glissant's later note, in his prose-poem 'The Open Boat', that 'the only written thing on slave ships was the account book listing the exchange value' of the enslaved.[41] This stark note that centres the slave ship and its stifling spaces underlines the necessity for an anti-racist architectural history to look far beyond surviving documents and built fabric, and to listen intently to texts such as those by Glissant and James.

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[37] Entry for 'topography', *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* [dictionary.com], accessed 6 July 2021.

[38] James, p. 169.

[39] Ibid, p.169.

[40] Ibid, p. 195.

[41] Édouard Glissant, 'Open Boat', in Poetics of Relation, trans. Betsy Wing (1990); Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 5–9 (p. 5).

James begins *The Black Jacobins* with a ship, both in the prologue – the ship on which Columbus arrived on the island of San Salvador then sailed to Haiti, where indigenous people helped rescue a wreck unwitting of what European ships would bring and take away – and in Chapter One, 'The Property', which opens with the slavers who 'scoured the coasts of Guinea', their 'chief hunting ground'.[42] Having established the intolerable pressure on African peoples to meet European demands for slaves, James describes the spatial organisation and control of the human 'cargo', from the forcibly unsettled 'interior' towards the slave ports and pens – 'dens of putrefaction' – and on to the 'hell' of the ship holds, where the incessant threat of revolt increased the chains used to tether the enslaved. 'No place on earth, observed one writer of the time, concentrated so much misery as the hold of a slave-ship.'[43] The deck offered no light: forced to dance, some took the chance to throw themselves overboard with cries of freedom.[44]

James later aligns and entwines slave ship and island in the plain paragraph: 'If on no earthly spot was so much misery concentrated as on a slave-ship, then on no portion of the globe did its surface in proportion to its dimensions yield so much wealth as the colony of San Domingo.'[45]

It is the ship that anchors the island as part of an expansive architecture of economic super-exploitation. Across a few pages in Chapter Two, 'The Owners', James maps this architecture of 'economic tyranny' which by 1789 made Saint-Domingue the most profitable colony the world had ever known, underpinned by the enormous increase in slaves shipped from Africa.[46] The inscription of the horrific transatlantic trade in local European spaces, and the pivotal place of the ship, is underlined by the response of the French 'maritime bourgeois' to the overturning of slavery: 'Bravo! [...] There is no longer any ship-building in our ports.'[47]

History, especially architectural history, tends to be focused on land – but architecture, especially as a technology of oppression and extraction, also happens at sea. Just as there is no real separation between land and sea in the globalised world, and the struggle across these spaces, the ship is powerfully present in James's descriptions of the colony. Le Cap's harbour is 'always filled with ships and its streets with merchandise'; and elsewhere the 'city and the shipping in the harbour' merge.[48] In the Haitian War of Independence, the 'irresistible offensive' took place 'not only on land but on sea', the French helpless against the Black revolutionaries' self-built light boats.[49]

Rather than being a 'floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself' as Michel Foucault suggests, boats were as Paul Gilroy has written 'the living means by which the

[42] James, pp. 3, 5.

[43] James, p. 6.

[44] James, p. 7.

[45] James, p. 37.

[46] James, pp. 37–46.

[47] James, p. 115.

[48] James, pp. 25, 71.

[49] James, pp. 295–96.

points within [the] Atlantic world were joined', providing 'a chance to explore the articulations between [...] discontinuous histories'.[50] 'Ships also refer us back to the Middle Passage,' Gilroy stresses – that is, the stage in the transatlantic trade in which millions of enslaved Africans were forcibly transported 4,000 miles or more to the Americas in murderous conditions (a 'womb abyss', in Glissant's words, that produced protest, and death, but also a 'coming unanimity'); ships direct attention to 'the half-remembered micro-politics of the slave trade and its relationship to both industrialisation and modernisation'.[51]

James's quotation of Toussaint – 'Your ship is not big enough for a man like me' – at once invokes and overturns the racialised architecture and spatial violence of the European ship; the flow of history is reversed, and revolutionary space pushed beyond the bounds of any shores.

Edge-*Interior*-Expanse

Tania Sengupta

I reflect here on a particular relational geography and landscape that emerges vividly through C. L. R. James's spatial, visual and performative narrative technique. Instead of Saint-Domingue, however, I focus on the West African end of its slavery story – as etched in the opening scheme of *The Black Jacobins* – and more specifically, on the tentacles of slave extraction penetrating West Africa's interiors in relation to its coastal edge and the Atlantic. From James's rendition emerges, for me, a particular type of spatial configuration – edge-*interior*-expanse – that simultaneously represents geographical relationships, an abstract figuration of colonial extractive processes, as well as a narrative device.

> The slavers scoured the coasts of Guinea. As they devastated an area they moved westward and then south, decade after decade, past the Niger, down the Congo Coast, past the Loango and Angola, round the Cape of Good Hope, and by 1789, even as far as Mozambique on the eastern side of Africa. Guinea remained their chief hunting ground. From the coasts they organized expeditions far into the interior.[52]

As a historian of colonial and imperial architecture, cities and spaces, my natural instinct was to "look for them" in James's iconic work, only to find rather fleeting, elusive glimpses. Yet his vivid historical narration draws us in, urging for a deeper look. Buildings, landscapes and sites gradually become legibile through the crevices of events, people and practices and in fact, appear ubiquitous. We find multiple openings to think about the nexus of architectural, spatial, economic, social and corporeal terrains in delivering, but also resisting and subverting projects of colonial capitalist economy and modernity. Through James, we also begin to glean architecture's more agile, ephemeral, contingent and liberating possibilities enfolding multiple landscapes, geographies, people, cultures, mobilities and practices.

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[50] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces' (1967), *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986), trans. by Jay Miskowiec, pp. 22–27 (p. 27).

[51] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 17; Glissant, p. 6.

[52] James, p. 5.

My choice to think about James's relatively short yet intense engagement with the West African interior landscapes of slave extraction at the start of *The Black Jacobins* is in significant part rooted in my broader interest in the condition of "interiority" within colonial territories physically, materially, through fixities/mobilities and as imaginaries. Despite its very different spatio-temporal context, James's work speaks to my own research on nineteenth-century provincial towns of colonial eastern India. There, the British East India Company's military-fiscal rule and agricultural revenue extraction from rural "hinterlands" also calibrated particular types of interiorities and exteriorities.

In the narration of colonialism and global capitalism – whether in period accounts and maps or in post-1990s transnational/global histories – coastal ribbons, sea-ports and ocean-space are central protagonists.[53] This is reinforced by long-established cartographic imagery as well as new visualisations of nautical networks linking continents, charting immense landscapes of global mobility of ships, people/slaves, commodities, ideas, expertise, cultures and so on. As conceptual and graphic imaginaries, flows converge here radially at port settlements, then diverge out to the expansive sea and vice versa.[54]

James's opening sequence in *The Black Jacobins*, however, draws us straight into the space of the West African interiors as the heart of slave extraction and as a landscape left ravaged and radically altered by it. We are guided first through the European slavers scouring expedition routes into interior villages, and then back through the outward journeys of slaves marching to the coasts. By the late nineteenth century, maps reveal well-established scourer caravan routes and James himself mentions slave canoe waterways.[55] The outward land routes or waterways also mapped the slaves' transformation from human into "property" as they were transported from their homes to the seaports and finally into "commodity" as they were put on display on ship decks on arrival at Saint-Domingue. Particular 'terrains' and connected geographies were thus vital vehicles of this transformation.[56]

Reading James alongside some of the period maps, one also sees how, rather than simplified radials that ended in "nothing", Africa's land mass, right from the coast to the interior, was actually overlaid with a complex combination of lattice and tree formations of caravan, marching and canoe routes, with designated direction of travel (inward or outward). It is likely that some of these built upon pre-existing paths, but the sheer density of footfall of eleven million slaves and numerous scourers between the early-sixteenth and into the nineteenth century will have etched hard lines onto these interiors.[57] The existing pathways and waterways were now repurposed for unprecedented forced mobility of labour. The slave extraction web also contained interior, intermediate collection points for villages. The long stretch of Guinea south of the Sahara, and from Senegal in the west to parts of Sudan via Cameroon, and the centre of Congo (scoured from both east and west coasts) saw some of the thickest extractions and hollowing out of a vital human landscape for the productive sugar landscapes of Saint-Domingue.

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[53] This is typified by the turn towards ocean rim histories, late 1980s onwards, of the Atlantic, Pacific and more recently, the Indian Ocean. Paul Gilroy's charting of a Black Atlantic culture is one of the early, evocative accounts of such oceanic space and mobility as a simultaneously creative and political site. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[54] The radial motif also proliferates in colonial oceanic cartography, for example, in the form of the nautical compass rose.

[55] Slave Map of Africa (A map of the slave trade in Africa that shows the regions of most intense activity), drawn by Sir H.H. Johnston and J.G. Bartholomew, Edinburgh, New York Public Library Collections, 1899; James, p. 6.

[56] I am referring here to Stuart Elden's conceptualisation of 'terrain' as the physical and strategic materiality of territory. Stuart Elden, 'Terrain, Politics, History', *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 11.2 (2021), 170-189.

Nor could the central African region remain ‘a territory of peace and happy civilisation’ following the introduction of western weaponry.[58] As James tells us, it fundamentally ruptured the communal fabric of societies: ‘they set the simple tribesmen fighting against each other with modern weapons over thousands of square miles.’ Here was a landscape that had been turned from benign to one of violent warfare: tribes, ‘forced to supply slaves or become slaves themselves’, and presumably the villages that were their communal habitat, fell apart, as ‘violence and ferocity became the necessities for survival, and violence and ferocity survived.’[59]

The motif of interiority resurfaces in the extreme forms of ‘circumscribed spaces’, to use Swati Chattopadhyay’s conceptualisation.[60] The enslaved peoples’ journey from inland villages traced a graded incorporation into increasingly confined spaces, bodily restrictions and torture – from the shackles, hand-restraints and weighting stones on the march, the narrow canoe (to prevent flight), through the crowded penning “trunks” at the slave ports that saw one-fifth of the slaves die, to the excruciating physical-psychological confinement of the stacks in the ship’s hold.

Africa’s inland regions thus stand as a protagonist and a circumscribed interiority a continuing motif, in James's opening account, setting some of the refrains for the rest of the book. He spends far more time describing the inlands than Africa’s coastal edge, yet equally, shows how the two fundamentally constituted each other.

> What could these inland tribesmen do on the open sea, in a complicated sailing vessel?[61]

The interior is thus harnessed again in relation to the open sea, as an embodied memory that renders the enslaved helpless in seemingly boundless territory, ironically, in extreme captivity. In *The Black Jacobins*’ opening scheme, the ‘interior’ is simultaneously a site of socio-spatial fragmentation and rupture, of arrival at the edge, of environmental incompetence in expansive space, of longing for peaceful free life, and of extreme bodily and psychological confinement. The interior meets the edge of the coast and the expanse of the sea and always remains an embodied presence within them.

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[57] James Walvin, ‘Introduction’ in James, *The Black Jacobins*, p. vii.

[58] James, p. 5.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Swati Chattopadhyay, Architectural History, or a Geography of Small Spaces?, The Eduard F Skelar Talk, SAH 2021 Conference, April 2021.

[61] James, p. 7.

Altering the landscape of colonial extraction

Ana Betancour

The formation of political landscapes, narratives of the Global South, being shaped by the Global North and the othering and racialisation of migrant communities were in many ways part of my lived experience as a displaced refugee to Sweden from Uruguay. As a researcher, spatial practitioner and educator today, reading James, who clearly and powerfully articulates this power imbalance of historical interpretation, strengthens my own position of resistance and belief in alternative futures for oppressed people.

In the allegorical etching for *America decima pars* (1619), Indigenous 'America' is represented as a nude woman in front of the voyager Amerigo Vespucci.[62] Michel de Certeau's reading of the scene describes the female body as 'the *nuova terra* not yet existing on maps', and he advances the argument that this moment in history acted as the beginning of 'colonization of the body by the discourse of power'.[63] The colonisers' desires would be written into this body, and the much sought-after gold and silver was to be followed by the white gold – sugar – and sugar cane was brought and planted in the colonies.

The extent of the extraction of sugar from the colonies and expansion of the slave trade resonates with James's description of sugar production in Saint Domingue: 'By the middle of the eighteenth century, sixteen factories refined 10,000 tons of raw sugar from San Domingo every year', and the sugar cane plantation required and 'demanded an exacting and ceaseless labour'.[64] The enslaved population in Saint Domingue increased from 2,000 in 1681 to 480,000, by 1791.[65]

James illustrates this extraction of wealth from Haiti when he describes 'If on no earthly spot was so much misery concentrated as on a slave-ship, then on no portion of the globe did its surface in proportion to its dimensions yield so much wealth as the colony of San Domingo' and describes the extent to which colonial Haiti was to France a landscape of extraction of natural resources and human labour.[66] Before the revolution, the sugar factories in Haiti brought France two-thirds of its riches from

[62] Allegorical etching by Jan Van der Straet for America Decima pars, by Jean-Theodore de bry (Oppenheim, 1619), in Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. by Tom Conley (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1988); 'Preface', p. xxv.

[63] Ibid.

[64] C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 48; p. 10.

[65] Ronald Segal, *The Black Diaspora* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995) p. 49.

[66] James, 1989, p. 46.

the colonies. To the colonisers, the slaves were machines in this factory of sugar wealth, an inextricable part of this landscape of extraction. Except they did rebel to extricate themselves. 'By the end of July 1791 the enslaved people in and around Le Cap were ready and waiting. The plan was conceived on a massive scale and they aimed at exterminating the whites and taking the colony for themselves'.[67] James describes the enslaved people behind the Haitian 1791 revolution as being 'closer to a modern proletariat than any group of workers in existence at the time, and the rising was, therefore, a thoroughly prepared and organised mass movement.'[68] The destruction of the vast plains of sugar canes through fire became part of the battle, as if necessary for their survival.

The intertwined relationship between the landscape as a body and the Black labouring bodies as a landscape of extraction within the colonial system of production is a manifestation of a 'rupture between a subject and object of operation'.[69] Within this interpretation the burning of the plantations can perhaps be understood as an existential necessity for those enslaved and "othered" to liberate themselves from the vessel of exploitation and through that, from the oppressor's exploitative desires.

A parallel reading of the act of destruction of the sugar factories could be an awareness amongst the rebelling enslaved that the colonisers would try to take back the production.[70] No matter what, the sugar fields were equal to exploitation and had to be destroyed. In James's words: 'They knew that as long as these plantations stood their lot would be to labour on them until they dropped. The only thing was to destroy them.'[71] This destruction was not unanimous, as James also explains how Toussaint 'prevented the revolutionary labourers from setting fire to the plantation,' and after the uprising urging the restoration of agriculture.[72]

The aftermath of independence of Haiti in 1804 came at a high price. The United States Congress which authorised the implementation of racial slavery in its own settler colonial state until 1863 (and feared it would spread this spirit of revolution), before banning trade with Haiti in 1806.[73] In 1825 'France recognized its former colony's independence, but only for a huge cash indemnity', continuing to affect Haiti today.[74] At the same time, reflecting on the Haitian Revolution offers the possibility of alternative narratives of futures for oppressed people then and now, as James powerfully highlights:

> Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Haitian slaves brought into the world more than the abolition of slavery. When Latin Americans saw that small and insignificant Haiti could win and keep independence they began to think that they ought to be able to do the same.[75]

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[67] James, 1989, p. 86.

[68] James, 1989, p. 86.

[69] De Certeau, 'Preface', p. xxvi.

[70] 'In the spring of 1803 Bonaparte was preparing vast armaments to send to San Domingo during the coming autumn.' James, 1989, p. 362.

[71] James, 1989, p. 88.

[72] James, 1989, p. 90; pp. 155–156.

[73] Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America*, trans. by Cedric Belfrage (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), p. 78.

[74] Galeano, p. 78.

[75] James, 1989, p. 411.

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Voodoo and the Origins of the Black Atlantic

Derin Fadina

Eh! Eh! Bomba! Heu! Heu!

Canga, bafio té!

Canga, mouné de lé!

Canga, do ki la!

Canga, do ki la!

Canga, li!

We swear to destroy the whites

and all they possess.

Let us die rather than fail

to keep this vow.[76]

As the story goes, on the stormy night of the 22nd of August 1791, some 200 enslaved peoples met in a place called Bois Caïman, a clearing in the thick forests of Morne Rouge, in the North Plain of Saint-Domingue.[77] What was said to take place on this fateful night was a Voodoo ceremony presided over by the eminent enslaved man and Voodoo High Priest Dutty Boukman. His chants and charges roused within the attending congregation the revolutionary spirit that was to be the lifeblood of the Saint-Domingue slaves' revolt. They drummed and danced and sang songs of revolution, Boukman drank the blood of a stuck pig, and called for the destruction of their oppressors.[78]

Following James's history, many of the details of this event have been called into question by historians. According to David Patrick Geggus, there is little historical evidence substantiating Boukman's chant, or that there ever was a place called Bois Caïman.[79] Even the supposed date of the ceremony has been disputed – there might have in fact been two or several such meetings. However, in spite of conflicting accounts, we can be sure that something did occur in August of 1791, and this moment is widely considered to be the official start of the revolution. What is equally significant about the event is that it constitutes the origins of what Paul Gilroy conceives as the Black Atlantic – the transnational, Black diasporic cultural-political formation that was brought about by the transatlantic slave trade.

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[76] James, pp. 14-15.

[77] James, pp. 69-70.

[78] James, p. 70.

[79] David Patrick Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002).

The enslaved in Saint-Domingue, and on the various other plantations scattered across the Americas, were connected not only by their forced conscription into the slave trade, nor by their mutual struggle for liberation, but by their common history – their origins in Africa. The memories of their homeland, despite growing dimmer with each passing generation, remained in the collective consciousness and were evident in their ways of life, and in their forms of spiritual expression and political formation. These Voodoo rituals were an amalgam of various West and Central African traditions further combined with elements of the Roman Catholicism the enslaved were forced to adopt upon arriving on the island. Although Toussaint L'Ouverture's revolution echoed Western ideals of liberty and equality, the medium through which the revolting masses articulated it was decidedly African. The aesthetics of syncopated drum patterns, call-and-response musical forms and rhythmic dancing became inseparable from the ethics of group expression and liberation. While the enslaved were 'taking part in the destruction of European feudalism begun by the French Revolution', they were also – through the perpetuation of these cultural practices – engaged in the construction of the Black Atlantic. The Voodoo ceremony is just one example of the diasporic decolonial spatial practices which emerged from and are expressive of the syncretism of disparate African cultures in the condition of slavery that have come to make up the Black Atlantic.[80] The music, costumes and dancing all 'celebrate the grounding of the aesthetic with other dimensions of social life' and 'form [a] contemplation of the mimetic functions of artistic performance in the process of struggles towards emancipation'.[81]

The discovery of Paul Gilroy's concept of the Black Atlantic, and the recognition that I myself inhabit it, represented a paradigm shift for me. This was partly why I joined the reading group, to further understand the Black Atlantic, and to seek its moments of formation, manifestation, and maturation. The episode in the San Domingue revolution highlighted in my essay struck me as one such instance. Here James presents us with the Black Atlantic in its embryonic stage, in the context of the transatlantic slave trade from which it was born.

[80] James, p. 161.

[81] Gilroy, p. 57.

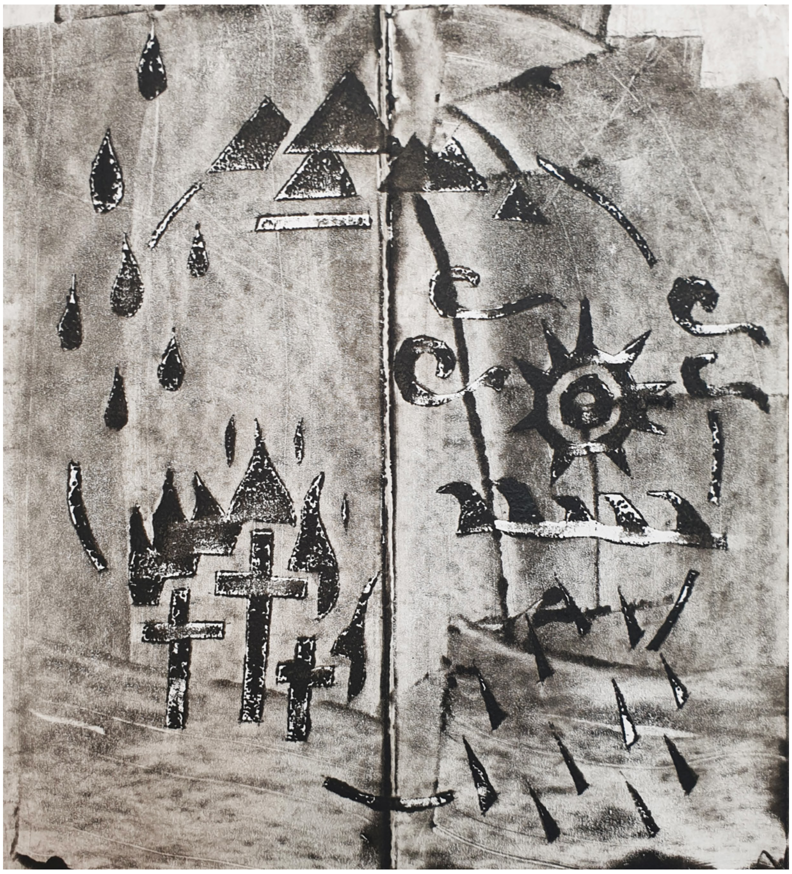

Figure 2. Hafsa Adan and Shahed Saleem, *Voodoo and the Origins of the Black Atlantic*, 2021.

'Town life is the nurse of civilisation'

Nick Beech

This is a strong normative claim by James.[82] He clearly expects towns to develop sophisticated forms of communication, both material – the separation and ordering of inter-relations between humans and non-humans – and symbolic – the formation of discursive regimes that distinguish private and public, commercial, sacral and civic life. This expectation might be considered in relation to James's statement on the formation of an industrial bourgeoisie as one that is necessarily urban rather than rural. All of which is to say: James strikes us, at first, as operating within that Marxist tradition which presupposes that the town and the bourgeoisie (and then proletariat) are the motor of historical "progress". Yet James's accounts of the main towns of Saint-

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[82] James, p. 25.

Domingue – Port-au-Prince and Cap François – provide a critique of colonial urbanism.[83] Though these relatively small towns sustain intense commercial activity – 'the Paris of the Antilles' as James puts it – their urbanism falls short of the progressive measure, bearing 'the imprint of savagery which seemed inseparable from everything connected with San Domingo'.[84]

> [T]he streets were sewers and […] people threw all their garbage into them. The Government begged people in vain not to commit nuisances in the street, to be careful of the disposition of "faecal matter", not to let sheep, pigs and goats wander loose […] the population washed their dirty linen, made indigo and soaked manioc in the water of the only spring which supplied the town […] If it rained at night, one could not walk in the town the next day, and streams of water filled the ditches at the side of the street in which one could hear the croaking of toads.[85]

These failures are a result of the practices of plantation extraction and slavery – a point underlined by James's urban critique of the brutalisation of the enslaved body as enacted within the public (as well as the private) sphere – 'they continued to beat their slaves in the public streets'.[86] The failure of the urban indexes the absolute limits of "civilization" in the colony.

James has been accused of Eurocentrism on these and other points. But even his critics acknowledge that James's position is always ambiguous in this regard.[87] If James seems to accept bourgeois life as a model of urbanity, derived from European metropolitan experience, in *The Black Jacobins* he juxtaposes this with another site – one invested with radical, transformative significance: the *rural*.

Urbanism "fails" in the colony, but architecture is nevertheless put to work. James forces our attention upon the sadism of Donatien-Marie-Joseph de Vimeur, Vicomte de Rochambeau, sent by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802 to crush the revolutionary forces in Saint-Domingue. James relates a macabre ceremonial conducted under the direction of Rochambeau:

> [H]e gave a great ball to which he invited several of the Mulatto women. It was a magnificent fête. At midnight Rochambeau stops the dancing and begs them to enter into a neighbouring apartment. This room, lit by a single lamp, is hung with black draperies in which white material figures as skulls; in the four corners are coffins. In the middle of their horrified silence the Mulatto women hear funeral chants sung by invisible singers. Dumb with terror they stood rooted to the spot, while

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[83] James, p. 23.

[84] James, p. 25.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] See for example, Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pp. 260–78.

> Rochambeau told them: “You have just assisted at the funeral ceremonies of your husbands and your brothers”.[88]

In his account of colonial urbanism James presents a failure to elaborate regimes of communicative reason. The architecture of Rochambeau on the other hand is precisely communicative and directed to a specific end: the mobilisation of ritual and formal organisation of space to generate an absolutely defined world from which a racialised class are excluded and exterminated.

To achieve this, all is inversion. Rochambeu’s illusory arts – the distorting light, cloth screens, the hidden singers, the axial spatial organisation and sequencing of the programme – are deployed to insist on the illusory status of the women invited: those who believed themselves to be not only human but members of the bourgeoisie are confronted with a shattering reflection. The horror experienced is calculated – an art of social intercourse (the ball or fête) – in which costumes, dance and conversation are deployed by individuals to demonstrate their ability and right to belong and converse is shockingly reversed at the moment of consummation. The perverse nature of the scene derives from the insistence that this is the modality through which life and humanity is assured – it is the result of a process of identification with that which denies one’s subjectivity.

What is described by James is not that species of spectacle, explicated by Michel Foucault, productive of the ‘double-bodies’ of both the sovereign (and sovereign power) and subjects (and souls).[89] This is spectacle, but one designed to *exclude* racialised bodies from a discursive regime and generate an “outside” in which those bodies are located and confined.

James highlights the extent to which Rochambeau’s programme of torture and ‘spectacle of the scaffold’ was targeted by the revolutionary Black population with a strategy that pulled these back into the very discursive regime that had been negated: ‘[...] far from being intimidated, the civil population met the terror with such courage and firmness as frightened the terrorists’; James remarks ‘they enslaved the Negro, they said, because he was not a man, and when he behaved like a man they called him a monster’.[90]

I came to this text as a lecturer in the history of architecture. I had no real expectations as to the pertinence of the work for architectural thought: rather, as all too often I suspect, I assumed that *The Black Jacobins* would be a window into the genealogy, history and theory of Black political radicalism. More fool me. The book is that of course, but James ought to be read in schools of architecture by scholars and students alike. His full descriptions of the urban conditions and architectural projects of colonialism are deeply troubling for European architecture not only on humanitarian grounds, but as that architecture is implicated as a

[88] James, p. 289.

[89] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1977), pp. 3-69.

[90] James, pp. 291-2.

technology both degenerative within coloniality and refined toward the same ends.

Biography

Unsettled Subjects is an interdisciplinary collective of architects and historians, whose members hail from diverse institutions across the UK, Europe and Africa. We seek to understand the political present by engaging critically and collectively with texts and ideas – through reading, research and creative practice – in order to interrogate issues of identity, race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexuality, class and power. The group was founded by Nick Beech in summer 2020, who convenes its active reading group, Unsettled Subjects / Confronting Questions.

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Walking on the Margin: A Study of Marginalised Ethnic Groups and Their Walking Practices in Urban and Rural Britain

Aayushi Bajwala

Introduction

In 'Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness', feminist writer bell hooks outlines the 'space of marginality' as a space that she can unlock as a Black woman living and working in the United States. She speaks of racial segregation and being an outsider in a place where there is white supremacy. Having grown up in a small Kentucky town, she lived literally on the margins, needing to cross the railroad tracks to enter the "centre" where the black population worked as taxi drivers, bar staff, and maids. These people physically entered the "centre" but were socially detached from it. Although we do not experience this exact geographical phenomenon in twenty-first-century Britain, there are metaphorical margins that are still embedded within access to education, healthcare, jobs and wealth. This marginality is a position in society.

hooks seizes this space of marginality as one of 'radical possibility' and opportunity.[2] She claims that 'living as we did – on the edge – we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out. We focused our attention on the centre as well as the margin. We understood both'.[3] Whilst hooks speaks of the 'margin', Black feminist academic Patricia Hill Collins describes marginalised individuals using the oxymoronic status as 'outsiders within', claiming that they have made 'creative use of their marginality' to produce unique Black feminist thought.[4] Both hooks and Collins argue for the positive nature of sitting on a 'margin' or 'border'.

It can be argued that individuals on the margin allude to Georg Simmel's social theory of The Stranger, a figure that embodies a sense of objectivity that allows them to be 'near and far at the same time.'[5] This figure is said to have a wandering nature, the opposite of fixation, giving them a helpful insight to social scenarios.[6] Another figure that communicates this action of physically wandering or strolling, particularly in an urban environment, is the flâneur. The flâneur, translating to "stroller" or "loafer" in French, was introduced by nineteenth-century poet, Charles Baudelaire, to describe a figure, typically a white male, roaming the streets and taking on the role of an urban observer completely unnoticed. I speculate whether individuals on the margin could obtain this flâneur status, exploring their variance in physical and metaphorical visibility in both geographic and social senses. These wandering figures of society can float through the centre invisible and are able to offer different and unique perspectives having seen both margin and centre.

Marginality is typically seen, as hooks states it, as a 'site of deprivation' and can be viewed as a place of repression rather than resistance, robbing these individuals of the same opportunities offered to their white counterparts.[7] However, writes hooks, 'It is a space I choose', a place of uniqueness and creative thought. Collins discusses in later writing the 'marketplace ideology' within organisations arguing that 'the commodification of outsider-within status where an African American's value to an organisation lies solely in their ability to market a seemingly permanent marginal status can operate to suppress Black women's empowerment' substituting for systemic change.[8] The 'outsider-within' status results in these figures being "othered". Their othered or unbiased position for solving centred people's problems, as Simmel suggests, can cause their own personal experiences to become invalid and distant from the centre. It is important to recognise that the very fact that marginality exists is an example of oppression towards certain groups and the gains from a marginal intellectuality can delay anti-racist or feminist social advancements. Through this argument, I recognise the dangers of romanticising marginality. However, in this study I present ways in which marginality has been utilised by individuals to create unique and creative practices worth embedding within our centres of knowledge.

Positioning has been important to my study. Employing feminist academic Donna Haraway's notion of 'situated knowledges' that clearly originate from a 'marked body', I utilise my subjectivity and my experiences as an object of study, recognising their advantages but also their limitations.[9] As a Brown woman of South Asian descent writing an academic essay, I question my authority to speak for others. I recognise the damaging effect of adopting the term BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) which has

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[1] bell hooks, 'Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness', in *Gender Space Architecture*, ed. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, Iain Borden, 2nd edn. (London and New York: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2003), p. 205.

[2] hooks, 'Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness', p. 206.

[3] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 15.

[4] Patricia Hill Collins, 'Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought', *Social Problems*, 33.6, (1986), S14 - S32 (p. S14).

[5] Georg Simmel, 'Chapter 3: The Stranger', in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. by Kurt Wolff (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1950), p. 408.

[6] Simmel, 'Chapter 3: The Stranger', p. 402.

[7] hooks, 'Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness', p. 206.

[8] Patricia Hill Collins, 'Reflections on the Outsider Within', *Journal Of Career Development*, 26.1, (1999), 85-88 (p. 88); Patricia Hill Collins, 'Towards a Politics of Empowerment', in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York and London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis, 2000), p. 283.

[9] Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Priviledge of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies*, 14.3 (1988), 575-599 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3178066> (p.589).

become overused in British academic institutions. Grouping together the experiences of different ethnic groups can homogenise, and the rejection of the fact that different groups experience different types of discrimination has caused a modern-day colonising effect. My personal experiences stem from the South Asian experience due to my Gujarati heritage. I do also speak of the Black experience, but I cannot speak for it. Therefore, I have decided to use the term “marginalised ethnic groups” to describe individuals who have been marginalised on the grounds of ethnicity and use “the Black experience” or “the South Asian experience” to describe specific examples.

I overlay hooks’ geographical model of margin and centre across onto rural and urban Britain, developing an analysis of the ways in which marginalised ethnic groups walk in rural and urban settings.

The first chapter, ‘Centre’, explores the ways in which marginalised ethnic groups walk in the urban realm. Through several examples – including Monica Ali’s character of Nazneen in Brick Lane, Steve McQueen’s depiction of the 1970 Mangrove Nine protest in his BBC Series Small Axe and the non profit organisation Southall Black Sisters – I ask the following questions: How do methods of urban walking adopted by marginalised ethnic groups challenge specific stereotypes of walking the city? How do marginalised ethnic groups use urban walking as a practice to make visible their problems?

The second chapter, ‘Margin’, focuses on the ways that marginalised ethnic bodies walk the British landscape. Looking at several examples including the nineteenth century history of The Sierra Club, Ingrid Pollard’s photography and Zahra Mahmood’s spiritual walking, I ask: How do marginalised ethnic groups navigate themselves, through the practice of walking, in the rural environment? How does walking in rural spaces hold a political scope?

Walking, as an activity that is underpinned by issues of culture, race and gender, is the practice I use to describe, challenge and draw parallels between the binaries at work in our cities: margin/centre, urban/rural and personal/political. Using Haraway’s ‘situated knowledge’ I assess these binary oppositions by realising the value of individual experience rather than generalising and basing arguments on the stereotypes that maintain certain assumptions about marginalised ethnic groups in Britain.[10] For example, I argue that, due to historical exclusion, for marginalised ethnic groups walking in rural spaces can be more political than protest walking, despite assumptions. I propose a vision distant from the white male gaze, depicting a position in which Britain’s diverse communities are not only respected but celebrated for the differences they have to offer. Through my argument the margins must become the centre.

[10] Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges’, p. 584.

Centre

Britain’s marginalised ethnic groups tend to be concentrated in clusters in cities. The ethnic groups most likely to live in an urban location are Pakistani (99.1%), Bangladeshi (98.7%) and Black African (98.2%).[11] However, at a more granular level, from neighbourhood to neighbourhood some London boroughs are more diverse than others.[12] Migrant populations often live densely in the city, recreating elements of their home countries in urban environments, that is creating their own centres.

Monica Ali, in her novel Brick Lane, writes Nazneen’s story following a young Bangladeshi woman who moves to London in 1985. Nazneen claims that if she ‘wore trousers and underwear, like the girl with the big camera on Brick Lane, then she would roam the streets fearless and proud.’ She has the desire to rip her sari to shreds when she realises that it is ‘clothes, not fate, that make her life.’[13] Despite it being an important part of her cultural identity, Nazneen feels shackled by her sari, which visually codes her as an outsider. The flâneur, the invisible observer of the city, is always depicted as a white cis able-bodied man leisurely strolling through Paris. Nazneen, however, with her traditional clothing and her identity as a brown woman, lacks the privilege of invisibility when she walks the city. The constant possibility of harassment is imminent as women can never fully escape into invisibility because their gender and – in Nazneen’s case – ethnicity marks them as objects of the male gaze.[14] The visibility of these individuals is a way that they still feel they are walking on the margin even if it is physically through the centre.

Walter Benjamin in his major work The Arcades Project concludes that ‘the flâneur was male, of some means, of a refined sensibility, with little or no domestic life’.[15] This lack of domestic life and responsibility does not correlate with Nazneen’s life in Brick Lane; she walks with purpose, leaving her home to buy groceries or for her children’s hospital appointments. Ali describes Nazneen’s bus journey with her baby, where she ‘stood Raqib up on her knee so he could look out of the window with her’, her observational practice devoted to her care of the baby.[16] Purpose and responsibility have always been a hindering factor to a flâneur’s status. However, I argue that Nazneen’s observations have a dual dimensional quality as she dictates Raqib’s sight of vision and safety – this only enhances her observations of the city. This lack of realisation of mothers’ observational practice shows how motherhood is completely excluded from the centred narrative of urban living.

In Brick Lane, Nazneen ventures out into the city to escape the four walls of her flat. Like Virginia Woolf in her 1930 essay ‘Street Hauntings: A London Adventure’ describing a narrator desperate to escape her room and challenge the mind’s eye, Ali adopts a stream of consciousness narrative, describing both the city and passersby at the same time, illustrating the

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11 GOV UK, Regional Ethnic Diversity, (1 August 2018) <\https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest> [accessed 2 December 2020].

12 Ben Walker, 'Britain’s diversity is much more complex than it seems', *NewStatesman*, 25 June 2020, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2020/06/britains-diversity-much-more-complex-it-seems> [accessed 15 December 2020].

13 Monica Ali, *Brick Lane* (London: Black Swan, 2003), p. 100.

14 Janet Wolff, ‘The Invisible Flaneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity’, *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 3 (1985), p. 37-46.

15 Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust* (London, Granta 2002), p. 199.

16 Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 100.

pace at which the narrator moves through the streets and attaining the dreamlike quality that often resonates in one's mind. Nazneen escaping where she lives in the 'eerily quiet ghettoised council estate that looms tall like chunky limbs on splinter streets' highlights her position in the margins and the hidden parts of Brick Lane, away from the touristic and famously presented centred version of the area.[17]

Ali describes how many Bangladeshis 'recreate their villages' from back home and suffer from an illusionary 'Going Home Syndrome' believing they will one day make enough money to travel back to Bangladesh.[18] She successfully paints Nazneen's feelings of un-belonging and longing for her home in Dhaka by the way that she walks the city. Ali's erratic imagery is often focussed on Nazneen's actions, feelings or mind's eye rather than her surroundings, illustrating the pace at which she runs through the streets. She never describes the physical qualities of Brick Lane, suggesting that Nazneen is very much caught up in her own anxieties, taking her mind on "wanderings" separate from her body and her surroundings. When Nazneen becomes lost she claims how the 'buildings seemed familiar' and that 'she sensed rather than saw, because she had taken care not to notice'.[19] This indicates to the reader that she does not care to become familiar with her surroundings because, like many migrants, she believes she will one day return to Bangladesh. She rejects Brick Lane as her centre.

Situated knowledge also aims for 'the joining of partial views into a collective subject position' so it is important to address how individual migrant stories create a collective presence in a city.[20] 'Going Home Syndrome' may have led to the multicultural environment of many British cities that Sanchita Islam, a British Bangladeshi writer, claims that Ali fails to depict. The strong visualisation of cross culture ubiquitous to Brick Lane, from 'the sight of Burkha-clad women walking down the street, weighed down with their shopping' to the 'packs of Asian lads with shaved heads dripping in designer gear as they loiter and heckle', are a product of diasporic communities.[21] Brick Lane's character is not a seamless, coherent identity or a single sense of place that everyone shares and experiences.[22] It is important to realise that each individual experiences their own sense of place in an area determined by 'their routes, their favourite haunts within it, the connections they make (physically, or in memory and imagination)' and how this creates a collective identity in a place.[23]

Places are a flux of moving cultures.[24] Academic Noha Nasser adopts the concept of 'Kaleido-scapes' to examine the cultural displacement and 'changing morphology' of Southall, West London, a centre of migration for South Asians.[25] In Southall, Ali's 'Going Home Syndrome' has given way to in Indian migrants weaving into the Edwardian suburb 'local customs, extended family, and community relations of the "pind" (Indian village) and the commercial structures of the "shar" (Indian town)' where the local is intertwined with the memory of home.[26] Communities in Southall

[17] Sanchita Islam, 'Monica Ali, Brick Lane', in *London Fictions*, ed. by Andrew Whitehead Jerry White (London: Five Leaves Publications and New London Editions, 2013).

[18] Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 32.

[19] Ali, *Brick Lane*, p. 55.

[20] Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 590.

[21] Islam, 'Monica Ali, Brick Lane'.

[22] Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense Of Place', *Marxism Today*, 1 June 1991, p.28.

[23] Massey.

[24] Massey, p.29.

[25] Noha Nasser, 'Southall's Kaleido-scape: A study in the changing morphology of a west London suburb', *Built Environments* (1978-), 30.1, (2004), 76-103 (p. 1).

[26] Nasser, 'Southall's Kaleido-scape', p. 99.

enable the creation of communicatory platforms to re-create a connection to homelands. The formation of Des Pardes (Home and Abroad) in 1965 — the largest Punjabi language newspaper — created a network between Southall and India, breaking free from oppressive languages. Many job roles in Southall require applicants to speak either Hindi, Punjabi or Urdu fluently which is a direct act of decentring white populations and bringing marginalised groups to the centre. Claiming their 'right to the city', activist groups occupied derelict buildings: The Dominion Cinema was first used by an Afro-Caribbean Youth Group and later taken over by IWA (Indian Workers Association) for a purpose-built community centre. These centres are created as a product of displacement, longing for home, racial aggression, violence and marginalisation.

Vaisakhi[27]

I walk South Road,
Remember Vaisakhi,
I held my nani's hand,
we stood on the pavement,
First the sewadars
sweep the road,
rhythmically,
Some are barefoot,
Then the Panj Piare,
the five chosen ones,
Begin the procession,
Followed by a large lorry,
Carrying the holy scripture,
The Guru Granth Sahib Ji,
large masses of people,
Begin to follow
Young boys practice Gatkha
Spinning around with sticks
'When all else fails,
it is proper to take the sword,
 in one's hand'
The sound of the Dhol
Carries through the street
Finally last I see police,
on foot,
On bike and motorcycle
Tagging along on the end
The procession ends,
with the setting up of food stalls,
Samosas and Capri suns

[27] The emergence of my own poetry is a record of my situated experiences and supports the arguments that I make. hooks writes that 'to be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body.' (bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 15.) Placing myself in the "margins" or the "gutter" of the document, my experiences, through a series of auto-ethnographic methods including poems and photographs, provide a thread to bind this body of work.

An alternative response to displacement and racial aggression is walking in protest. Protest can be viewed as a way of making personal problems public. The Mangrove Nine case is depicted in Steve McQueen's BBC film series Small Axe. The Mangrove was a restaurant in Notting Hill, London, which provided a centre for British Black activists to meet in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the space of eighteen months, the restaurant was raided by the police twelve times on the pretext of searching for drugs, even though none were found. On 9th August 1970, Frank Crichlow, the owner, along with other activists, decided to 'take it to the streets'.[28] Darcus defines the protest as 'self-movement' and a physical 'demonstration' of their problems and the injustices they face.[29] In the film, the calm protest of speeches leads to the crowd marching the streets to the chant "hands off — Black people" and a non-diegetic ticking crescendo starts playing. As the police descend brutally, a cacophony of screaming, exclamations of confusion, racial slurs towards the ground and the repetitive sound of breaking glass echo the raids on The Mangrove café earlier in the film and become a visualised display of the injustices being 'taken to the street' for all to see. Later in the film, the exact same crescendo is heard in the courtroom, illustrating the power of protest in making the people's problems public and centring them.

Protest, as the physical demonstration of the personal, is especially important to marginalised ethnic groups because of the fragility that surrounds the topic of racism and women's issues. Southall Black Sisters (SBS) are a non profit organisation supporting Black and Brown women who are suffering from domestic violence. They highlight the British legal system's repeated struggle to understand the cultural and race related reasons for Black and Brown women voicing their experiences of domestic violence. Audre Lorde writes of 'the transformation of silence into language and action.'[30] Evidence of SBS reclaiming language and turning it into tangible action can be seen in the protest following the event in which a woman was raped on a bus in Delhi. In Southall '150 women, children and men took to the streets' chanting "women raise your voice — freedom is our right!"[31] After the protest, 'away from the cold and with much needed hot teas and samosas, they regrouped at the offices for the speeches.'[32] SBS aims to eradicate the discomfort surrounding the topic of Black women's issues by first taking them to the streets in the form of protest and then transitioning to the courts, bringing them to the centre.

Saturday Morning

My mother drives me to my dance class,
We talk endlessly,
When we're about to park,
I rush to open my purse,
Scramble around to find my ghungroos,
Tangle and unravel,

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[28] *Small Axe: Mangrove* dir. By Steve McQueen (BBC, 2020).

[29] McQueen.

[30] Audre Lorde, 'The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action' (1977), in *Sister Outsider* (London: Penguin Random House, 2017), p. 29.

[31] Women, Rise and Fight – Our March on Southall (Dec 23, 2018) <https://southallblacksisters.org.uk/news/women-rise-and-fight-our-march-on-southall/> [accessed 13 March 2021].

[32] Women, Rise and Fight.

I run with ghungroos on my feet,
Through the car park,
The cricket boys exit the sports centre,
I feel their stares and snickers,
I stomp my feet louder,
The bells weighing my feet down,
the sound echoing,
through the car park,
Let every step I take,
reach your ears,
and rattle your bones
Hold the end of the rope,
with my toe,
Wrap it around my ankle,
Round and round,
Tightly tie it at the top,
Shutting the car door behind me

Through Ali's Nazneen we explore the ways in which a Brown woman walks the city and whether she can obtain a flâneur status. She is marked as visible through her traditional sari and the colour of her skin as she walks through the centre, but her marginal position renders her invisible to society. This is due to the centring of the white male experience of the city. However, through her marginal status, she 'offers the possibilities of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds.'[33] Taking Ali's 'Going Home Syndrome', displacement can form collective identity new centres through Southall. Creating platforms of language and expression as well as claiming their 'right to the city' enables the very process of decentring whiteness and allowing opportunities for marginalised ethnic communities. In protest, marginalised ethnic groups have found the first place in which they can gain an anonymous status, in becoming at one with the crowd. As McQueen's depiction of the Mangrove Nine Protest shows, protest is a method of 'taking to the street' the situated problems of marginalised ethnic individuals in collective performance. Further, SBS looks at the depersonalisation and silence surrounding topics of race and creates a protest language and platform in which tangible action can be taken to tackle the injustices that black and brown women face. Lorde suggests that 'black women have always been highly visible, and so, on the other hand, have been rendered invisible through the depersonalisation of racism.'[34] The practice of walking in protest, then, is the first place in which marginalised ethnic communities can become invisible in the crowd but render their problems visible in society

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[33] bell hooks, 'Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness', p. 207.

[34] Audre Lorde, 'The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action', p. 31.

Entrance at Winter Street - 26/10/20

I think those leaves were red
but they are now blush pink,
bathed in the rain.
My feet stop, I hear tapping,
droplets smacking
the top of a black bin at a door front.

I walk and I wear clothes

that any white person would wear,
but my skin is different.
Black trench coat, thick scarf.
I put on my grandmother's earrings
ones she made in the factory
to 'feel Indian' -
I am afraid of forgetting

Writing is like walking
walking is like writing.
When I am walking,
I want to sit down and write
and when I write
I want to get up and walk.

my body is a pen.

I wrote half of this in my head,
rushing to get to the bench,
the words seeping
through the soles of my feet.
I look different,
maybe I see different

I will get up and walk again

Margin

Walking the British landscape is often seen as a white middle-class activity. In a 2017 study by Natural England, it was discovered that just 26% of Black people spent time in the countryside, compared with 44.2% of white people.[35] In a different study, it was revealed that only 1% of visitors to UK national parks come from marginalised ethnic backgrounds.[36] Lack of diversity in the British countryside is strikingly apparent from these statistics. Only 1.7% of the Black population and 2% of the Asian population live in the countryside.[37] Due to most minority ethnic communities residing in urban areas and UK cities, visiting and partaking in walks in the countryside comes with a multitude of difficulties, including travel costs, lack of ‘cultural habit’ and fear of discrimination. The countryside, where the romanticised illusion of ‘British’ culture still exists as the binary opposite to multicultural cities, is perhaps the ‘centre’ that marginalised ethnic communities still feel excluded from, with their neighbourhoods being the margins. Yet, as Julien Glover suggests ‘our countryside will end up being irrelevant to the country that it represents’, perhaps it is time we reframe the centre or let it evolve in parallel with the ‘flux of moving cultures’ that best describes twenty-first century Britain.[38] I also argue that marginalised ethnic groups, due to their positionality in society, walk and appreciate rural environments in a different way to white communities and therefore our studies of walking and environmentalism should expand further than the romantic European walker.

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[35] Gov UK, 'Visits to the natural environment' (17 May 2019) <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/culture-and-community/culture-and-heritage/visits-to-the-natural-environment/latest> [accessed 2 December 2020].

[36] Nazia Parveen, 'The BAME women making the outdoors more inclusive' (2 December 2020) <https://www.

Elchi

We walk down from the path,
into the black marshes,
muddying our boots,
It is liberating,
to feel the soles of my feet,
travel further below than usual,
leaving hollow imprints in the ground,
It gives me a greater sense of purpose.

We maintain our direction downwards,
until we find a few logs where we sit,
My father unzips the rucksack,
pulls out a flask and some tea bags,
We proceed to make the tea,
while we chat,
Sipping the warm liquid .... ‘elchi’ એલચી
(Gujarati for cardamom and messenger)
I whisper the word into the cold air,
as though this one word,
not in the oppressor’s language,
was my one weapon.

All around me, I feel warm,
I feel this warmth on my fingers,
and around my lips,

The wind whips through the tall leafless
trees

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theguardian.com/travel/2020/dec/02/the-bame-women-making-the-british-outdoors-more-inclusive?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other> [accessed 2 December 2020].

[37] Gov UK, 'Rural Population and Migration' (August 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rural-population-and-migration> [accessed 16 January 2021].

[38] Julien Glover, 'Landscape Report - Final Report', GOV DEFRA, June 2020, p.5; Massey, Doreen, 'A Global Sense Of Place', Marxism Today, 1 June 1991, p.29.

Marginalised ethnic communities view recreation in the countryside differently. Walking for pleasure tends to be a less popular recreational activity than, for example, eating together in a picnic outdoors. For South Asian communities like the one I have grown up in, group excursions are normal. MOSAIC Outdoors Chair and campaigner Mohammed Dhalech explains that when marginalised ethnic communities go outdoors ‘they tend to come in large extended families to picnic together’ and ‘a lot of people go to the Lake District on summer evenings for a picnic. They want to use the environment in different ways.[39] Although walking in nature has not been common for my family, walking in groups, eating, playing card games, badminton or cricket and talking amidst the rural landscape are activities we have carried out in Britain for years. Solitary walking through the countryside is less popular than visiting in larger groups as groups ensure anonymity and safety in numbers to gain some level of invisibility. Marginalised ethnic groups often feel outnumbered in rural areas of Britain as ‘white supremacists seem to arise from or flock to some of the most scenic parts of the country.’[40] Evelyn C. White writes that when she first tried to explore rural Oregon, memories of southern lynching ’could leave me speechless and paralyzed with the heart stopping fear that swept over me as I crossed paths with loggers near the McKenzie River or whenever I visited the outdoors’ illustrating the fear that marginalised ethnic groups feel in the countryside.[42]

Poppy Noor, British columnist for The Guardian, argues that being Black in nature means feeling like an ‘endangered species’, highlighting the links between race, environmentalism and conservation.[42] In the nineteenth century many walking clubs were formed as the Romantic interest grew. The Sierra Club was founded in 1892 by a group of Californians who were interested in wilderness walks in the mountain ranges of the Pacific Coast. Other clubs were also formed during this period, including the Alpines Club of English mountaineers. However, The Sierra Club was different due to its interest in the forest and natural features as a ‘political interest’ and their efforts to keep the natural landscape ‘untransformed.’[43] They became an activist walking group walking and fighting to preserve the landscape which was being exploited for economic gains. John Muir, founder of The Sierra Club, used evocative and spiritual language as an effort to portray Yosemite as a sacred place and reveal a divine beauty that was embedded within nature. However, Black and indigenous people did not fit in his framing of beauty: ‘The Indians he saw on trails struck him as filthy’ and he ‘spoke of Negroes as largely lazy and easy-going and unable to pick as much cotton as a white man.’[44] Gifford Pinchot, the chief of the forest service during Roosevelt’s presidency, argued for eugenics and the sterilization of Black and indigenous people in his three volumed ‘National Conservation Commission’.[45] The approach to conservation of natural beauty translated almost directly into the conservation of (white) beauty in humans. This conservation of beauty in both the British landscape and

[39] The Great Outdoors, BLACK GIRLS HIKING: HOW THE OUTDOORS IS BECOMING MORE DIVERSE (6th February 2020) <https://www.tgomagazine.co.uk/news/black-girls-hiking-how-the-outdoors-is-becoming-more-diverse/> [accessed 4 January 2021].

[40] Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust, (London, Granta 2002), p. 244.

[41] Solnit, Wanderlust, p. 244.

[42] Poppy Noor, 'Being black while in nature: 'You’re an endangered species', *The Guardian*, 31 May 2020

[43] Solnit, *Wanderlust*, p. 102

[44] Christopher Carter, 'Blood in the Soil: The Racial, Racist, and Religious Dimensions of Environmentalism', in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Religion and Nature*, ed. by Hobgood Laura, Bauman Whitney (Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 50.

[45] Carter, 'Blood in the Soil’, p. 50.

population can explain why many marginalised ethnic individuals do not feel that they belong in the rolling picturesque of the Lake District.

I put my foot down
on the forest bed,
instead of hearing,
the leaves crunch,
I hear the word 'imposter',

Ingrid Pollard, British artist and photographer, explores such constructs of race and 'Britishness' through portraiture and landscapes. She investigates the states of belonging and un-belonging in particular landscapes.[46] With the rise of industrialisation in the nineteenth century, writers and poets took comfort in the unexplored landscapes of Britain. This phenomenon created the traditional representation of Britain to be that of 'an idealised rural landscape, the rolling green hills, the farm in the valley, and the sun setting over the wheat fields. The binary opposite lies within the city and its traffic, smoking chimneys, teeming hordes, that are constantly encroaching on the countryside.'[47] Pollard's work in her series Pastoral Interlude (1988) aims to deconstruct these polarities through the exploration of place, being and British identity in the Black British community. This sense of place has been dictated by deep rooted issues concerning land ownership, economic and industrial development as well as Britain's involvement in the Atlantic Slave Trade creating 'the Romantic Countryside idyll'.[48] She maintains a romantic, picturesque and post-card-like quality alluding to William Wordsworth's "wanderings", but the Black figures, accompanied with words describing feelings of exclusion, create unease. British art historian, Anna Arabindan-Kesson, describes how 'Pollard's Black subjects move through the landscape, in an ambivalent space, revealing themselves to be, like tourists or travellers, not quite at home'.[49] Through her work, Pollard perfectly visually represents how marginalised ethnic groups feel in the British landscape and she claims that 'nature romanticism is not available to people of her colour' as they do not fit in the centred vision of the Pastoral that is so embedded within British culture.[50]

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[46] Ingrid Pollard, 2020. *Belonging & Un-belonging in the English Countryside* (6): Ingrid Pollard. [video]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m72p59wCnJM> [Accessed 3 March 2021].

[47] Pollard.

[48] Pollard.

[49] Anna Arabindan-Kesson, 'Landscape, Interrupted: Ingrid Pollard and the Diasporic Imagination', unpublished, paper in conference of International Conference: Photography and Britishness (Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, November 4-5, 2016).

[50] Solnit, *Wanderlust*, p. 244.

“What is this you have taken me to?!
All I see here is dust and stones!”
‘Bus aya to dhoor ne dhefaj che!’
અહીયા તો ધૂળ ને ઢેફાં જ છે.,
My great grandmother,
used to exclaim,
Followed by laughter.
Whenever taken out of the city,
And into the nothingness
Of the country,
We all laugh and exclaim,
“Dhoor ne defa!” (dust and stones)

We are dust and stones.

Dhoor ne dhefa
ધૂળ ને ઢેફાં.

Although rural Britain is portrayed as a romantic and pastoral illusion, for example through its depiction in poetry and literature, rural land in Britain is not exempt from colonial connections to the Atlantic Slave Trade. Corinne Fowler, in her work Green Unpleasant Land, recognises ‘the pastoral’s role in constructing consoling mythologies of Englishness.’ With rapid industrialisation taking place in British cities during the nineteenth century, the rural provided a safe place and ‘site of Englishness.’[52] Rural belonging and identity are explored by Romantic poets and writers such as Wordsworth, who wandered into the hills and moors and described the landscapes using common but lyrical language. However, despite many rural poems and literature being published at the height of the Empire, they fail to allude to the colonial links of the British landscape. New farming methods and industrial developments were taking place to allow wealthy tourists to visit rural Britain, and many of the roads that paved the way to the Wye Valley, the setting for Wordsworth’s poem ‘Lines Composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey,’ were paid for by slave-produced wealth.[53] Many gardens, as a part of wealthy estates, also had hidden colonial connections. Fanny Price’s appreciation of the gardens in Jane Austen’s Mansfield Park, describing it as ‘soothing and lovely,’ overlooks the Antiguan Slave Trade that funds the grounds of the estate.[54] The illusionary pastoral carefully hides the lines which trace rural land back to slave links. Although it appears that marginalised ethnic individuals are not in the centred vision of the pastoral, they are very much embedded in the history of what makes rural Britain the way it is today.

Previously the sites of rural Britain were accessible mainly to the gentrified classes. However, during the early twentieth century, solitary walking and ramblings began to appeal to marginalised individuals of society when the benefits of the outdoors to health and wellbeing were

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[51] Corinne Fowler, *Green Unpleasant Land: Creative Responses to Rural England’s Colonial Connections* (Leeds, Peepal Tree 2020), p. 52.

[52] Fowler.

[53] Fowler, p. 76.

discovered. On 24th April 1932, around 400 people defied the law and trespassed from Manchester to Sheffield, over the hills and moorlands, to meet at the plateau of Kinder Scout, Derbyshire. The protest walk was organised by the BWSF (British Workers' Sports Federation), which was becoming increasingly popular with young mill workers from Manchester and surrounding cities. Walking in protest is not limited to urban environments: BWSF member, Benny Rothman, recalls the walk and describes the 'hundreds of lads and girls, in their picturesque rambling gear: shorts of every length and colour, flannels and breeches, vivid colours and drab khaki' who broke through and ran through prohibited land to Kinder Plateau. After his arrest, he explains how 'ramblers, after a hard week's work, in smoky towns and cities, go rambling for relation and fresh air.'[55] Rural Britain provided an escape to the overcrowded and polluted cities of the twentieth century industrial revolution. The Mass Trespass Protest fuelled the 'Right to Roam' Movement which eventually led to the creation of National Parks in Britain, with the Peak District being the first. With increasing awareness of the benefits of the outdoors to physical and mental health, this raises the question of why rambling or solitary walking in the outdoors is so uncommon amongst marginalised ethnic communities. Their marginal position in rural Britain has impacted their susceptibility to health conditions, such as asthma, heart disease, and vitamin D deficiency, that could otherwise be prevented through walks and exposure to the outdoors.

Walking and the outdoors are not new to marginalised ethnic communities. Many immigrants of marginalised ethnicity come from rural areas. Displacement and diaspora include walking through rural environments. Black people on foot have appeared in many significant moments throughout history, from death walks through to West Africa to reach slave ships to the American civil rights marches in the 1960s. Marginalised ethnic individuals are not new to rural Britain either. The Runaway Slaves Project at the University of Glasgow has records of escaped slaves in Britain proving the existence of Black and South Asian presence in rural Britain as early as the eighteenth century. Corrine Fowler describes the hunting of a runaway slave who escapes into the Yorkshire moors and how 'he is not the first to flee along this riverbank, to lumber through these bars of beech.'[56] The historical presence of Black and South Asian people in rural Britain paints a picture of chaos and violence: a part of British rural history that has been pushed back to the margins.

It is only in recent years that marginalised ethnic communities have ventured out into rural Britain as ramblers and solitary walkers. Modern day immigrant lifestyles in Britain echo the nomadic patterns of rural movement, 'never still, working second, third, and fourth jobs.'[57] Poet, critic, and journalist Bridget Minamore explains that this constant movement is 'why hill-walking felt so at odds with her blackness at first: this walking without purpose.'[58] However, Ghanaian journalist Maxwell

[55] Benny Rothman, The Mass Trespass <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/learning-about/news/70-years-of-the-peak-district-national-park/the-mass-trespass> [accessed 6 October 2021].56 Fowler, *Green Unpleasant Land*, p. 295.

[57] Bridget Minamore, *Black Men Walking: a hilly hike through 500 years of black British history* (23rd January 2018), <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jan/23/black-men-walking-royal-exchange-manchester-testament> [accessed 6 October 2021].

[58] Minamore.

Ayamba highlights that there is a purpose to rambling and solitary walking. Research suggests that African-Caribbean men are more likely to experience mental illness. As a result, Ayamba co-founded 100 Black Men Walk for Health in 2004 to bring awareness to the Black community of the benefits of walking to physical and mental wellbeing. Furthermore, rapper and playwright Testament, in his play Black Men Walking, ties together a Black men's walking group in Sheffield with over five hundred years of Black British history.[59] Every first Saturday of the month, a group of Black men from Sheffield meet at 9.30am sharp to begin a hike in the Peak District. They walk and talk about relationships, jobs, families, politics, religion and fatherhood. The play features three Black men singing a choral chant from their ancestors: 'We walk out our identity. We walk for sanctuary. We walk to claim this land. Though we are written into the landscape you don't see us. We walked England before the English.'[60] This chant alludes to Fowler's concept of the 'Postcolonial Pastoral': a 'medium for painful cultural memory rather than comforting cultural myth,' suggesting that communicating with nature and its history brings healing and awakening.[61] Minamore explains how 'walking is a reclamation', reminding herself that 'this is a land she can take your time with; these peaks are safe, she won't need to run.'[62] With this deep rooted history of identity and belonging, for marginalised ethnic groups walking through rural Britain is an entirely different entity to that of the centred white experience.

Different patterns of use and appreciation of the countryside, along with a lack of culturally appropriate provisions, are possible factors of the lack of marginalised ethnic communities visiting the countryside. Rural Britain is less diverse and so marginalised ethnic groups experience an amplified feeling of otherness and un-belonging due to physical visibility. Feeling so visibly exposed in the cultural centre which is within rural Britain, they are pushed back to the margins. The political history of The Sierra Club outlining efforts to translate natural beauty to the idealised beauty of the human population has led to a deeper-rooted feeling of exclusion in rural Britain for marginalised ethnic communities. Furthermore, 'walking is practised and experienced in innumerable contexts, and so generalisations are problematic' revealing the limitations of traditional walking stereotypes.[63] The construction of the illusionary pastoral of the British countryside, in Romantic poetry and literature, has pushed away historical narratives of Black and South Asian presence in rural Britain. With the complex and painful history of slave roots and Empire, the practice of walking through the British rural as a marginalised ethnic individual offers an experience of a different dimension: of healing, remembrance and identity. Marginalised ethnic communities show that the practice of walking itself can also be experienced in a multitude of ways different to the traditional or European romantic stereotype of 'the strolling narrator' or 'the nomadic pedlar.'[64]

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59 Minamore.

60 Testament, *Black Men Walking*, (London, Oberon Books 2018), p. xvi.

61 Fowler, *Green Unpleasant Land*, p. 295

62 Minamore, *Black Men Walking: a hilly hike through 500 years of black British history*.

63 Tim Edensor, 'Walking in rhythms: place, regulation, style and the flow of experience', *Visual Studies*, 25.1, (April 2020), 69-79 (p. 69).

64 Solnit, *Wanderlust*, p. 113.

The Margins Must Become the Centre

In academia, we are taught to not stray too far out into the margins and our research must anchor back to centred knowledge. Haraway talks of 'reductionism' in which 'science is about a search for translation, convertibility, mobility of meanings, and universality, where one language must be enforced as the standard for all the translations and conversions'.[65] In the same way, we have created a common language in which we discuss walking. All modes of city walking must reference the European trope of the flâneur and rural walking must relate to Wordsworth's romantic wanderings. However, walking cannot be reduced to any universality. Walking with its rhythmic pace and metronomic nature allows 'something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitiveness: difference' and 'despite the many traditions of walking – the landscape walker, the walking poet, the pilgrim – it is always possible to walk in new ways.'[66] With the act of walking practised by most of the population, the practice can be stylised allowing us to identify and celebrate certain cultural and social differences outside of centred examples.

As Lorde has repeatedly said, academics refuse to teach the experiences of marginalised ethnic individuals as their situated problems are "too different" and too far from the centre. 'Institutional rejection of difference' is what has caused marginalised ethnic groups to become the other: 'the outsider whose experience and tradition is too 'alien' to comprehend'.[67] Lorde further describes it as 'academic arrogance' to deny the 'creative function of difference' and recognize it as a 'crucial strength' in feminist and anti-racist practice.[68] Through the recognition of difference we can widen our knowledge, expand our centres and learn from the creativity and uniqueness that marginality can offer.

Through the thread that I follow in the form of poetry, photographs and self-actualisation, I discover what Lorde describes as 'places of possibility within ourselves' which hold 'an incredible reserve of creativity and power, of unexamined and unrecorded emotion and feeling.'[69] Having spent my academic life in the 'European mode of living', I have come to the realisation that 'survival is not an academic skill' but a process of delving into the 'place of power within which is neither white nor surface; it is dark, it is ancient, and it is deep.'[70] Just as Lorde states 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house', I know that the key to feminist and anti-racist social advancements does not lie in the academic institutions that have been built by our oppressors, but within myself and the poetry I write.[71]

Through the study of walking, I have realised that the margins are so far from the centre; geographically, with marginalised ethnic groups experiencing starkly different phenomena in both realms, but also

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65 Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p.580.

66 Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, time and everyday life*, translated by S. Elden and G. Moore. (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 6; Sean O'Hagan, 'Walking in rhythms: place, regulation, style and the flow of experience', *Visual Studies*, 25.1, (April 2020), 69-79 (p. 75).

67 Audre Lorde, 'Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference' (1980), in *Sister Outsider* (London: Penguin Random House, 2017), p. 108-110.

68 Audre Lorde, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House' (1979), in *Sister Outsider* (London: Penguin Random House, 2017), p. 105. 69

69 Audre Lorde, 'Poetry Is Not a Luxury' (1977), in *Sister Outsider* (London: Penguin Random House, 2017), p. 25.

70 Lorde, p. 26; Audre Lorde, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House', p. 105.

71 Lorde, *The Master's Tools.*

metaphorically, with these groups sitting in the margins of society, far from the centre. And so, the margins must become the centre.

All images: Photograph of author by Owais Abid (Photo: by permission Owais Abid, 14.12.2021).

Biography:

Aayushi Bajwala is a recent graduate from the Sheffield School of Architecture and a freelance writer and artist with a focus on social topography and borders. During her time at the University of Sheffield she was involved in the EDI Committee and was a key member of the EDI Student Action Group, holding talks and discussions. She was also a key participant in the podcast 'Off the Drawing Board: Call to Action: Anti-Racism at SSoA.' Since graduating, she has been involved in outreach programmes working to make the architectural profession more accessible to marginalised people in the UK. Working on a project called 'Playful Prototypes' funded by Barnet Artsdepot, she has been helping lead school workshops based on sustainability and creative reuse alongside architects from Studio Polpo and Architype. Now she is working in Lisbon as an Architectural Assistant Intern at Darq2 Arquitetura/Design.

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Contextualising Colston: a Case Study for the Reconfiguration of Contested Heritage through the Composite Medium of Historic and Contemporary Values

Amy Crellin and Melissa Kirkpatrick

Calls for the removal of contested monuments and statues have become familiar, globally. Movements such as ‘Rhodes Must Fall’, decolonising universities in the UK and South Africa and campaigns against Confederate monuments in the USA have triggered cultural debate on public statuary with colonial associations. This leads to questions such as: how are the evolved meanings of monuments and statues mediated over time? How can memorials be reconfigured to reflect contemporary social and political values whilst preserving heritage? Is the answer iconoclasm? Can monuments be ‘decolonised’ whilst remaining in situ? And can architecture and design be used as a *composite* to interact, preserving monuments whilst providing contemporary interpretation? A *composite approach* combines past and present context and values, juxtaposing contemporary and historic artifacts.

Memorialisation of monuments with colonial associations could be addressed in different ways. This paper identifies three possible strategies. These alternative approaches to future memorialisation of contested heritage are examined and objectively evaluated. It introduces and reflects on ‘Contextualising Colston’ as a case study for re-appropriation. ‘Contextualising Colston’, a collaboratively designed proposal from 2018 that seeks to re-appropriate Bristol’s statue of Edward Colston, is presented as one of many possible design methods of dealing with contested heritage.

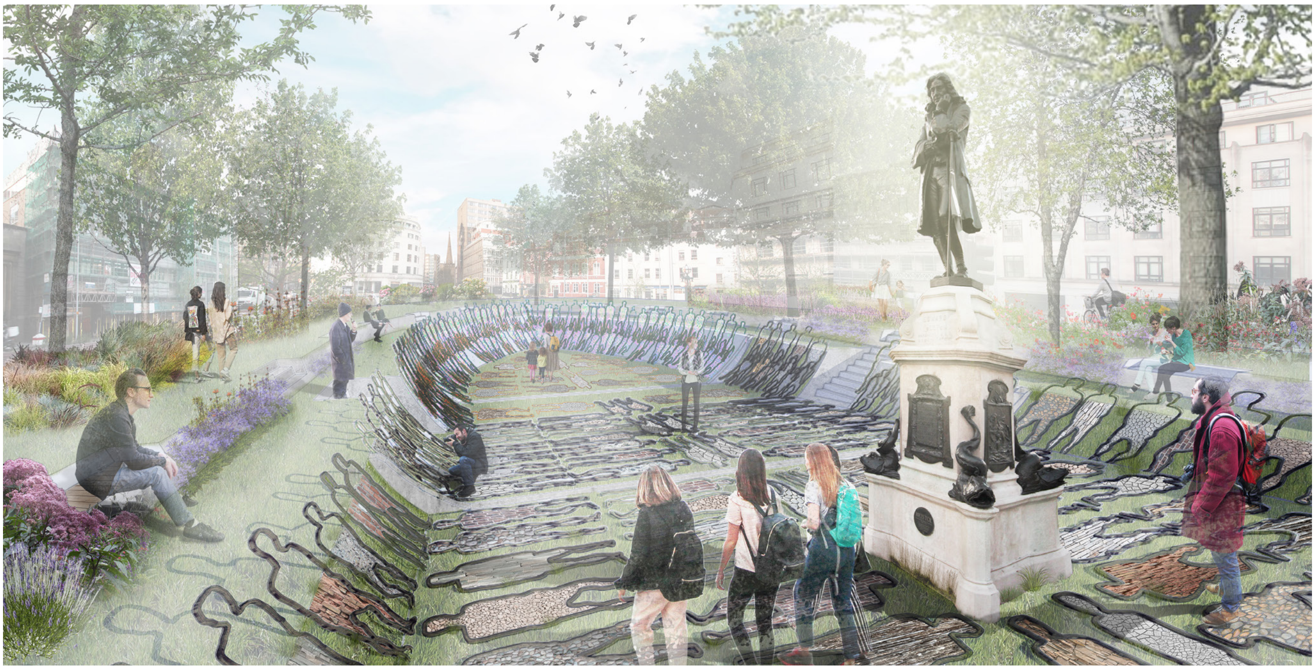

Figure 1:
Perspective render of proposed 'Contextualising Colston' memorial

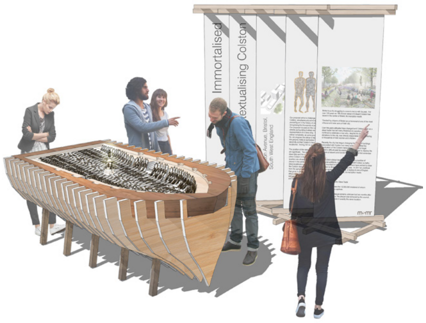

Figure 2: Historic England Immortalised Exhibition Proposal render

There are three major approaches to dealing with today's contested monuments: preservation, removal or reconfiguration. Allowing contested, colonial monuments to remain poses cultural, social and political problems in a contemporary context. Though heritage has a positive valence, a holistic representation of all historical perspectives is not achieved with this approach. Marginalised voices are forgotten and belittled, colonial voices dominate, resulting in perpetual white supremacy and Eurocentric values. Colonial representations may result in amplified reactions amongst people of colour, due to unresolved historical trauma and racial segregation that still exists today. "White society has actively resisted critically reconsidering the significance of these commemorative statues", especially since the principal outlook of cultural heritage sectors tends towards heritage preservation in its original form.[1] The secondary approach, of removal, represents a subtraction. Removal may be seen as a form of iconoclasm and erases the lessons of history, yet could be a powerful pedagogical opportunity to re-educate the public about contentious histories, creating lasting impression on public memory as a movement towards justice.[2] However, controversy is often raised around where the limit for the removal of commemorative colonial statues is drawn and what societies would do with removed statues as well as their plinths.[3] Colonial figures may be absolved once removed from public critique. Often motivated by contempt, removal poses problems surrounding the protection of heritage, particularly monuments with listed status, which could be undermined. It is therefore unconstitutional to deface monuments.

A reconfiguration could be created through a *composite design medium*, which is additive rather than subtractive. It allows aspects of the former

1 Laia Colomer, 'Black Lives Matter and the Archaeology of Heritage Commemorating Bigoted White Men', Science Norway, 2020 <https://sciencenorway.no/archaeology-opinion-racism/black-lives-matter-and-the-archaeology-of-heritage-commemorating-bigoted-white-men/1709994> [accessed 7 July 2020]; Joanna Burch-Brown, 'Should Slavery's Statues Be Preserved? On Traditional Justice and Contested Heritage', Journal of Applied Philosophy, (2020), p. 4.

2 Colomer., p. 7.

3 Tuck Langland, 'Iconoclasm Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow', Sculpture

to remain either in its entirety or in an evolved configuration. A *composite approach* is a critical reinterpretation that can encompass different forms and allows for multiple narratives to be manifested. A richer layering of history and meaning can be achieved with this approach, incorporating twenty-first century contexts and present understandings of history whilst retaining the original concept of the artefact. Public symbolism may be rebalanced, with changed meanings from honouring to reflecting. Colonial figures can be held accountable, retained within public consciousness, whilst acknowledging injustices. New forms of commemorative heritage accept the ethical "responsibility of being inclusive in our heritage practice" and benefit modern civic democracy.[4]

'Contextualising Colston' utilises a *composite approach*. It is a proposition that seeks to subvert the Grade II listed bronze statue of Edward Colston. Erected in 1895, the statue lies in a prominent locale in the centre of the city of Bristol. Colston was a Bristol philanthropist and, as a director of the Royal Africa Company, his source of wealth was generated from the triangular slave trade. The monument's inscription: "Erected by citizens of Bristol as a memorial of one of the most virtuous and wise sons of their city".[5] However, twenty-first-century values and anti-colonial movements have induced a sense of dynamic reinterpretation, illuminating the narratives of marginalised ethnicities, in this case of the African diaspora. During the UK Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, the contentious statue was toppled, paraded around the city centre and thrown into Bristol Harbour. The removal is a subtraction. Prior to the toppling, Madge Dresser notes: "Using public funds to re-contextualise the statue with new plaques and counter memorials [...] would both preserve and enrich Bristol's symbolic urban landscape and provide for a more honest and inclusive sense of Bristolians' shared identity."[6]

Originally designed for Historic England's 'Immortalised Exhibition' by MSMR Architects, 'Contextualising Colston' offers an alternative narrative. It is an addition rather than a subtraction, a metamorphosis of past and present. The addition extends the original meaning of the statue, situating it within a wider contemporary framework. Colston's altruism is recognised, allowing the statue to remain standing. However, he is positioned at the wheel of a ship, reaffirming his position as master and slave trader, enclaved amongst the enslaved onboard, his chained human cargo. This represents his source of wealth and his position of power. The inspiration for the scheme comes from the eighteenth-century slave ship engravings produced by the Society of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, with their unforgettable depictions of human beings as mere commodities.[7] A landscape design in the form of a slave ship hull creates a contemplative space, honouring the lives of every enslaved person aboard. Each figure is cast in bronze, on a par with Colston. The enslaved

Review, 70.1 (2021), 22-26 <https://doi.org/10.1177/07475284211010742> (pp. 25-26).

[4] Lagland.

[5] Historic England, Statue of Edward Colston (1997/2021) <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1202137> [accessed 20 May 2021].

[6] Madge Dresser, Obliteration, contextualisation or 'guerrilla memorialisation'? Edward Colston's statue reconsidered (2016) <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/obliteration-contextualisation-or-guerrilla-memorialisation-edward-colst/> [20th May 2021].

[7] MSMR Architects, 'Immortalised' (unpublished document, 2018), p. 1.

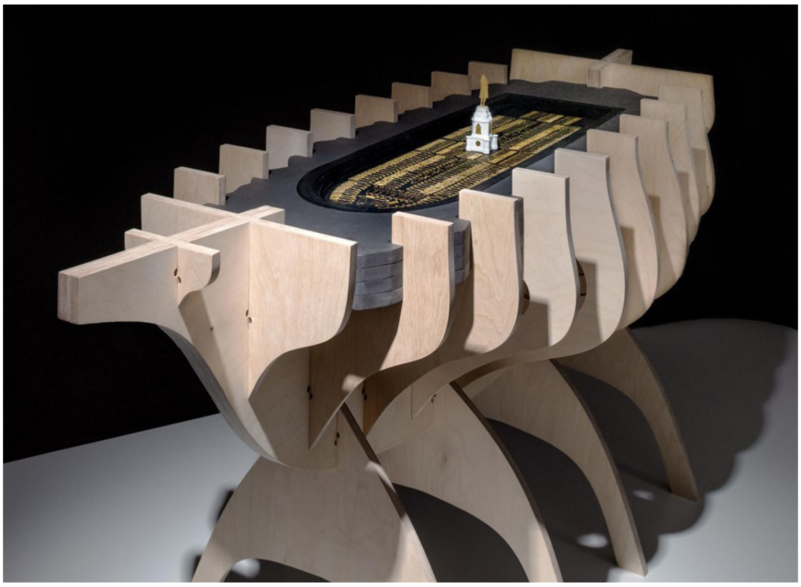

Figure 3: Finished piece in boat form, showing proposal

are individually expressed, infilled with varying materials, reflective of their individuality.[8] The arrangement is intended as a memorial garden, providing a civic landscape in a prominent public space, to ensure the original statue cannot be conceived without its enriched context.

Anonymous graffiti artist Banksy, native to Bristol, proposes another example of reconfiguration of the statue using a *composite* response to address the empty plinth. A satirical sketch proposes retrieval of Colston's statue from the river and replacement atop the plinth. Instead of standing straight, the statue is slanted. It is angled towards an additionally commissioned bronze statue of the Black Lives Matter protestors, depicted pulling him down. This reconfiguration allows the statue to remain, preserving history, whilst acknowledging the monumental contemporary events, which as Banksy notes were "a famous day commemorated".[9]

Reflecting on the potential contribution of design reconfigurations to contemporary attitudes, architects and artists can act as agents or mediators to intervene and re-appropriate contested monuments. Re-contextualising statues *changes their meaning*, endowing them with new stories and memories. Marginalised subjects are made visible through interventions and new narratives can reconcile the entanglement of conflicting memories. Cabinet minister Robert Jenricks notes that "monuments are almost always best explained and contextualised, not taken and hidden away".[10] Following the real events of the statue's removal, questions of where statues should be relocated and how they should be contextualised can be addressed with *composite mediums*. These examples highlight the differing forms *composite approaches* can adopt.

Possible limitations of re-contextualising are the difficulties in judging appropriateness of interventions that respond to sensitive and contested

[8] MSMR Architects, Immortalised: A Design Competition, 2018 <https://historicengland.org.uk/get-involved/help-write-history/immortalised/competition/> [accessed 20 May 2021].

[9] Tom Ravenscroft. 'Banksy proposes reinstating Edward Colston statue as part of slavery memorial', Dezeen (2020) <https://www.dezeen.com/2020/06/11/banksy-edward-colston-statue-slave-trader/> [accessed 20 June 2021].

[10] Tom Gillespie. 'Controversial monuments should be 'contextualised' not 'hidden away', cabinet minister says', Sky News (2021) <https://news.sky.com/story/controversial-monuments-should-be-contextualised-not-hidden-away-cabinet-minister-says-12190260> [accessed 20 May 2021].

issues. Different groups and individuals may have alternative perceptions and responses to the original intentions of the creative intervention. Design is subjective. Managing symbolism can be difficult. The scale of intervention or reconfiguration could also be questioned; all voices may not receive equal representation. Commissioned designers may be outsiders and may misinterpret marginalised communities. A discussion of MSMR's design highlights how difficult it is to re-contextualise effectively. It suggests that the symbolism of the design could be perceived as insulting rather than respectful as the African figures are depicted passively, in outline with non-human materials, and Colston's remaining elevated position could be regarded negatively.[11] This is far from the intention of the designers but remains an unconsidered response to the design. Embedded colonial attitudes can persist, even amongst the self-aware. Emphasising negative aspects of colonial history contributes to equality, but also to understandings of how racism pervades throughout society.

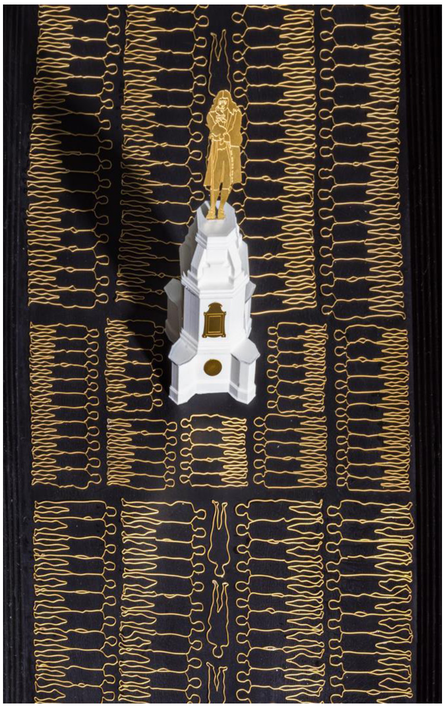
Figure 4: Close up of model showing Edward Colston stature surrounded by slaves

On Contextualising Colston, an architecture student of Kenyan origin did not perceive walking over the silhouettes as insulting yet suggested that "if the silhouettes were to stand all around Colston staring at him" the communicated message could be enhanced.[12] This is a compelling suggestion. If further developed, meaningful community consultation and participatory evaluation with Bristolians of African ancestry would provide additional enriching insight, embellishing the design validity, allowing cultural nuances to be introduced and marginalised voices to influence the built environment.

Following the toppling of Colston's statue, there is still clear importance to displaying the statue in the context of real events. At present, the statue is on display at Bristol's M Shed museum alongside protestor's placards. A survey invites residents to decide the statue's future. Artist Marc Quinn has created a design addition, 'A Surge of Power (Jen Reid)'. The resin and steel sculpture was proposed as a replacement for Colston's plinth, depicting a Black Lives Matter protester who assisted in the felling of the original Colston statue. Lack of engagement by public consultation resulted in an indeterminate outcome by Bristol City Council for the new statue's planning application. Although appealed, the ultimate dismissal was seemingly determined by a single Planning Inspector. Despite this, the statue was secretly installed and then removed by Bristol City Council the following day.

A lack of transparency between the public and the council still remains. City Mayor, Marvin Rees, outlines that "the future of the plinth and what is installed on it must be decided by the people of Bristol. An independent group, the 'We Are Bristol History Commission' are surveying local opinions in collaboration with the local authority, on possible futures for the statue and remaining plinth."[13] The commission themselves note that

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[11] Burch-Brown, 'Should Slavery's Statues Be Preserved?', p.11.

[12] Joseph Mwaisaka, Interviewed by Amy Crellin, 23 October 2021.

[13] Bristol City Council, We Are Bristol History Commission, 2021 <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/we-are-bristol-history-commission/> [accessed 30 October 2021].

"the least amount of support" amongst the public is for leaving the plinth empty, however this is the outcome that currently indefinitely remains.[14]

The power of the local authority, in ignoring the initial planning application, undermines the democracy of the planning system. If planning decisions are made by single individuals, a diverse cacophony of local voices and ethnic communities remains unrepresented. These voices must be represented in decisions, and statutory efforts to ensure diverse planning committees and decision-making groups should be considered. Whilst the later consultation approach is democratic, disconnection exists between this initiative and the town planning consents process. Rigid procedures with lack of exchange still prevent productive negotiations from taking place. The planning system is seemingly in need of reform to allow for flexibility, cooperation and increased community participatory consultation.

Are the current delisting mechanisms extensive enough for contested heritage? Historic England describes listing as "the term given to the practice of listing buildings, scheduling monuments, registering parks, gardens and battlefields, and protecting wreck sites".[15] Listing allows buildings and sites to be protected, preventing future alterations which would result in the loss of their significance. Listed buildings and sites must possess "special architectural or historical interest".[16] Delisting is a reversal of this process.

Delisting can be an evidently lengthy and complex procedure, since "[t]he vast majority of buildings that are listed have been correctly identified as having special interest".[17] Buildings can only be delisted if they no longer possess special architectural historical interest. Historic England's criteria for delisting does not seem to take into account changing perspectives. History is continually re-understood as our society changes. In the case of Colston's statue, delisting could allow for more flexible interventions. However, the statue still possesses historical significance, meaning it does not fit delisting criteria, and there is a twenty-three year history of unofficial and official responses, resulting in inaction. Such inaction in response to efforts for social change may perpetuate marginalisation and cause emotional damage, maintaining white hegemony within the built environment and national narrative.[18] Had there been definitive decision and action over the 23 years, would the statue's debated toppling have occurred?

The listing and delisting process is therefore inadequate for contested heritage, with no mechanisms to reflect on contemporary attitudes. The current categorisation of listing or delisting is exceedingly polarised and exclusive, rejecting consideration of the spectrum of distinct opinions, whilst community participatory consultation is also not deemed essential for delisting applications. Historic England provides advice for local authority delisting decisions, institutionalising the system, whilst it is inaccessible to members of the public. In addition, in an architectural context, delisting is not as familiar a process to architects as listing. Delisting mechanisms arguably need to be enhanced to allow for re-contextualising or delisting contested heritage. New grades of listing for contested heritage with varied allowances for recontextualisation may be achievable, supported by appropriate research and consultation. If recontextualisation is an approach to be adopted, architects could use their skills and knowledge of town planning procedures to assist communities. Furthermore, the addition of context through architect designs and artistic visual representation is an amelioration over merely 'politically correct' plaques.

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[14] We Are Bristol History Commission, Meeting Summary: June 2021, 2021 <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/5246996/History_Commission_Meeting_Summary_28_June_2021.pdf/d66f7ef9-b854-b65c-e614-7f9ffb39e313?t=1635264914007> [accessed 30 October 2021].

[15] Historic England, What is Listing?, 2019 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/> [accessed 20 June 2021].

[16] *What is Listing*.

[17] Historic England, Removing a Building form the List, 2019 <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/guidance-de-listing-building/removing-building-from-list-jan19/> [accessed 20 June 2021].

[18] Colomer, 'Black Lives Matter and the Archaeology of Heritage Commemorating Bigoted White Men', p. 1.

To conclude, architects and artists can act as agents of change, using creative practices to tackle the anachronistic colonial narratives of contested heritage. This will give subaltern voices equal weighting and address contemporary epistemological injustice. *Composite approaches*, which can adopt a multitude of forms, are a form of addition. This reconfiguration reimagines contested heritage, allowing enrichment and layering of historical and contemporary attitudes. Marginalised voices can be represented whilst allowing for heritage preservation. They are favourable to removal, which is a subtraction. The power of built environment agencies in dominating decisions and perpetuating marginalisation should be considered. Delisting and planning processes may need to be reviewed, with community participatory consultation and broadened criteria to facilitate this change.

This case study has caused us to reflect that a *composite approach* can be applied to architectural history curriculum. According to this approach, pedagogy from a 'western perspective' would still be an important part of architectural education. However, equivalent weighting must be given to marginalised voices. Like monuments, architectural history has long been written by colonisers, ignoring the experience and agency of the colonised. Postcolonial theories should be introduced into schools of architecture. The curriculum should co-construct both national and local narratives. Dominant viewpoints should be challenged so that co-narratives can exist. This will allow all voices to be heard equitably, embodying a curriculum with greater equality that seeks to undo the curriculum's current white hegemony. A *composite approach* should be reflected in all aspects of architectural education and practice today.

Biography

Amy Crellin and Melissa Kirkpatrick are students and alumni of The University of Sheffield School of Architecture. They collaborated with a small team to create MSMR's 'Contextualising Colston' whilst completing their RIBA Part I experience. They are both of mixed ethnicity.

Amy is an architect in training and researcher of British-Hong Kongese heritage. She is interested in contextual, cross-cultural architecture informed by past, present and future. She is studying a postgraduate degree, supported by a RIBA Wren Insurance Association Scholarship and the Sir H.K. Stephenson Studentship. She has global practice experience in London and Hong Kong on heritage façade retention, Knightsbridge Gate and East Kowloon Cultural Centre. She has undertaken research, developing a digital library for historian Peter Blundell Jones' legacy and conducted participatory studies with Zimbabwean communities, ('Make It Grow'). Her undergraduate project, 'The Tricorn Centre: Resurrection, Preservation', was nominated for the RIBA President Dissertation Medal, receiving the Robert Cawkwell Prize.

Melissa is an architect of British-Jamaican heritage from Bristol.
Her thoughts surrounding her own heritage and hometown inspired 'Contextualising Colston'. She is a keen advocate for social issues including equality, mental health and sustainability within the architectural profession. She is an ambassador for the Architect's Benevolent Society (ABS) charity and a member of the Architects' Mental Wellbeing Forum. Her MArch dissertation, 'Mental Wellbeing and the Architecture Student', was sponsored by the ABS and supported by the RIBA. She has delivered various talks on the subject. She is currently at EPR Architects in London, working on hospitality projects with a focus on heritage and retrofit, which fuel her interest in history.

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Diversity in Architecture: What can Architectural Education and Practice Learn from Law?

Sophie Mayer

Introduction

This article has been adapted from my dissertation entitled 'Diversity in Architecture: What Can Architectural Education and Practice Learn from Law?' The primary ambition is to bring together a multiplicity of voices from the legal and architectural professions to compare attitudes towards ethnic and gender diversity. The research interrogates case studies from the legal profession to determine if any of the diversity initiatives utilised by law could be adopted to disrupt the existing homogeneous culture that exists within architecture. The issues explored were framed by a series of interviews with students and practitioners from law and architecture; the results of an online survey answered by sixty-seven architecture students; and a literature review focussing on gender and ethnic representation in the legal and architectural professions. The landscape of diversity in architecture is ever-evolving. This article acknowledges this and is intended to act as a marker of 2021, to assess what is currently being done to combat the profession's alarming lack of diversity.

Response to 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action'

As a woman of mixed white and Asian origin, I find the issues raised in 'Anti-Racism at SSoa: A Call to Action' deeply alarming. This article emanates from my own experiences at SSoA, namely in a management practice and law seminar, in which three white male presenters, an architect, a contractor and a client, proudly discussed their team structure: all 30 members were white and male. When I challenged the team's lack of diversity, I was assured that female architects had worked on "collages" in the earlier design stages but it was assumed that they would not enjoy the technical design that followed. The ignorance of this response was deeply disconcerting and points to an industry still perceived as a white, old-boys club which is largely unwilling to recognise it has a problem.

Similarly to the 'Call to Action', this article acknowledges that overlaps in social characteristics can create interdependent systems of disadvantage. Initiatives which are too narrowly focused on one underrepresented group can detrimentally overlook another. Consequently this article does not exclusively focus on race and gender; where appropriate it also draws on initiatives utilised to encourage wider diversity within the profession.

The 'Call to Action' has provided SSoA with a unique platform to instigate change on a local level. This article argues that to achieve the celebrative, respectful and heterogeneous culture the profession deserves on a national level, architectural education and practice must take drastic action. Learning from the diversity initiatives utilised by the legal profession to achieve 'formal equality' with respect to gender and ethnicity, this article demands action on a macro scale.

Diversity in Architecture: What can Architectural Education and Practice Learn from Law?

The demographics of the architectural profession have not changed very much since the inception of the 'professions' in the nineteenth century, when secular ideals were propagated via public schools through a celebration of 'gentlemanly conduct'.[1] Today, how many of us believe that white, middle-class men are the only ones capable of fulfilling an architect's responsibilities?[2] The role of the professional is undergoing radical change; this is just as true for the learned professions such as medicine and law as it is for architecture.[3] Statistics for the medical and law professions continue to show increasingly diverse workforces, but architecture is falling behind this trend.

The following infographic highlights the well known fact that women and Black and minority ethnic groups (BAME) are under-represented in the architecture profession. Findings from the Architect's Journal's 2020 Race Diversity Survey suggest racism within the profession is getting worse as those from non-white backgrounds struggle against 'both blatant and less overt racism.'[4]

[1] Simon Foxell. 2003. *The Professionals' Choice : The Future of the Built Environment Professions* (London: Building Futures), p. 21

[2] John Morris Dixon. 1994. 'A White Gentleman's Profession?', *Progressive Architecture*, 75, 11. p55

[3] Foxell. *The Professionals' Choice*. p. 13

[4] Richard Waite. 2020. 'Architecture Is Systemically Racist. So What Is the Profession Going to Do about It?,' *The Architects' Journal* <https://www. architectsjournal.co.uk/news/architecture- is-systemically-racist-so-what-is- the-profession-going-to-do-about-it> [accessed 9 October 2020]

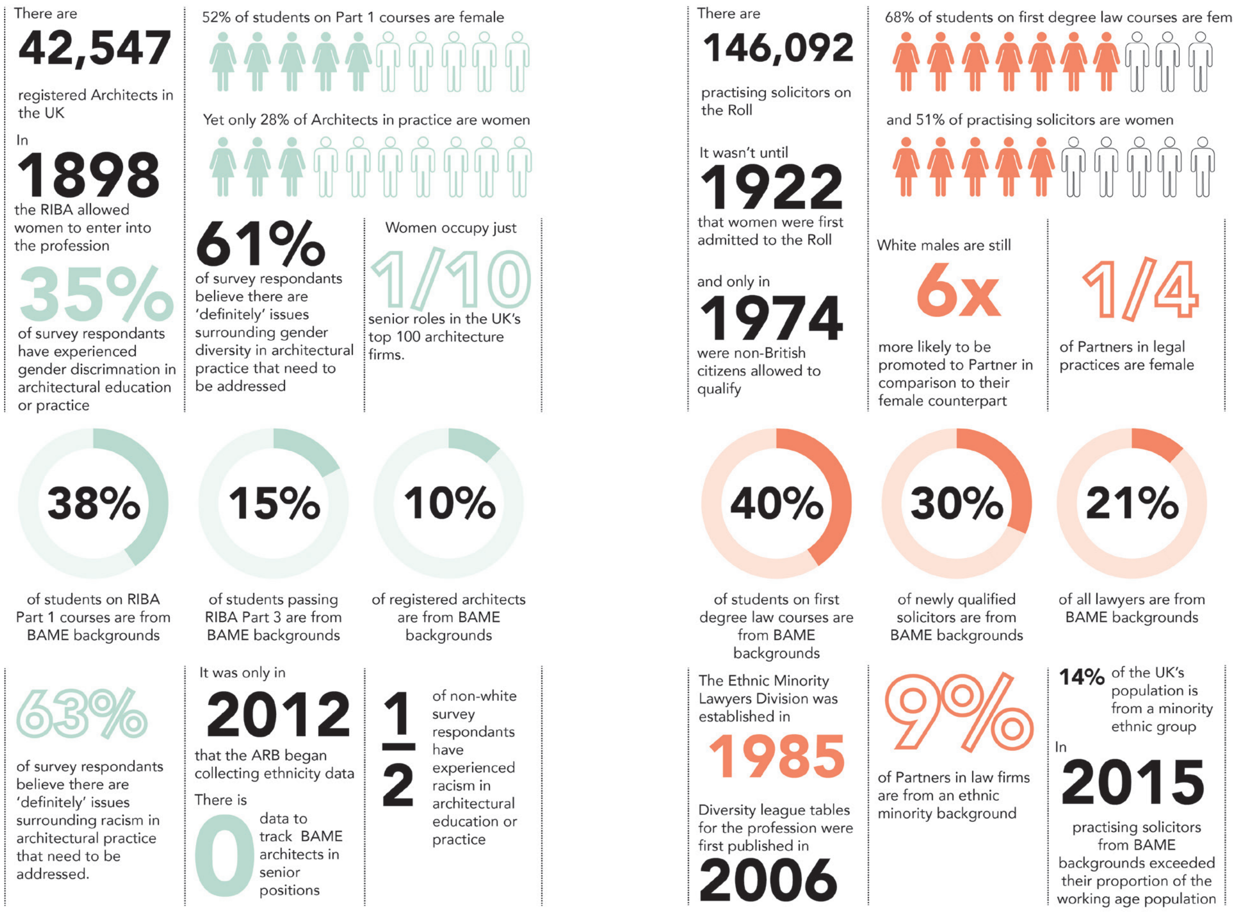

Fig. 1: Infographic produced by the author, 2021 with reference to:
ARB Annual Report 2019. 2020. (Architects' Registration Board) .
Lynne Walker. [n.d.]. *Golden Age or False Dawn? Women Architects in the Early 20th Century* (English Heritage), p. 2
"Diversity in the UK - Diversity UK." 2012. *Diversity UK* <https://diversityuk.org/ diversity-in-the-uk/>
Marcus Fairs. 2017. "Survey of Top Architecture Firms Reveals 'Quite Shocking' Lack of Gender Diversity at Senior Levels," *Dezeen* (Dezeen) <https://www.dezeen.com/2017/11/16/ survey-leading-architecture-firms-reveals- shocking-lack-gender-diversity-senior- levels/>
"Population_solicitors." 2011. *SRA*. (Solicitors' Regulation Authority) <https:// www.sra.org.uk/sra/how-we-work/ reports/ statistics/regulated-community-statistics/ data/population_solicitors/>
Sundeep Aulakh, Andy Charlwood, Daniel Muzio, Jennifer Tomlinson, and Danat Valizade. 2017. *Mapping Advantages and Disadvantages: Diversity in the Legal Profession in England and Wales* (Solicitors Regulation Authority)
Urwin, Gould. Diversity League Table: A 10 Year Demographic Survey of the Legal Profession

In comparison, the legal profession's attitudes towards diversity have changed markedly over the last thirty years as women now constitute 51% of all qualified solicitors and those from minority ethnic backgrounds have exceeded their proportion of the working population as a whole.[5] As one trainee solicitor mentions, diversity and inclusion has become a flagship policy of The Law Society.

[5] The Law Society. 2019. *Trends in the Solicitors' Profession Annual Statistics Report 2018* (The Law Society)

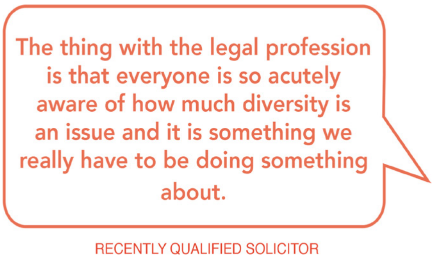
The thing with the legal profession is that everyone is so acutely aware of how much diversity is an issue and it is something we really have to be doing something about.
RECENTLY QUALIFIED SOLICITOR

Fig. 2: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with a recently qualified solicitor, 2020.

Despite drastic improvements in the diversity of the legal profession, the legal community continues to recognise that further progress is required to ensure that ‘substantive diversity of non-traditional groups’ is achieved.[6] This means addressing the fact that representation within different minority groups is uneven, balancing representation in the most lucrative areas of the profession and providing equal opportunities for advancement within them. Nevertheless, the legal profession must be applauded as with respect to gender and ethnicity at least, ‘formal equality has been achieved.’[7] The following sections interrogate the diversity initiatives utilised by the legal profession to critically evaluate if similar initiatives could be adapted to architecture.

The Role of the Student Body

Junior Lawyers Division

A branch of the Law Society, the Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) is the community for aspiring and newly qualified solicitors in England and Wales. To learn more about the JLD, I interviewed their Executive Committee Member, Adam Hattersley.

One of the JLD’s responsibilities is to issue a quarterly poll to learn about the demographic and experiences of their members. The majority of participants voiced feelings of alienation in firms once qualified, resulting in most solicitors from lower socioeconomic backgrounds leaving the profession less than five years post-qualification. Describing employers as ‘the driving force’ for increased social mobility, Hattersley culminates the study by outlining initiatives law firms can implement to ensure solicitors from all backgrounds feel welcome. As a first-generation university graduate himself, it is evident that Hattersley’s own experiences have contributed to the rigour of the JLD’s study on social mobility which ultimately reiterates the need for diversity amongst the committee itself.

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[6] Sundeep Aulakh, Andy Charlwood, Daniel Muzio, Jennifer Tomlinson and Danat Valizade. 2017. *Mapping Advantages and Disadvantages: Diversity in the Legal Profession in England and Wales* (Solicitors Regulation Authority) p.12

[7] Aulakh

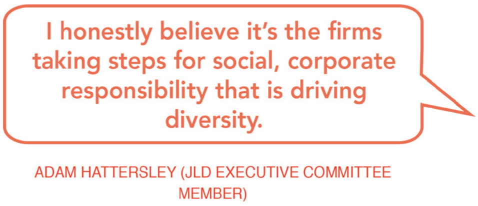
I honestly believe it's the firms taking steps for social, corporate responsibility that is driving diversity.
ADAM HATTERSLEY (JLD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER)

Fig. 3: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with Adam Hattersley, 2020.

An Architectural Student Body

The JLD's commitment to data collection is vital as a means of capturing the issues prevalent in the profession and is supported by further studies such as the Race Fairness Commitment which has enlisted seventeen legal firms to 'identify and attack' unfair career obstacles faced by BAME staff.[8] Conversely, as Katy Ghahremani argues, diversity statistics in architecture are hard to come by as even the RIBA's 2017 Destination Survey failed to address ethnicity, referring only to 'diversity' in regards to gender.[9]

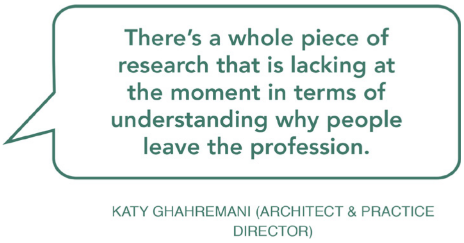
There's a whole piece of research that is lacking at the moment in terms of understanding why people leave the profession.
KATY GHAHREMANI (ARCHITECT & PRACTICE DIRECTOR)

Fig. 4: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with Katy Ghahremani, 2020.

However, the formation of the Black Solicitors Network's (BSN) Junior Lawyers Division, established to focus specifically on the needs of black junior lawyers, signals a lack of faith in the abilities of the JLD to singly champion diversity.

Groups constitutionally disassociated from the Law Society, such as the Black Solicitors Network (BSN), could be argued to have a greater influence on the profession than the JLD. Responsible for annually publishing diversity league tables for the legal profession, the BSN's research on diversity has contributed to 'significant change in the profiles of those who work within it.'[10]

[8] Jemma Slingo. 2020. 'City Firms Embark on Data-Drive to Combat Racial Inequality,' *Law Gazette*<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/city-firms-embark-on-data-drive-to-combat-racial-inequality-/5104889.article?utm_source=gazette_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=City%27s+race+pledge+%7c+Pre-charge+bail+review+%7c+Rozenberg_07%2f06%2f2020> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[9] Kelly MacKinnon. 2017. RIBA Student Destinations Survey 2017, RIBA (RIBA) ,<https://live.architecture.com/~-/media/GatherContent/RIBA-Student-Destinations-Survey/Additional-Documents/

[10] Professor Urwin, and Dr Matthew Gould. 2017. *Diversity League Table: A10 Year Demographic Survey of the Legal Profession* (Black Solicitors' Network), p.16

Independent organisations on the outside need to be the ones that actually push for change.

SIMEON SHTEBUNAEV (CO-VICE PRESIDENT OF THE RIBA FOR STUDENTS AND ASSOCIATES 2017-2019)

Fig. 5: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with Simeon Shtebunaev, 2020.

According to Co-Vice President of the RIBA Students and Associates 2017-2019, Simeon Shtebunaev, independent organisations must be the ones lobbying for greater diversity. The establishment of Black Females in Architecture (BFA) seeks to 'cater for a very specific problem that seems unnoticed or misunderstood by others' by actively addressing issues of inequality and diversity.[11] Established as an independent network, BFA hopes to collect their own data to educate others about the common problems Black women in architecture face. BFA's growing network of over three hundred members highlights the potency of their cause.

Students and associates make up approximately one third of the RIBA's membership and yet responses indicate that the role of the RIBA was perceived as being obsolete.[12] The formation of the Architecture Students Network (ASN) in 2012 as an 'independent network of student representatives' highlights the incredulity amongst students about the RIBA's ability to spearhead change.[13] However the ASN, funded by the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture (SCHOSA), cannot be deemed to be entirely independent. Given that schools of architecture often have their own agenda, which usually involves attracting more students as a means of receiving greater funding, Shtebunaev argues that the ASN may be 'a placating device not a revolutionary one.'[14]

The lacklustre success of architectural student bodies such as Archaos have proven that groups which are wholly dependent on the RIBA cannot enact drastic change. Similarly to the JLD, Archaos was founded as a wing of the RIBA in 1999. The transitory nature of the student community resulted in the dissolution of Archaos in the mid noughties, only to be revived in 2019 with the launch of the RIBA's Future Architects, a programme aspiring to provide 'a network and community for future and emerging architects designed to support, inspire and provide a voice for those transitioning from education to practice.'[15] However, even those closely associated with Future Architects contend that 'it risks turning into more of an RIBA-led business body.'[16]

[11] Black Females in Architecture Committee Member. Interview (21.09.20)

[12] Richard Waite, 2020. 'How will the would-be RIBA presidents tackle education and diversity?' *The Architects' Journal <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/how-will-the-would-be-riba-presidents-tackle-education-and-diversity>* [accessed 9 October 2020]

[13] Merlin Fulcher. 2012. 'Architecture Students Network Replaces "defunct" Archaos', *The Architects' Journal* <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/archive/architecture-students-network-replaces- defunct-archaos> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[14] Simeon Shtebunaev. Interview (31.08.20)

[15] RIBA [n.d.]. 'Future Architects', *RIBA* <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/future-architects> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[16] Simeon Shtebunaev. Interview (31.08.20)

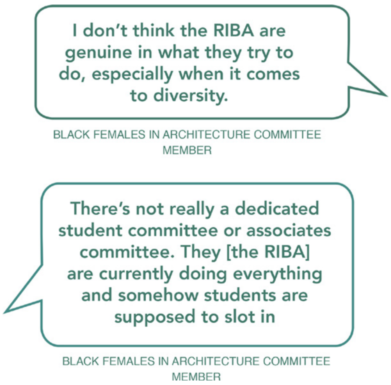
I don't think the RIBA are genuine in what they try to do, especially when it comes to diversity.
BLACK FEMALES IN ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE MEMBER
There's not really a dedicated student committee or associates committee. They [the RIBA] are currently doing everything and somehow students are supposed to slot in
BLACK FEMALES IN ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Fig. 6: Quotes from an interview conducted by the author with a Black Females in Architecture Committee Member, 2020.

It is evident that the legal profession's ability to report on, address and champion diversity is strongly supported by a combination of work undertaken by groups such as the JLD, who maintain a direct association with the Law Society, and fully independent networks such as the BSN. In response, the architectural profession must foster and encourage a similar balance of association and autonomy with the RIBA. Still very early on in its inception, RIBA Future Architects has the potential to provide a sustained student voice to lobby the profession on issues important to the student community. However, given responses allude to incredulity around the RIBA's ability to justly represent students, perhaps Future Architects must become semi-autonomous if it is to be successful. This would ensure it can withstand the transient nature of the student community and is still supported financially by the RIBA, but can operate as an semi-independent student-run organisation.

Routes to Qualification

Pathways to the Roll

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) specifies a six-year pathway to The Solicitor's Roll. Crucially, as a Senior Law Lecturer mentions, admission does not mandate possession of a legal undergraduate degree.[17]

Leading legal firms believe that too many candidates come from similar backgrounds as they utilise the same gilded degree route. The introduction of an apprenticeship promised to encourage diversity, by taking away the burden of debt. However, 'after a period of upscaling their non-graduate recruitment, firms have reached capacity' leading to an anticipated 14% decline in legal apprentices in 2020.[18]

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17 Senior Law Lecturer. Interview (08.07.2020)

18 Marialuisa Taddia. 2020. 'Earn and Learn', *Law Gazette* <https://www. lawgazette.co.uk/analysis/earn-and- learn/5103352.article> [accessed 9 October 2020]

> A lot of students start a law degree without having decided exactly what career they are going to pursue. Plenty of law graduates don't become lawyers and plenty of lawyers haven't done law as a first degree.

SENIOR LAW LECTURER

Fig. 7: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with a Senior Law Lecturer, 2020.

Upscaling the apprenticeship route is heavily reliant on the introduction of the Solicitor's Qualifying Exam (SQE) which will act as an endpoint assessment. The SQE is a direct result of the SRA's 'Training for Tomorrow' report which consulted 'on some of the most far-reaching changes to legal education and training for over 40 years.'[19] By providing a single standardised assessment, it aims to diversify the profession by addressing concerns that the traditional routes are expensive and inflexible.[20] However, the substantial training costs associated with the SQE have left critics sceptical that it will actually provide students with a financial saving.

Architectural Education Reform

The RIBA Education Review (RER) has been underway since 2013, the same year the SRA launched their 'Training for Tomorrow' report. Yet many interview participants argue that progress in education reform has been painfully slow.

> The RIBA Education board did a full review of the Part 1 and Part 2 system because the EU laws were about to change, but nothing seemed to come out of that; which was very frustrating.

KATY GHAHREMANI (ARCHITECT & PRACTICE DIRECTOR)

Fig. 8. Quote from an interview conducted by the author with Katy Ghahremani, 2020.

Outlined in the infographic, the central proposal of the RER was the introduction of a '7-year integrated award' whereby Parts 1, 2 and 3 would be combined into one single programme.[21] The reformed award was intended to retain students through to qualification in an attempt to address high drop out rates from student dissatisfaction, as illustrated in the graph below. This approach would tie students to a single school for the entirety of their education as architecture schools would take on responsibility for everything required for registration, an obligation that many are unwilling to be burdened with. Furthermore, the programme would only further exacerbate the siloed nature of architectural education, which already fails to comprehend that not all architectural students wish to become architects.

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[19] SRA.'Policy Statement: Training for Tomorrow.' 2013. *SRA* <https://www.sra. org.uk/sra/policy/training-for-tomorrow/ resources/policy-statement>

[20] Solicitors' Regulation Authority. 2020. *Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) Briefing* (Solicitors' Regulation Authority), p. 3

[21] Laura Mark. 2015. 'RIBA Moves to Scrap Part 3', *The Architects' Journal* <https://www.architectsjournal.

The greatest disappointment of the RER is that it fails to respond to recommendations by the independent UK Architectural Education Review Group. The group recommends a revised framework which removes the Parts 1-3 system in order to shift the focus of architectural education to the demonstration of competence, rather than the possession of prescribed awards.[22] This would give universities greater freedom to develop more distinctive programmes and, similarly to the SQE, would allow entry into the profession via a single professional gateway; without mandating an undergraduate architecture degree.

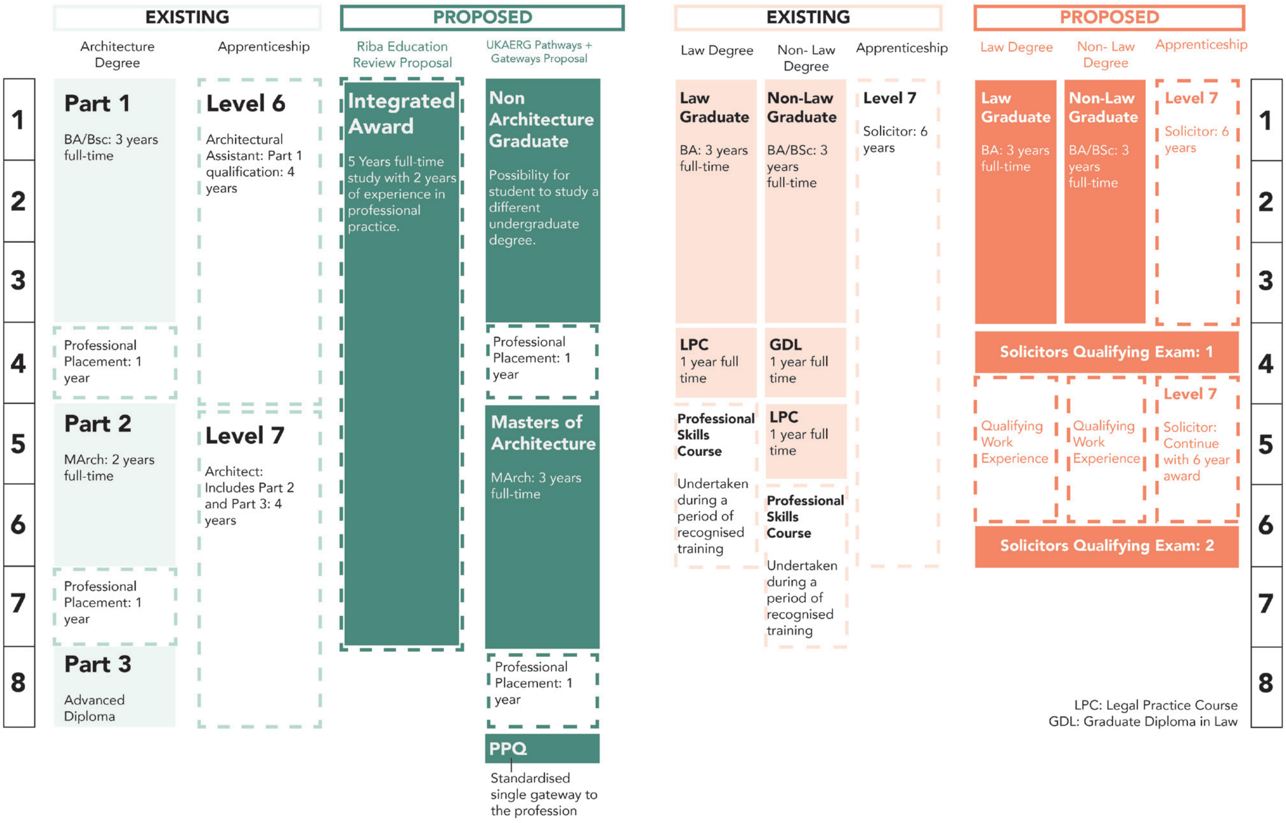

EXISTING
Architecture Degree
Apprenticeship
PROPOSED
Riba Education Review Proposal
UKAERG Pathways + Gateways Proposal
EXISTING
Law Degree
Non- Law Degree
Apprenticeship
PROPOSED
Law Degree
Non- Law Degree
Apprenticeship
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
Part 1
BA/Bsc: 3 years full-time
Professional Placement: 1 year
Part 2
MArch: 2 years full-time
Professional Placement: 1 year
Part 3
Advanced Diploma
Level 6
Architectural Assistant: Part 1 qualification: 4 years
Level 7
Architect: Includes Part 2 and Part 3: 4 years
Integrated Award
5 Years full-time study with 2 years of experience in professional practice.
Non Architecture Graduate
Possibility for student to study a different undergraduate degree.
Professional Placement: 1 year
Masters of Architecture
MArch: 3 years full-time
Professional Placement: 1 year
PPQ
Standardised single gateway to the profession
Law Graduate
BA: 3 years full-time
Non-Law Graduate
BA/BSc: 3 years full-time
Level 7
Solicitor: 6 years
LPC
1 year full time
GDL
1 year full time
Professional Skills Course
Undertaken during a period of recognised training
LPC
1 year full time
Professional Skills Course
Undertaken during a period of recognised training
Law Graduate
BA: 3 years full-time
Non-Law Graduate
BA/BSc: 3 years full-time
Level 7
Solicitor: 6 years
Solicitors Qualifying Exam: 1
Qualifying Work Experience
Qualifying Work Experience
Level 7
Solicitor: Continue with 6 year award
Solicitors Qualifying Exam: 2
LPC: Legal Practice Course
GDL: Graduate Diploma in Law

Fig.9. A comparison of the pathways to becoming an architect and a solicitor. Infographic produced by author and aided by interview conversations, 2020.

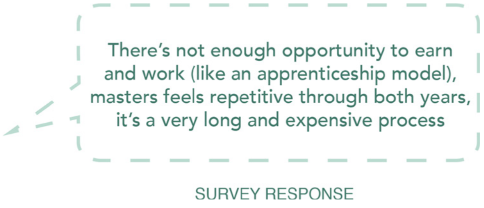
The London School of Architecture, alongside The University of Sheffield's Collaborative Practice course, directly addresses the issues raised by the

[22] The UK Architectural Education Review Group. 2013. PATHWAYS AND GATEWAYS, p. 7

RER by offering work placements alongside learning. Nonetheless, despite showing great progress, it is disappointing that both programmes charge fees in excess of £9,000 a year.

In 2020 the ARB undertook a consultation process which they describe as 'the biggest step so far on the journey towards the most significant shake-up of architectural education since the 1950s.'[23] The ARB's 'Modernising the Initial Education and Training for Architects' report found 'a consistent and widespread view is that there is a need for new, more flexible routes to the Register' as the current system 'is likely to be a barrier that is impacting on diversity.'[24] The ARB's commitment to co-create outcomes and standards through direct engagement with the sector signals a promising awareness of their need to open up the profession. As part of the three year project, the ARB will develop routes to registration through a period of public engagement in 2022, with an ambition to establish the operational systems required to implement the new educational framework in 2023.

The most tangible reform to architectural education to date is the introduction of the architectural apprenticeship. The biggest hope pinned on the scheme when it was introduced in 2018 was that it would widen access to the profession by promoting more opportunities to 'earn and learn' as one survey respondent remarks.[25]


There's not enough opportunity to earn and work (like an apprenticeship model), masters feels repetitive through both years, it's a very long and expensive process

SURVEY RESPONSE

Fig. 10: Anonymous response from author's online student survey, 2020.

However, only two universities currently provide a Level 6 apprenticeship – equivalent to the RIBA Part 1 – suggesting the scheme is suffering from the same funding issues as its legal counterparts. Instead, more universities offer a Level 7 apprenticeship – equivalent to Parts 2 and 3 – which requires applicants to hold an architecture Bachelor's degree. As a result, little progress has been made to broaden entry into the profession. This supports research from the Social Mobility Commission, whose report 'Apprenticeships and Social Mobility' found that the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017 has disproportionately funded higher-level apprenticeships for students from more advantaged communities, rather than those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.[26]

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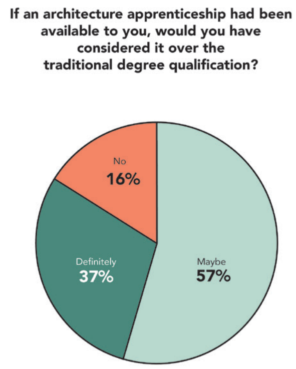
[23] Richard Waite, 2021. 'ARB chief on education shake-up: "We want to remove unnecessary barriers."' *The Architects' Journal*. <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/arb-chief-on-education-shake-up-we-want-to-remove-unnecessary-barriers> [accessed 29th October 2021]

[24] Architects Registration Board, Modernising the initial education and training of architects: a discussion document. (Architects Registration Board, 2021) p13

[25] Anonymous response from author's online student survey, 2020.

[26] Social Mobility Commission. 2020. Apprenticeships and Social Mobility:Fulfilling Potential (Social Mobility Commission), p. 5



If an architecture apprenticeship had been available to you, would you have considered it over the traditional degree qualification?

Fig. 11. Infographic produced by author from anonymous survey responses, 2020.

The legal profession has shown that apprenticeship roles are likely to decline as opportunities within the industry become saturated. This problem of scalability is likely to be amplified in architecture as small practices make up approximately 79% of all RIBA chartered firms.[27] As a result, Level 6 positions will be hard to come by as many firms will struggle to commit to the mandatory 4 year period of employment required. Therefore, despite survey responses indicating high levels of interest in apprenticeships, the scheme cannot independently solve the profession's lack of diversity.

A representative from the Architects Registration Board (ARB), warns that we risk reducing standards and safety when introducing alternative pathways to the profession.[28] Regulatory competence is crucial if we are to maintain public confidence in the profession. However, it is this reliance on legislation that has led to a lack of diversity. In response to the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire, the RIBA outlined plans to introduce mandatory competency tests for architects.[29] However, this shows a failure to respond to the lack of social justice exemplified as working-class communities were corralled into 'the worst housing in a global city in the twenty-first century.'[30] Given that diversity is ultimately underpinned by social justice, it's not surprising that unlike the Statement of Solicitor Compliance, the ARB's Code of Conduct fails to assert the importance of diversity.[31]

The implementation of the SQE will provide students with greater flexibility, notably by not mandating an undergraduate law degree. Therefore, reforming the tripartite structure of architectural education is imperative if we are to diversify the profession. For this to happen, the RIBA and ARB must proactively act on feedback from students, practitioners and schools of architecture to create a multitude of flexible pathways into the profession. Furthermore, the architectural profession's largely legislative approach must be replaced by one that instead looks to 'promote and manage diversity, with an increasing focus on recognition and celebration of difference.'[32]

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[27] The Fees Bureau. 2019. RIBA Business Benchmarking Report 2019 (RIBA)

[28] ARB Representative. Interview. (16.07.20)

[29] Tom Ravenscroft. 2020. "RIBA Set to Introduce Mandatory Competency Tests for Architects," Dezeen <https://www. dezeen.com/2020/09/01/riba-architects- mandatory-competency-tests/> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[30] Coventry University. "The Big Question: 'What Has Grenfell Tower Taught Us about Housing, Racism and Social Justice?'" [n.d.]. Coventry University <https://www.coventry.ac.uk/ research/about-us/research-events/2017/ the-big-question-what-has-grenfell-tower- taught-us-about-housing-racism-and- social-justice/> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[31] "Statement of Solicitor Competence." 2015. SRA <https://www.sra.org.uk/ solicitors/resources/cpd/competence-statement/> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[32] Professor Urwin, and Dr Matthew Gould. 2017. Diversity League Table: A10 Year Demographic Survey of the Legal Profession (Black Solicitors' Network), p.16

[33] Adam Hattersley. 2019. "Weighing the Cost of Qualification," Law Gazette <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/ commentary-and-opinion/weighing-

Funding

Funding in Law

Upon qualification, a newly qualified solicitor is likely to be burdened with total debt of around £70,000-£80,000.[33] As one newly qualified solicitor mentions, around a quarter of aspiring solicitors will have their Legal Practice Course (LPC) tuition fees paid for by their future employers, which, when self-funded, can cost up to £16,750.[34] Individuals from minority ethnic groups cannot be assumed to be of a lower social mobility, however the overall social and economic statuses of BAME individuals has been proved to be generally lower than that of the white population.[35] Therefore this increased financial support could be argued to contribute to greater ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, the new SQE qualification will replace the LPC in a bid to further improve social mobility and to provide a level playing field for all candidates.

> Unless you had lots of money, the only way to become a solicitor was to work for a corporate firm, who would sponsor you and pay for everything. There's no way I could have qualified without any of that.
>
> RECENTLY QUALIFIED SOLICITOR

Fig. 12:Quote from an interview conducted by the author with a recentlyqualified solicitor, 2020.

A career within the legal sector is often perceived as a prestigious one due to its respected "learned" status. Unlike architecture, both a solicitors' title and function is protected by the Legal Services Act 2007, legislation that ensures a person can only carry out a reserved legal activity if authorised by the SRA.[36] This layer of protection ensures that solicitors remain in demand and, as a result, are well remunerated for services rendered.

Funding in Architecture

In 2013, the average student debt for qualifying architects was estimated to be £76,968.[37] This raises concern that those from poorer backgrounds are being priced out of architectural education as "elitism" continues to be a recurring criticism. As stated in CABE's report 'Architecture and Race,' there is a 'need for additional funding for those in lower-income groups, many of whom are from minority ethnic backgrounds."[38]

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the-cost-of-qualification/5069108. article> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[34] Jemma Slingo. 2020a. "40% of LPC Students Not Getting Training Contracts," Law Gazette<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/40-of-lpc-students-not-getting-training-contracts-/5105248.article> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[35] Helen Barnes, Dorothe Bonjour, and Melahat Sahin-Dikmen. 2012. Minority Ethnic Students and Practitioners in Architecture:A Scoping Study for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) (Policy Studies Institute), p. 6

[36] SRA. 2019 "Guidance: Admission as a Solicitor." SRA <https://www.sra.org.uk/ solicitors/guidance/admission-solicitor/> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[37] Marlin Fulcher. 2013. "Profession Divided over RIBA's Shake-up of Architectural Education," The Architects' Journal <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/archive/profession-divided-over-ribas-shake-up-of-architectural-education> [accessed 9 October 2020]

In 2019 the RIBA were only able to award twenty scholarships and bursaries, despite their Hardship Fund receiving three hundred applications in 2018. This financial strain is worsened as students are also expected to spend around £2,000 a year on hidden extras such as printing.[39] As one Part 2 Architect explains, for many students the long hours studio culture restricts them from obtaining part-time work, only further exacerbating their crippling financial burden. Similarly to how many law students have their LPC fees paid for by private institutions, architectural organisations, schools and government must take greater action to address the financial struggles with which many architecture students are encumbered.

Personally for me, it was a bit of a struggle because I couldn't work during the year and then during the summer I'd waitress myself to death.

BLACK FEMALES IN ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Fig. 13: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with a Black Females in Architecture Committee Member, 2020.

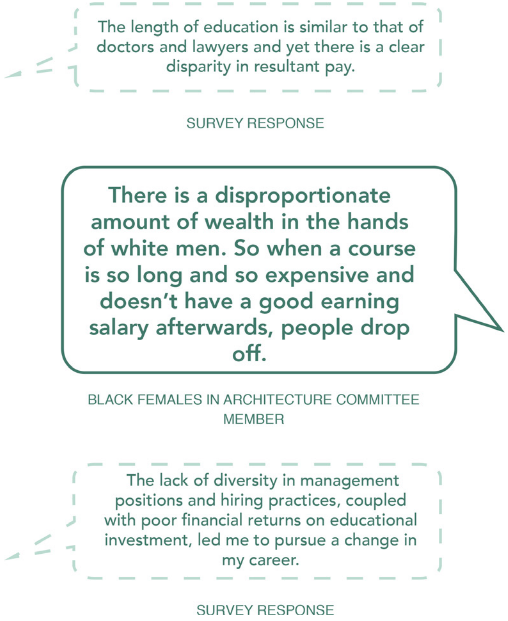
Architecture's culture of low pay and long hours is causing many to drop out of the profession as unpaid overtime is all too common. Despite the legal profession harbouring a similar culture, an average salary of £65,000 a year for newly qualified solicitors provides a redeeming incentive when compared to the £34,000 average for a newly qualified architect.[40] As many survey responses indicate, this lack of financial reward has led to growing disillusionment with the profession, typically centred around the relatively low pay which fully qualified architects could expect to achieve, in comparison to allied professions such as medicine and law.[41]

If we want the profession to be attractive to all, we must address the consistent financial exploitation of the Architect's function. According to Femi Oresanya, Principal Architect and Honorary Professor at The Bartlett School of Architecture, protecting only the architect's title, as enforced by the Architect's Act 1997, is not enough. Greater restrictions are required to 'protect not only what we do, but who does it,' as current legislation has led 'architecture to become a lost leader' in what Oresenya describes as an 'open market.'[42] This inability to be justly remunerated diminishes the salaries of all within the profession. This low pay is further compounded by the willingness of some to undertake early design work at little or no fee; a notion unimaginable in the field of law.

[38] Barnes, Bonjour, Sahin-Dikmen. Minority Ethnic Students and Practitioners in Architecture. p. 85

[39] Ella Jessel. 2018. "Student Survey:Only the Rich Need Apply to Study Architecture," The Architects' Journal <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/student-survey-only-the-rich-need- apply-to-study-architecture> [accessed 9 October 2020]

[40] Prospects. "How Much Do Lawyers Earn?" [n.d.]. Prospects <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/ jobs-and-work-experience/ job-sectors/ law-sector/how-much-do-lawyers-earn> [accessed 9 October 2020]



The length of education is similar to that of doctors and lawyers and yet there is a clear disparity in resultant pay.

SURVEY RESPONSE

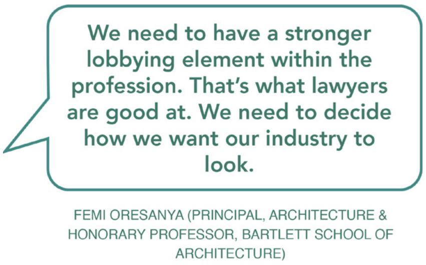
There is a disproportionate amount of wealth in the hands of white men. So when a course is so long and so expensive and doesn't have a good earning salary afterwards, people drop off.

BLACK FEMALES IN ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE MEMBER

The lack of diversity in management positions and hiring practices, coupled with poor financial returns on educational investment, led me to pursue a change in my career.

SURVEY RESPONSE

Fig. 14: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with a Black Females in Architecture Committee Member and anonymous responses from the author's online student survey, 2020



We need to have a stronger lobbying element within the profession. That's what lawyers are good at. We need to decide how we want our industry to look.

FEMI ORESANYA (PRINCIPAL, ARCHITECTURE & HONORARY PROFESSOR, BARTLETT SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE)

Fig. 15: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with Femi Oresanya 2020

Despite the traditional routes to qualification in law and architecture being of a similar financial magnitude, the legal profession has shown that the prestige and remunerative award post-qualification contributes to the attraction and retention of a more diverse workforce. Alternative routes into architecture will help to address students' financial burden, but ultimately we need to have a stronger lobbying element within the profession if we are to increase salaries and make architecture more attractive to a broad student audience.

Educational Outreach

Legal Work Experience

Unpaid internships have become a prerequisite for attaining a legal training contract. This is detrimentally impacting diversity as only aspiring solicitors from privileged backgrounds are able to take these opportunities.

However, when interviewing a newly qualified solicitor, she was optimistic that organisations such as ‘Aspiring Solicitors’ (AS) are opening up opportunities within the profession. AS was established with the primary aim of increasing diversity in law.[43] In a bid to provide free access, opportunity and assistance to students from underrepresented groups, AS equips aspiring solicitors with mentors, interview coaching and work experience opportunities. As a result, since 2014 AS’s diverse members have been offered over 1600 training contracts and vacation schemes.[44]

There are a lot more opportunities now then there used to be, partly to do with organisations like Aspiring Solicitors- they took me to a couple of open days at firms that I wouldn’t have had access to otherwise.

RECENTLY QUALIFIED SOLICITOR

Fig. 16: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with a recently qualified solicitor, 2020

Educational Outreach in Architecture

The problem of unpaid work experience is all too pertinent in architecture. The RIBA made a stand on unpaid work placements in 2011 by announcing that practices had to pay interns at least the minimum wage, or risk losing their chartered status.[45] However, it is evident that these unpaid placements are still happening. If this is to change, the RIBA must establish a proxy by which students can anonymously report experiences of little or no pay.

Built By Us (BBU) was established with the primary ambition to ‘connect diverse talent to construction businesses, to support companies on their journey to becoming more inclusive workplaces and nurture diverse talent through mentoring.’[46] When speaking with BBU’s Founder and CEO, she argued that the way teenagers are often unclear on the role and responsibilities of an architect causes many to discount it as a serious

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41 Barnes, Bonjour, Sahin-Dikmen. Minority Ethnic Students and Practitioners in Architecture. p. 77

42 Femi Oresanya. Interview (06.07.20)

43 “Aspiring Solicitors- The Principles.” [n.d.]. Aspiring Solicitors <https:// www. aspiringsolicitors.co.uk/about-as/> [accessed 9 October 2020]

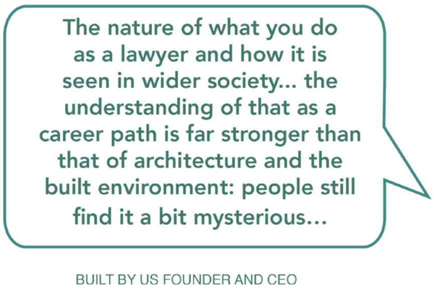
44 Ibid.

45 Laura Mark. 2013. “Architecture Students Call for an End to Unpaid Internships,” The Architects’ Journal <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/ news/architecture-students-call-for-an- end-to-unpaid-internships> [accessed 9 October 2020]

46 “WELCOME.” [n.d.]. Built By Us <https:// www.builtbyus.org.uk> [accessed 9 October 2020]

career path. As a result, educating students about the multitude of professions in the construction industry is crucial.

As the former chair of the RIBA's equality, diversity and inclusion group – Architects for Change – BBU's Founder was instrumental in launching the RIBA Role Model campaign. In a bid to communicate the RIBA's 'commitment to making architecture and the broader construction industry more inclusive,' the Role Models campaign successfully outlines the experiences of a diverse group of architectural practitioners.[47]



The nature of what you do as a lawyer and how it is seen in wider society... the understanding of that as a career path is far stronger than that of architecture and the built environment: people still find it a bit mysterious...

BUILT BY US FOUNDER AND CEO

Fig. 17: Quote from an interview conducted by the author with Built By Us Founder and CEO, 2020

The establishment of Aspiring Solicitors shows that many in law still believe some groups are underrepresented in the legal profession. It is encouraging that similar organisations such as Built By Us exist in architecture too, highlighting that many within the industry are aware of the profession's lack of diversity. Nevertheless, all within the profession must do more to facilitate mentoring and educational outreach.

Recommendations

The initiatives presented in this paper constitute the initial steps that architectural education and practice can learn from law to diversify the profession. Moreover, it argues that the legal profession has shown us that the first step to achieving diversity is to recognise that minority groups are underrepresented in the profession. For many, this awareness will only present itself through statistical data and qualitative studies; both of which the architectural profession is currently lacking. Nevertheless, attracting a broader pool of talent is just the start. In order to retain diversity, we must cultivate environments that are inclusive and respectful of difference.

The SRA's development of flexible pathways to the Solicitor's Roll has significantly contributed to greater diversity within the legal profession. However, perhaps what is most interesting is their shift in focus from a largely legislative approach, to one which instead promotes and celebrates diversity. It is clear that implementing such change requires a top-down, transformative approach which encourages solidarity amongst the profession. In response, architectural schools, organisations, government and the RIBA must take similar, drastic action. The findings from this study have been formulated into a series of recommendations below and are directly derived from the initiatives successfully employed by the legal profession.

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[47] "RIBA Role Models" [n.d.] RIBA <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/role-models> [accessed 9 October 2020]

1. Acceptance: Everyone within architectural education and practice must acknowledge the homogeneous culture within the profession. Everyone must understand the barriers that individuals from non-traditional groups face and recognise that overlaps in social characteristics can create intersectional systems of disadvantage. Both the RIBA and independent networks such as BFA must carry out further research to raise this alert.

2. Semi-autonomy of RIBA Future Architects: Groups such as the Black Solicitors Network and Black Females in Architecture have shown that operating independently from the RIBA can engender greater solidarity. Future Architects requires continuous resourcing and therefore continued funding from the RIBA is imperative. Nevertheless, it must become more ambitious if it is to strongly advocate the issues important to the student community.

3. Flexibility: Architectural education must focus on the demonstration of competence, rather than the possession of prescribed awards. Schools of architecture need to be granted greater flexibility to create a multitude of ‘earn and learn’ pathways.

4. Greater Funding: Architecture schools, organisations, government and the RIBA must provide more funding opportunities to allow those from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter into the profession.

5. Protection of an Architect’s Function: Professional bodies such as the ARB and the RIBA must protect not only what architects do, but who does it. The gratuitous working culture within the profession must stop and architectural schools must reiterate the value of an architect.

6. Greater Financial Rewards: Remuneration upon qualification must be attractive. Practices must ensure all work is paid; the RIBA must implement a formal proxy process to declare practices who fail to pay interns.

7. Educational Outreach: Architectural practices, schools, independent groups and professional bodies must encourage more mentoring and provide educational support in order to retain individuals from underrepresented groups through to qualification.

Biography

Sophie Mayer is a Part 2 Architectural Assistant at West Port Architects. Sophie studied as an undergraduate at the University of Bath before undertaking her Master's of Architecture at the University of Sheffield where she graduated with distinction. Her experiences in several small to medium architecture practices, as well as for a large main contractor, developed her interest in the topic of diversity in architecture.

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What if Architecture Looked like me?
A Photographic Essay

Samuel Kapasa

Introduction

The title of this essay derives from my ongoing reflection of architectural practice and the role of my own culture and identity in shaping it. As a graduate of the Sheffield School of Architecture, I critically reflect on where my journey has taken me since my days in the Arts Tower. I explore how the agency of starting an architectural studio has led to opportunities of personal and cultural expression. My studio, SPATIAL-ESK, seeks to hold no restrictions when it comes to collaboration. To date, I have worked with hip-hop artists, poets, artists and coders. The main premise of these collaborations is to forget my preconceptions for what counts as a typical architectural project. On the other hand, what is brought to mind is how the identity, experience and culture of the architect and client can create new and original projects.

As a response to ‘Anti-Racism at SSoA: Call to Action’, I share my own journey so that others may see the power of agency and one’s own unique cultural background in the world of architecture. By using your skill-set in a way that reflects your background and experience, new and wonderful things can happen. My own agency is my activism.

Towards Ethnographic Practice

As a dual citizen (Zambian and British), I have grown up with an appreciation for the value that various cultural experiences can bring. I have a strong village mentality – which views all relationships (business and otherwise) as lifelong social and supportive networks. Within this framework, all are connected and valued equally. In architectural terms, anyone can be a client.

When I first embarked on the life-long education that is architecture, I sought a means of creative expression that combined personal creativity with civic duty. Specifically, that my cultural experience and approach would positively impact the world around me by using the tools that architecture provides. This expression would undoubtedly be balanced with the expected constraints (and opportunities) introduced by the client, site, technology and programme. When I eventually entered the architectural workforce, I continually sought ways and opportunities to 'practice' architecture in ways that were most natural to me. This was developed by deliberately seeking project opportunities which align with my cultural interests, which often existed beyond the boundaries of my employment. This led to the development of my studio SPATIAL-ESK, which allows me to respond to the following question: 'What if architecture looked like me?'. If I intentionally chose to relate to clients as a sort of creative village, what would this look like? The question focuses primarily on the opportunities created by a culturally aware way of relating.
This photo essay concentrates on two key case studies where some aspects of personal and cultural interest have led to new and interesting opportunities.

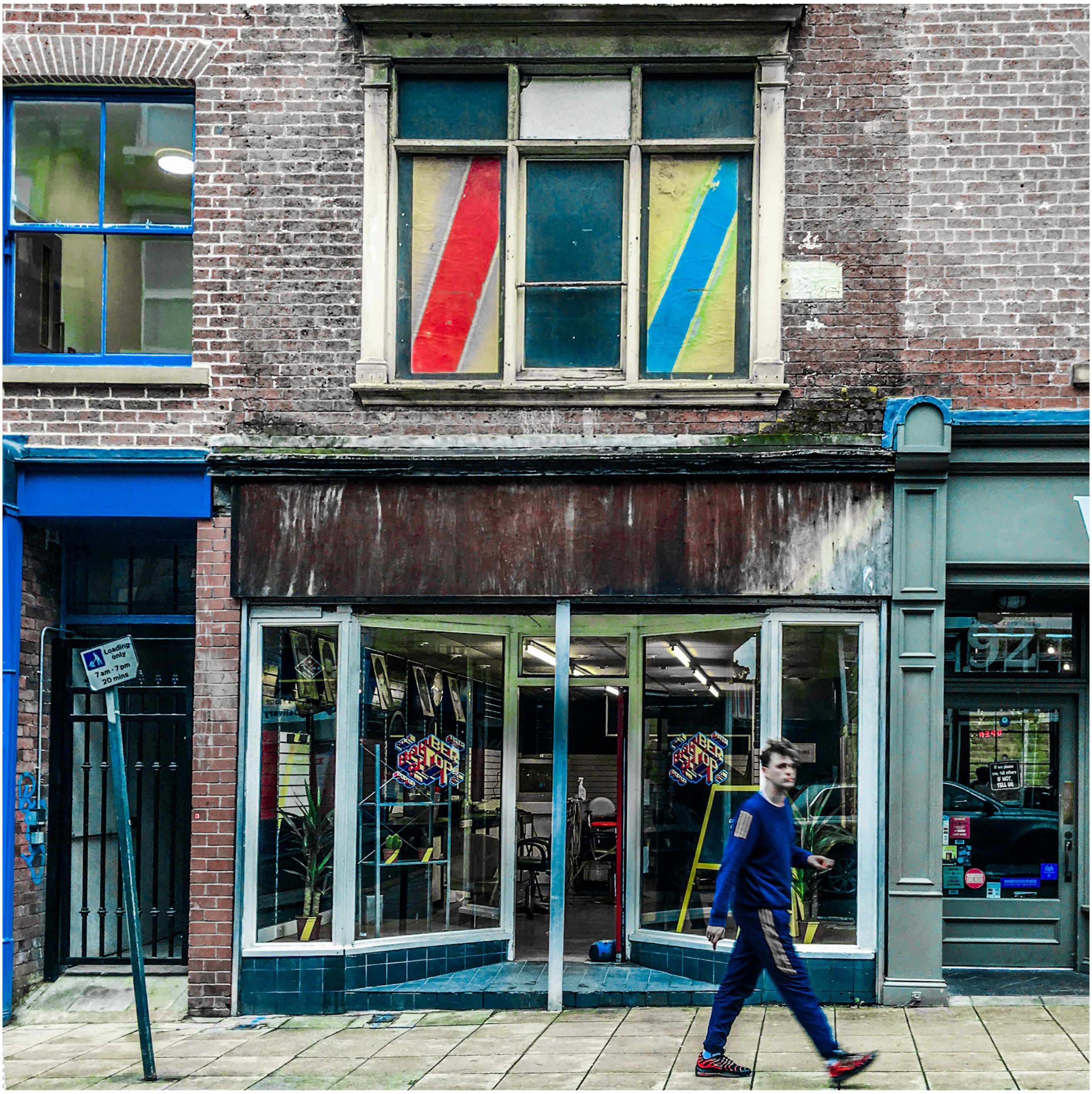


Figure 1. Photograph of The Barber Shop Gallery, Leeds (SPATIAL-ESK, 2019)

The Barber Shop – Alternative Means of Exchange

Kirkgate, Leeds is home to one of the largest indoor markets in Europe. The local area has been at the heart of the Leeds retail scene since 1857, with businesses spanning generations and representing a wide range of nationalities. It has recently become a cultural hub with a thriving community of creatives, musicians and artisans.

It is also the home to an inconspicuous barber shop that caught my attention. Despite its undecorated appearance, bare interior and A4 printed signage, this establishment still operated as an active social intersection. The Black Caribbean owner, Tony, had taken pride in the variety of nationalities and characters that walked into his doors from local market tradespeople to business executives and occasionally (to the owner's annoyance) those who just wanted to use his Wi-Fi.

The creative relationship with Tony began with an unconventional exchange. One day, I simply noted how the walls and finishes of his business could benefit from colour and vibrancy. The frugal business owner did not see the point in parting with funds for anything that would not help his already lean business model. I therefore took the opportunity to propose a piece of artwork for one of his walls in exchange for a haircut. This unusual business proposal both intrigued and humored Tony, who gladly accepted the exchange. Creating relationships through non-monetary exchange is not an unusual concept from my Zambian upbringing, allowing individuals to exchange skills and tasks in lieu of currency. His requirement was simply that the piece was bespoke and colorful. I therefore developed an elevational drawing of the barber shop with bold street art on the elevation: this large vertical print immediately caught his attention and sparked conversations in the barber shop throughout the following weeks.

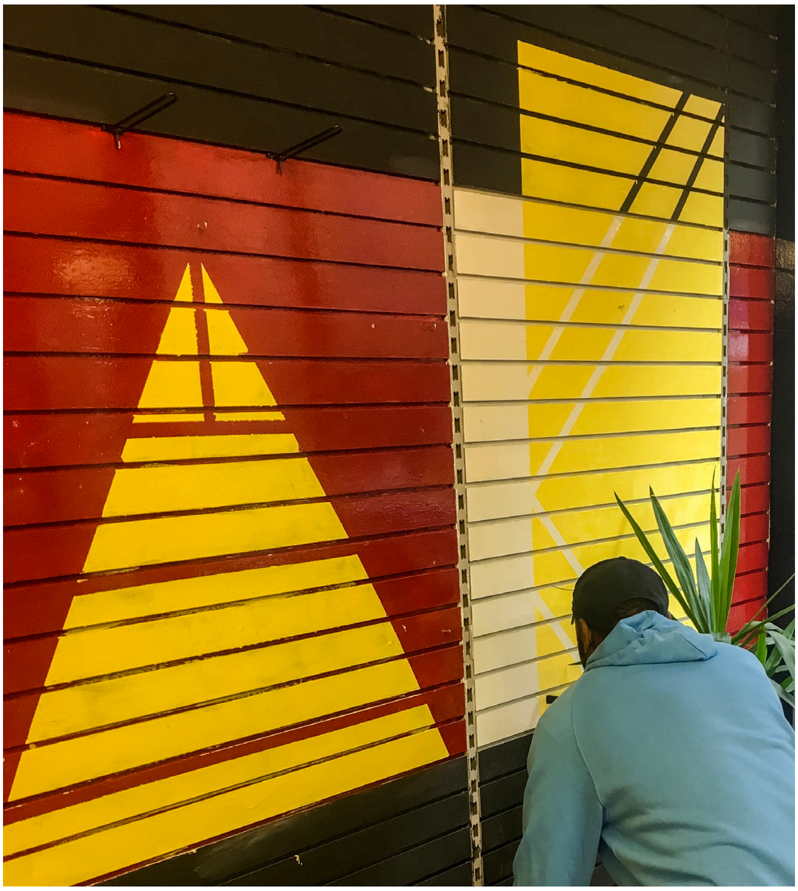


Figure 2. Photograph of Wall Mural, The Barber Shop Gallery, Leeds (SPATIAL-ESK, 2019)

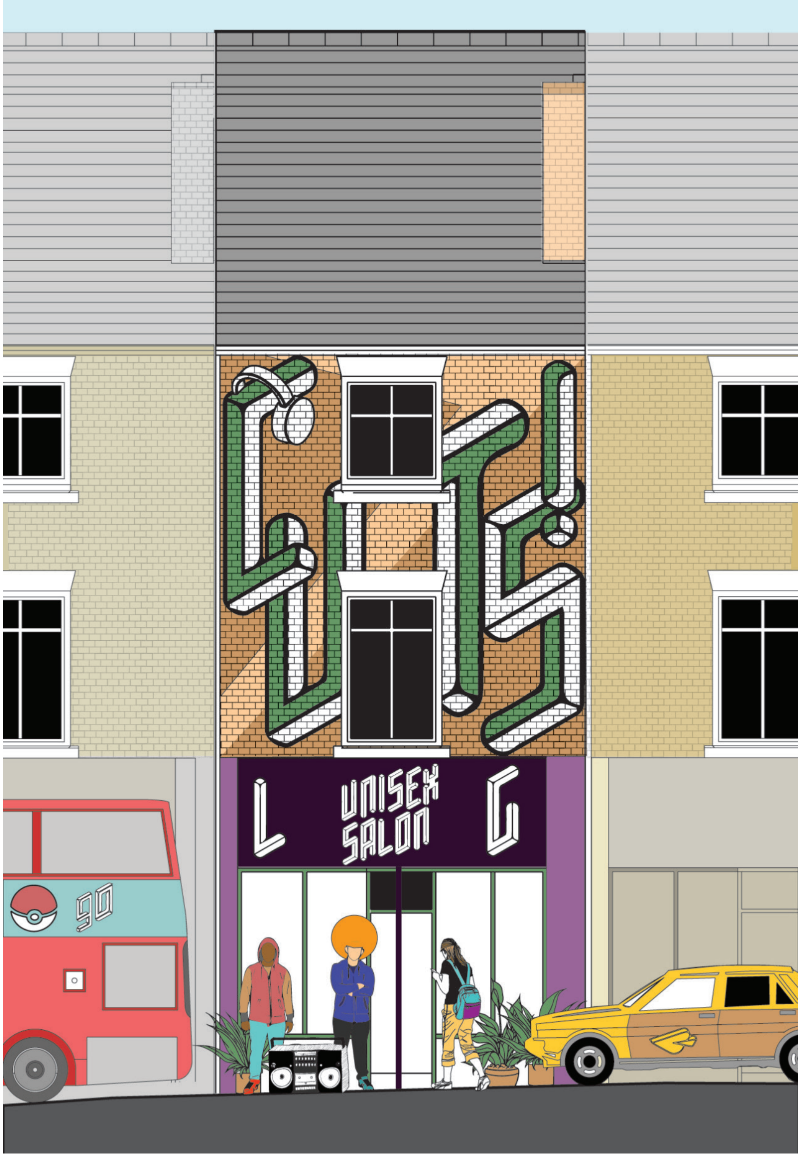


Figure 3. Elevational artwork of The Barber Shop Gallery, Leeds (SPATIAL-ESK, 2019)

“Can you have that guy make a piece of art for my son?” one customer asked. On another occasion, a local councillor visiting the street stated, “It would be great if your store looked like this!” By making this subtle intervention, the nature of the space began to change. In curiosity, Tony proposed that he would give me five haircuts to paint a mural on the rear wall of his space. He began to notice how his customers engaged with the space and the positive impact this was having on his business. I took this step further and worked closely with him to re-think how his barber shop could connect with the existing arts community and present an opportunity to exhibit local work. This eventually led to the barber shop serving a dual function: it housed and celebrated local artwork whilst maintaining its role as a convivial hub in Kirkgate.

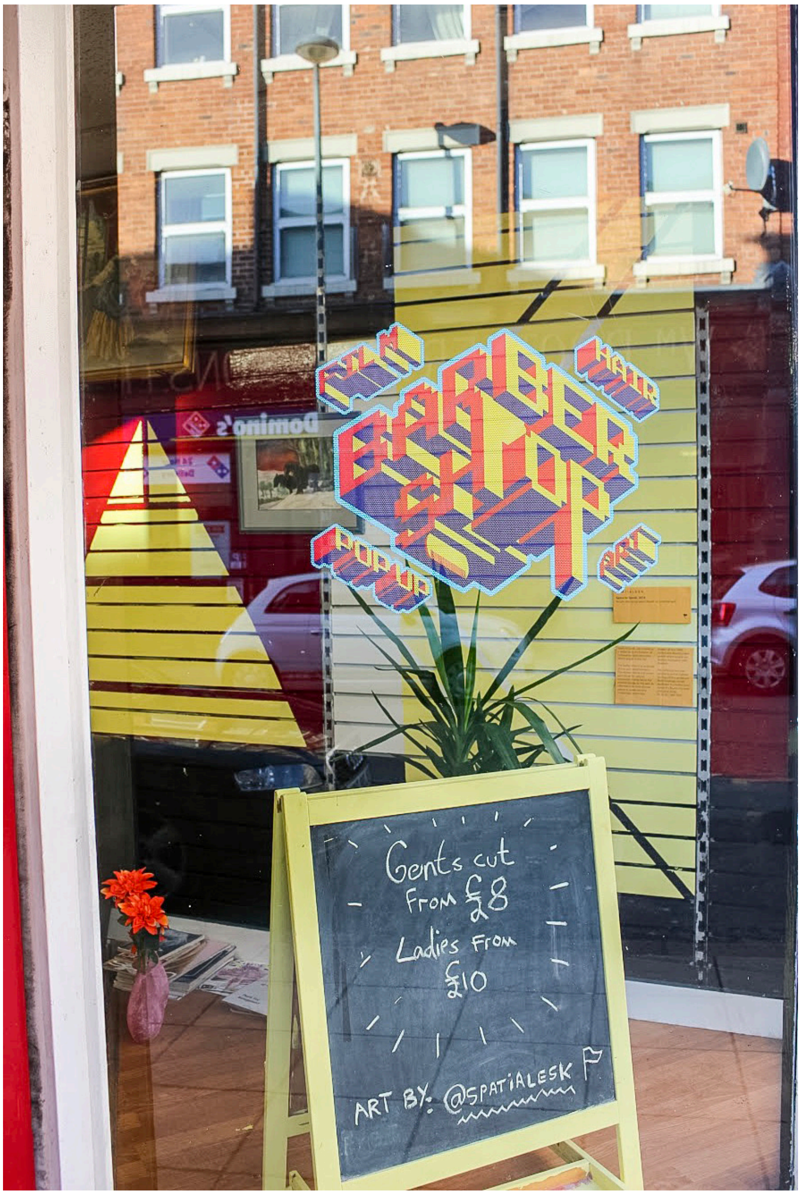


Figure 4. Photograph of shop front at The Barber Shop Gallery, Leeds (SPATIAL-ESK, 2019)

The Remix – Virtual Reality and Black Space

When I first moved to England from South Africa in the year 2000, I was fascinated by the built environment around me. This was one of the main reasons I was attracted to the world of architecture. At some deeper level however, the question that many immigrants face is not only that of belonging but also that of effecting change in their new environment. After all, it is one thing to feel at home, and quite another to rearrange it. I have long been fascinated by the ways in which various cultures and groups re-imagine spaces in the city through the application of street art, social gatherings and music. In Manchester in 2008, I was seeing the impact mobile phones had on street culture. By carrying and playing a backing track on a phone, my school friends and I could rap and perform in any space, sharing our latest creations on a bus, in a park or anywhere else we desired.

I recently moved to Toronto, where I connected with Nia Centre for the Arts, Toronto's first Black arts center. Nia Centre supports, showcases, and promotes an appreciation of arts from across the African Diaspora. As an initiative it resonates with my sense of desiring a spatial manifestation of my own African diasporic experience. Their latest project, 'The Remix', was an online exhibition seeking to explore themes of Afrofuturism through the medium of analog and digital collage. The project brings together the work of eight contemporary artists deeply engaged in the excavation of a future informed by their individual ancestral connections to the African and Caribbean diaspora and their varied interpretations of collage.

As a result of COVID-19 pandemic, public gallery viewings were no longer an option. I proposed that my skills in architecture (combined with some training in code) would allow me to create a virtual world through which these artworks would be exhibited. There were many other companies that offered a VR creation service, however I sought to architecturally develop the space in line with the themes and aspirations of the exhibition.

Therefore The Remix was established as a virtual space created to challenge conventions of exhibition. This space was coded and modeled as a spatial manifestation of the exhibition's Afrofuturist manifesto. The digital presentation combines spatial and temporal experiences marking an invitation to participate in this new imagining. The virtual worlds, in which The Remix resides, demonstrate an example of not only collaging in code but also an investigation of how the foundations of the Afrofuture can manifest. In the construction of the virtual exhibit we rejected notions of "the white cube" in every sense and challenged the ways in which a gallery can exist when it is no longer bound to physical space.

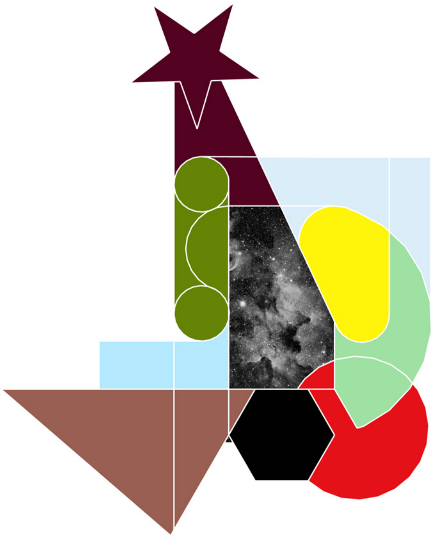


Figure 5. The Remix: Virtual Exhibition Floorplan. Each artist was given a bespoke space relating to the artwork presented (SPATIAL-ESK,2021)

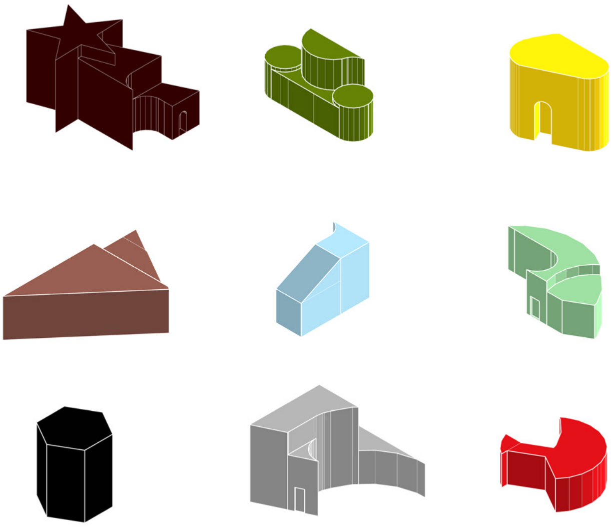
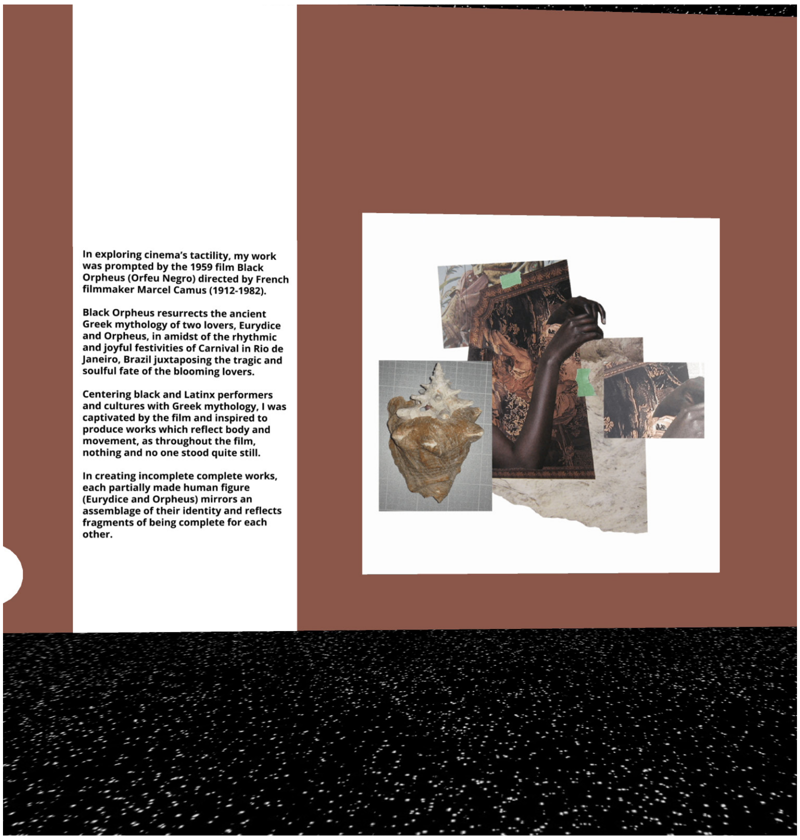


Figure 6. The Remix: Each space designed collaboratively with each artist (SPATIAL-ESK, 2021)



In exploring cinema’s tactility, my work was prompted by the 1959 film Black Orpheus (Orfeu Negro) directed by French filmmaker Marcel Camus (1912-1982).

Black Orpheus resurrects the ancient Greek mythology of two lovers, Eurydice and Orpheus, in amidst of the rhythmic and joyful festivities of Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil juxtaposing the tragic and soulful fate of the blooming lovers.

Centering black and Latinx performers and cultures with Greek mythology, I was captivated by the film and inspired to produce works which reflect body and movement, as throughout the film, nothing and no one stood quite still.

In creating incomplete complete works, each partially made human figure (Eurydice and Orpheus) mirrors an assemblage of their identity and reflects fragments of being complete for each other.

Figure 7. The Remix: Virtual exhibition artwork of artist Ghislan Timm (SPATIAL-ESK, 2021)

The exhibition also acted as an activist response to recent Black Lives Matter protests. It spatially re-interprets the infamous last words of George Floyd ‘I can’t breathe’, into a spatial and emotional inflation of expression. The exhibition floats ethereally in outer space, untethered by convention and standing independent and free.

In the same way my personal practice has acted as a satellite to the conventions of commercial practice, it maintains a vital lifeline to the optimistic architectural aspirations of my university days. Throughout this process, I have become more personally aware of contrasts which may exist between my desired way of working and my professional work environment. I encourage personal explorations of practice, since these have the opportunity to give greater personal perspective and incentive to seek like-minded individuals within the industry.

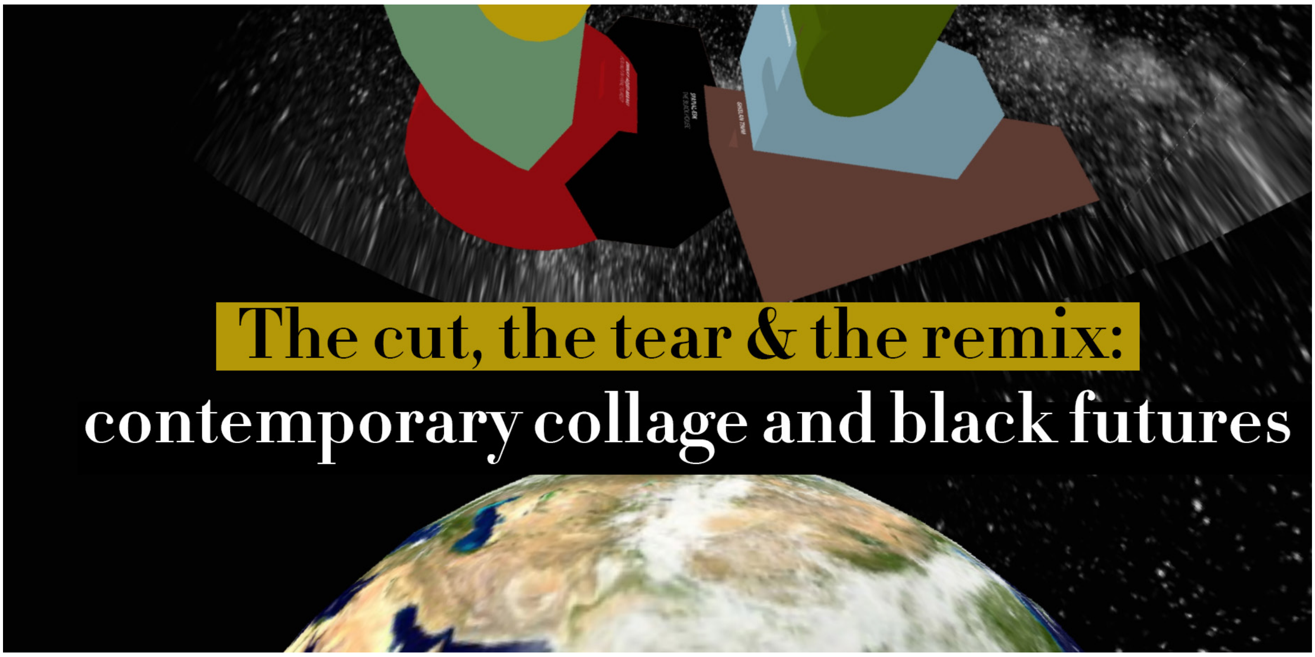

The cut, the tear & the remix:
contemporary collage and black futures

Figure 8. The Remix: Exhibition poster at McMasters Museum of Arts, Canada (SPATIAL-ESK, 2021)

I often perceived that I would establish my practice at a certain point in time when I would be most financially and professionally secure. Of course, however, we are always learning. This led to the commonly asked questions of ‘when will I have enough (money, knowledge, skill) to start my own practice?’. By establishing SPATIAL-ESK after the completion of my MArch, I was able to give validation and importance to my explorations, however small. As a result, the term practice was given its fuller meaning as the ongoing development of architecture’s outworking. I believe therefore that the expression of this outworking is truly enhanced by individual cultural experience. However, this, like all forms of practice, must be tested and developed through the practice of architecture.

By drawing on all aspects of our cultural upbringing, in my case my Zambian heritage, we can allow the face of architecture to change. It can look more like you. I don't simply mean the skin tone of the architectural image but also its voice, its personality and manner of relating. Whilst I chose to create an independent studio for this exploration, I also have case studies which can suggest the benefits of these alternatives to wider architectural practice.

Biography

Samuel Kapasa is a registered architect and graduate of The University of Sheffield School of Architecture. He founded his studio SPATIAL-ESK to explore new modes of architectural practice. The name of the studio reflects an undefined approach to architecture which grows in definition from project to project. His studio promotes freshness, spontaneity and surprise through the bold combination of cultural, experimental and spatial themes. Furthermore, he combines art, design and technology to create new and powerful spatial experiences in both physical and virtual realities. He is currently based in Toronto, Canada. More information about his ongoing practice can be found at: www.spatialesk.com.

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Housing: A Racial Equality Issue

Zoe Lord

Preface

My BA Architectural Studies dissertation, ‘London in 2050: The future of the city’s social housing, property price and gentrification,’ interrogates contemporary issues in the UK’s housing sector. Using contemporary society’s current trajectory to forecast a view of the city in the future, this projection serves as a tool to amplify the issues facing the working class, specifically ethnic minorities in London, in the present day.

This article serves as a reflection on the issues and recommendations outlined in the dissertation, reinforcing its connection to architectural practice and education. Housing is integral to societal relationships of inequality, influencing many factors affecting quality of life. However, there is currently only a small minority of research and awareness on the topic.

The issues of social housing, property prices and gentrification are dissected, before being translated into recommendations and actions. The built environment profession plays a key influence on people’s quality of life, and if this relationship is recognised the profession can take significant steps to rectify current inequalities.

Research Methods

The issues and recommendations proposed in this article are structured by: a literature review, a conversation with researcher David Robinson and interviews with five housing professionals who work in Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) housing associations. The interviewees' scope of expertise ranged from the history to governance and policy in London.

It is important to address early on my own position as a white researcher: I come from a background of privilege.[1] The system that I critique disadvantages ethnic minorities but largely benefits me, which might suggest a bias in my approach. However, it is equally important to utilise my position of privilege to highlight racial disparities. The onus should not be on those who have suffered to research and dismantle issues of race, but on those who have played a part in these issues. Donna Haraway describes the notion of 'Situated Knowledge,' arguing that knowledge is always influenced by the individual producing it.[2] Haraway argues for a different kind of objectivity, where each perspective has a unique value, and the more perspectives that are offered, the better we can understand the subject. As far as possible, ethnic minority voices have been amplified on the topic and a critical view has been taken of my own views and those of other white researchers.

This article uses the terms "ethnic minorities" and "BAME," recognising that there is tension around currently available terminology. These terms generalise the intersections within the category, and arguably uphold whiteness as the norm. Despite this, these terms are used to conform to the sources and statistics used in the study, simultaneously acknowledging their problematic nature.

Introduction: The Context of Housing

With the increasing visibility of the Black Lives Matter movement, it is critical to refocus on racial disparities, but little has been done in the housing sector to acknowledge demands for social change. Social scholars such have investigated how white privilege operates in the UK, referencing events such as Brexit.[3] Other scholars, such as Nirmal Puwar, touch upon whiteness in 'space' through examples of entering parliament, immigration or being subject to surveillance.[4] However, the issue of 'space,' in terms of housing, has been under examined. This article attempts to contribute to a raised awareness of the way the housing system operates racially.

The interviews conducted underline how, despite a raised awareness of racial discrimination in the housing sector and across society, ethnic minorities continually face unique obstacles. Due to recent austerity policies, widespread economic inequalities have worsened, resulting in social divisions and a masking of the racial dimension of their collective struggle. Class issues have become largely synonymous with race issues, and understanding of the two in relation to housing has become obscured. This provokes a need to create a critical awareness of the scale and

[1] Kalwant Bhopal, White Privilege: The Myth of a Post-Racial Society, (Bristol: Policy Press, 2018); Reni Eddo-Lodge, Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018).

[2] Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,' Feminist Studies, 14.3, (1988), pp. 575-99.

[3] Bhopal, White Privilege: The Myth of a Post-Racial Society; Eddo-Lodge, Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race.

[4] Nirmal Puwar, Space Invaders (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004).

importance of housing issues for all, and the distinct issues facing ethnic minorities today.

GRENFELL
FOREVER IN
OUR HEARTS

[Figure 1: Grenfell Tower]

Housing's Contemporary Issues

Social Housing and the Working Class

The 2017 Grenfell Tower tragedy highlighted the disproportionate effect of housing issues on ethnic minorities. Wider forces of structural racism within the UK cause ethnic minorities to be more vulnerable to poverty, and this makes them more likely to be social tenants.

Social housing supply is diminishing at an accelerating rate, aided by policies such as the 1979 Right-to-Buy programme. The aspiration of home ownership has become extensive, and governmental priorities reflect this ideology. In turn, social tenants are stigmatised, and their homes are left to disrepair.[5] Governmental attitudes are grounded in racial discourse: social estates are tarred as crime-ridden areas which need to be “cleansed,” and are targeted by remedial action in the form of regeneration, policing strategies and surveillance. The white working class is identified as a distinct racial group, also at risk due to the stigmatisation of this tenure, but are arguably still able to leverage their white privilege over ethnic minorities.[6] Consequently, divisions have grown within the working class, while the collective suffers the violent consequences of these racialized perceptions and policies, such as in the case of Grenfell. However, despite the sectoral issues, racism in the housing system is not exclusive to social housing.

Property Price, Poverty and Homelessness

David Robinson's work on racism and housing highlights the complex and historical issues within our housing system.[7] The trajectory of housing inequalities is related to steady processes of financialization, commodification and deregulation. The evolution of housing over the last 60 years has led to contemporary inequalities in the system, and these processes are rooted in racial discourse. House prices have been bonded with economic growth as opposed to affordability, priming housing as an investment opportunity as opposed to a home.

The Private Rental Sector (PRS) inflates as homeownership becomes less attainable, and ethnic minorities are vulnerable to poor conditions and unethical landlord practices. Due to their often-limited eligibility for social housing and their overrepresentation in insecure, low paid occupations, such as in the gig economy or the public services, ethnic minorities

[5] Ryan Powell and David Robinson, ‘Housing, Ethnicity and Advanced Marginality in England,’ in Class, Ethnicity and State in the Polarized Metropolis, ed. by John Flint and Ryan Powell. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 187-212; Jessica Perera, The London Clearances: Race, Housing and Policing (London: Institute of Race Relations, 2019), <https://irr.org.uk/app/uploads/2019/02/The-London-Clearances-Race-Housing-and-Policing.pdf> [accessed 11 May 2021].

[6] Bhopal, White Privilege: The Myth of a Post-Racial Society.

are commonly left to the low-end PRS.[8] Deregulation can lead to life-threatening housing conditions, and the lack of protections for tenants often leaves them on the streets if they cannot afford their rent.

The issues of poverty and homelessness are contrasted with the presence of the 'super-rich' in London, and each group influences the fabric of the city.[9] The threat of shanty towns rises [Fig 2.], simultaneous with the presence of gated communities: these two stark identities demonstrate the large rift between the classes in the UK.[10] However, largely due to a change in governmental level thinking on equality, ameliorative approaches which address and identify inequalities have decreased, moving towards a narrative of who is deserving and who is not.[11]

Displacement and Gentrification

Displacement and gentrification threaten the working-class population and have a disproportionate effect on ethnic minorities, such as in mega-urban projects like the London 2012 Olympics [Fig 3.].[12] While these projects intend to reinvigorate the local economy by encouraging middle-class reurbanisation, these "mixed-tenure" developments often result in the opposite outcome. Low-income residents are often not considered. They struggle to afford their rent, and move – either to other deprived areas, creating stronger borders of segregation, or further afield – compromising their access to employment, health services and support networks.[13]

Stemming from historical overtly racist initiatives concerning "slum clearance" and "inner cities," regeneration policies have since evolved into more sophisticated concepts such as "social mixing."[14] Despite efforts becoming more covertly racialised, their roots are still firmly grounded within racial discourse and result in what has been critiqued as social cleansing.

An Alternate Future: Recommendations

There is still opportunity to salvage the dire issues with housing, and steps must be taken to prevent the loss of more life.

Understanding the Significance of Housing: An Equality Issue

The UK's political, social and economic climate has amalgamated into an unprecedented crisis where housing has become a site of tension. Housing is difficult to obtain (good quality housing even more so) but this

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7 Powell and Robinson, 'Housing, Ethnicity and Advanced Marginality in England.'

8 Powell and Robinson, 'Housing, Ethnicity and Advanced Marginality in England.'

9 Rowland Atkinson, 'Limited exposure: Social concealment, mobility and engagement with public space by the super-rich in London', Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space, 48.7, (2015), 1302–1317, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0308518X15598323>.

10 Ellis Woodman, 'How Will Britain's Cities Cope With Migrant Shanty Towns?', Architects' Journal, (2016), <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/opinion/how-will-britains-cities-cope-with-migrant-shanty-towns> [accessed 19 April 2021].

11 Powell and Robinson, 'Housing, Ethnicity and Advanced Marginality in England.'

12 Phil Cohen and Paul Watt, London 2012 and the Post-Olympics City: A Hollow Legacy? (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

13 Paul Watt, 'Social Housing and Urban Renewal: An Introduction', in Social Housing and Urban Renewal ed. by Paul Watt and Peer Smets (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2017), 1-36, <https://doi-org.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/978-1-78714-124-720171004> [accessed 10 May 2021]

14 Juliet Carpenter, 'Regeneration and the Legacy of Thatcherism', Metropolitics, (2014), <https://metropolitics.org/Regeneration-and-the-Legacy-of.html> [accessed 10 May 2021].

issue is rarely understood in its implications for wider social justice. How we inhabit cities is significant in its indication of wider relationships of inequality and power between individuals, groups and at an institutional level. Housing can be viewed as a gateway through which we can access quality of life. The scale and effect of housing issues should be considered at the forefront of debate over increasing inequality, demanding change and recognition to avoid tragic outcomes.

Housing must be brought into broader conversations of equality and politics generally. Our society has moved on from postwar perceptions of housing as a fundamental human right towards a privilege granted only to those who can afford it. Housing determines our access to employment, health services, transport links, facilities for worship, social communities and much more. Hence, poor quality housing has been linked to lower educational attainment, lower life expectancy and poorer health.[15] Contemporary perceptions of housing are singular, and while most of the population recognise the difficulty of entering the market, rarely is housing understood as interwoven with many facets of everyday life.

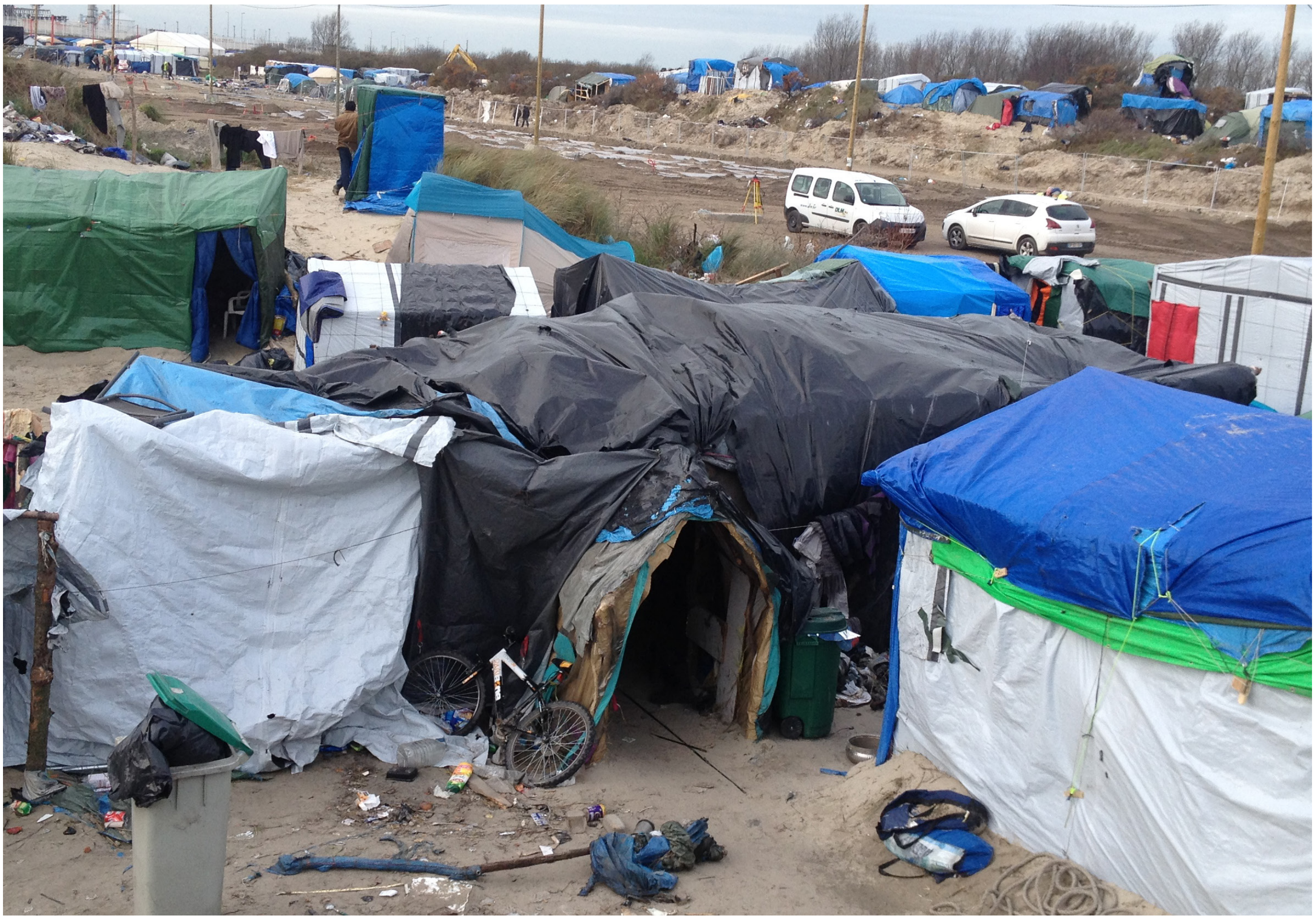

Figure 2: Calais Refugee Camp, dubbed ‘Shanty Town’

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[15] Michael Marmot and others, The Marmot Review 10 Years On (London: Institute of Health Equity, 2020), <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/marmot-review-10-years-on> [accessed 4 May 2021].

Figure 3: The Olympic Park

Varying from the societal, institutional and individual level, the significance of housing must be recognised. Architects must acknowledge the part we play in enacting social justice: as designers we are able to influence the distribution of resources, the quality of people's living space and the affordability of housing. While often the profession feels helpless in our ability to act independently of governmental and developer priorities, we can salvage our ability to act autonomously.

It is also important that housing is treated less as a siloed issue and viewed more broadly. In conversations around the BAME community's suffering at the hands of systemic racism, housing must be understood as influencing racial inequality. Wider forces of institutional racism must be recognised at the governmental level. The recent report on racial equality has been a step forward in recognising systems of racial inequality in the UK, but its references to housing are minimal.[16] In the Grenfell inquiry, race continues to go unacknowledged, and governmental accountability is necessary to progress.[17]

BAME Representation

Consulting ethnic minorities in key decisions and improving representation on housing association boards and other decision-making bodies would aid in ensuring inclusive housing policies to drive positive outcomes. Significantly, BAME students suffer when entering architectural

[16] Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 'The Report', gov.uk, 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities > [accessed 14 May 2021].

[17] Leslie Thomas, '"We can't breathe" - Oral statement by Professor Leslie Thomas QC to the Grenfell Inquiry on behalf of bereaved, residents and survivors', Garden Court Chambers, 2020 <https://www.gardencourtchambers.co.uk/news/we-cant-breathe-oral-statement-by-professor-leslie-thomas-qc-to-the-grenfell-inquiry-on-behalf-of-bereaved-residents-and-survivors > [accessed 11 November 2020].

education and progressing to full qualification, and BAME architects continue to experience racism in the workplace.[18]

Cultural Coherence

There is a need for housing professionals to become aware of the differing needs and vulnerabilities of marginalised groups. The importance of recognising cultural values, such as the norms of multi-generational living, has become increasingly clear in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.[19] Ethnic minorities have suffered devastating loss of life for intersecting reasons, some of which can be linked to their housing situations. Ethnic minority households are more likely to be overcrowded, making them susceptible to more health conditions and creating obstacles for their ability to self-isolate.[20] Representation in the built environment profession will aid design for these groups and help to prevent further unnecessary tragedies. Additionally, diversifying the architectural curriculum will encourage designers to consider how we can creatively respond to the varying needs of different groups.

Societal Perception

The Right-to-Buy policy ushered in the beginning of the idolisation of homeownership. This has had ramifications for the social housing sector, which is now rife with classed and racialised stigma. The overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in social housing calls for a revitalisation of the sector, providing better options for multi-generational living and a better standard of social housing and maintenance. Our country's cultural perception of renting can evolve to accept different ways of living outside of home ownership. The stigmatisation of the tenure has resulted in the neglect and decline of social estates, posing a threat to ethnic minorities' health and livelihoods. Perceptions of social housing have become singular and these narratives have become mainstream in the media and policy.

Market-rule

National legislation is required to ensure that rent and property price are tied to true affordability and income as opposed to market value. The housing market has become oversaturated by investors and second-home buyers while many struggle to enter the market at all due to housing being regarded as a commodity or asset.

While property prices affect most of the population, the consequences are felt most severely by ethnic minorities.[21] Ethnic minorities are consistently pushed into low-end private rental sector properties and areas, which detrimentally impact their quality of life. This shift can be rectified by empowering local organisations, working collaboratively with local communities and adopting measures of investment-return that consider factors other than property price or rental income. We should adopt a long term systems view on housing, understanding the intertwined effects on local economy, infrastructure and access to employment, education or health services.

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[18] Richard Waite, 'Architecture is systemically racist. So what is the profession going to do about it?', Architects' Journal (2020), <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/architecture-is-systemically-racist-so-what-is-the-profession-going-to-do-about-it> [accessed 20 June 2021].

[19] Michael Marmot and others, 'Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review', Institute of Health Equity, (2020), <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review> [accessed 4 May 2021].

[20] Marmot, 'Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review'.

[21] Paul Cheshire, 'Property Millionaires: The Growing Housing Divide', Santander Mortgages, 2020, <https://www.santander.co.uk/assets/s3fs-public/documents/property_millionaires.pdf> [accessed 19 April 2021].

Regulation

The housing sector – particularly the private rental sector – has become immensely deregulated, leaving vulnerable tenants in poor conditions at no consequence to the landlord. Too often ethnic minorities are pushed into the low-end private rental sector due to a lack of funds or eligibility problems due to migrant status. Even the minimum standards are not enforced, and the processes to become a registered landlord are insufficient. A duty of care must be awarded to landlords and dire levels of overcrowding, issues with maintenance, and other problems should be unacceptable.

Conclusion

The trends identified in social housing, property price and gentrification disproportionately affect ethnic minorities in the UK. The ethnic minority experience has been overlooked as research has been dominated by a classed view of reality, despite distinct intersections within working-class experience. While the whole population has suffered the housing crisis, the white working class are able to leverage their privilege, and this ability has not previously been identified in mainstream literature.

The recommendations for sector-wide change to address inequalities in the housing system argue for a recognition of racial disparities in political discourse. At the larger scale, we have identified a need for more representation, an evolution of societal perception and legislative change. We recommend that, given the impact of housing on many facets of life, the discussion on housing shifts to a debate on equality and empowers the architectural profession to become more culturally coherent.

The topics covered in this article are intentionally broad, however there is a wide range of topics that can be dissected through research and future design: the design of social housing and the potential for multi-generational living, solutions for affordable housing design, the connection between housing and health outcomes, and how we can avoid gentrification while developing at a large, fast paced scale.

Despite the need for radical change, the study concludes that the future can change for the better, and that there is still time to reform the housing sector into a more equal system that benefits all.

Post-Script: 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action'

This article has highlighted a need to understand architecture as a social profession. SSoA's 'Call to Action' identifies the interconnected nature of architecture as one that influences people and communities. This article responds to the demands to diversify architectural history and explore the relationship between architecture and power.

This process fundamentally begins with education and representation, with the 'Call to Action' explicitly referencing the desperate need for the architectural profession to reflect the diversity of the society within which it resides. However, this article proposes that as architects we are capable of more.

The act of architectural design is intrinsically linked with the distribution of resources and the everyday experiences of people within the built environment, and therefore they have a large role to play in spatial disparities. The issue of housing interrogated in this article underlines that housing influences countless aspects of our quality of life, from our access to education, employment, and healthcare to our social support systems. Housing inequalities in the UK have been highlighted as inherently racialised, and architects must become educated and aware of our ability to dismantle these inequalities through design.

Consequently, this article suggests that as part of the diversification of the architectural curriculum, architects should be encouraged to view issues of housing design as opportunities to dismantle racial inequalities.

Biography

Throughout my undergraduate study, I became deeply interested in the relationship between the built environment and societal relationships of power. Beginning with a focus on social housing and the sector's history and politics, I began to understand the inequalities at play. Having sparked a passion for research and theory, in my final year I changed course to 'Architectural Studies', allowing me to develop my interests further, studying modules with a focus on race, diversity and health in cities.
The built environment's power to influence societal inequalities is rarely recognised, and it is important that this power is brought into mainstream debate.

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Studio Juggernaut

Jane Tankard, Farid Abdalla, Ben Brakspear, Safia Cragg, Sarah Daoudi, Nouha Hansen, Rim Kalsoum, Ali Montero, Hafsa Syed.

Please scan or click the code to access the film.

To testify is to articulate the hegemonic silences that we experience but do not speak. To listen is to bear witness to these political narratives, a necessary ethical responsibility that enables us to create a space of agency and transformation. The modernist construct of educational space and the architecture profession's embedded corporeal sense of the student as tabula rasa obfuscates and denies not only identity, cultural values and meaning, but also the realities of daily life for students when outside of the university studio space.

The film we present is a response to 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action'. It represents a fragment in a collaborative journey which has manifested in a series of online discussions, creative thinking workshops and film making focused on architectural study, collective practice and the relationship between active listening, reciprocity and commonality. Central to the work is the notion of architectural education as being more than transactional, and instead a narrative of personal and social transformation supported by safe, supportive and enabling spaces.
We acknowledge that the condition of being "the other" manifests in marginalisation and silencing and that through listening, we may be able to construct spaces of equity and agency.

Our methodology evolved through a collaborative process that began with conversations about the nature of the institution and issues of colonialism, race, gender and class in architectural education and the profession.
We recorded every meeting, which due to Covid -19 restrictions, were all on Zoom. We began with conversations around the issues faced, in a search for non-hierarchical structures in teaching and the potential

of understanding the studio space as a construct similar to the notion of “home”. We defined a group of questions from these discussions that helped voice individual experience; each member of the group wrote responses to these prompts, which they read as testimonies. The work has become a catalyst in wider contexts, opening conversations on how we in education can enable cultural inclusivity and learn the value and potential of individual experience.

The texts exposed some unexpected overlaps in our experience and cultural connections and the making of this document has now generated ideas of how we might collaborate across disciplines and educational structures.

Those taking part have studied architecture or architectural humanities and represent experiences at a number of institutions. They are at different stages of training or practising and not all have chosen familiar career routes. The opinions, individual and not necessarily shared, represent a cross section of experience of architectural education in the UK. But the value of listening is a value common to all.

Biographies

Studio Juggernaut is an open research group, based at the University of Westminster School of Architecture and Cities exploring mechanisms for reciprocity in architectural education and practice.

Jane Tankard is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Westminster and ARB/RIBA registered Architect. Her third year Undergraduate BA Architecture design studio, which she teaches with tutor Thomas Grove, explores the relationship between identity, politics and architectural practice. Issues of gender, race and colonialism are central to their work.

Working in roles aimed at positively impacting local communities, Farid Abdalla is an advocate for marginalised people and a community development practitioner, prioritising quality architecture for all. Working in the UK and internationally, he believes in the power of lived experience and his own experiences of social housing has informed his intersectional approach to environmental transformational design.

Ben Brakspear is a 29-year-old from Manchester working as a freelance Art Director and Set Designer in London. His background in architecture (RIBA parts 1 and 2) and construction (self-build) has a large part to play in informing the design process and aesthetic of his current work in production design.

Safia Cragg, an English and History graduate, is Head of Networks and Operations at a national charity. With over 15 years' experience working in the voluntary sector, Safia supports partnerships of cross-sector senior leaders to think differently about complex problems, applying a systems-thinking lens to bring about societal and cultural shifts needed to create inclusive and equitable places.

Sarah Daoudi is a Part 2 architecture student studying at the University of Westminster. She has experience in designing religious architecture at MakeSpace, as well as in community-led design at MUF architecture/art. Recently, she has been working on creating a short documentary about the Truman Brewery development at Brick Lane with Nabiha Qadir.

Rim Kalsoum is a RIBA Part 3 student who teaches first year Architecture at the University of Westminster. Currently working for the practice Architecture Doing Place, she is a founder member of Muslim Women in Architecture, and is active in promoting inclusivity in the profession.

Having worked at Part 1 for Amos Goldreich Architecture, Ali Montero is currently a freelance designer, set-design assistant in London and student external advisor to the University of Westminster. Interested in inclusive, intersectional and artistically-minded approaches to design, her hands-on attitude has manifested in recently learning carpentry and timber frame construction methods.

Currently working in the US as an architectural assistant, Hafsa Syed spent her first Part 1 year out working in Pakistan, archiving the histories and technologies of local vernacular architecture. She will begin her studies for her Part 2 at the AA in the autumn.

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‘Independent Thought’: Withdrawal Towards our Self-Rule and Freedom

Tilo Amhoff, Vanessa Nkumbula, Vivian Wall

We, Tilo Amhoff (European), Vanessa Nkumbula (African), and Vivian Wall (Caribbean) would like to introduce you to the ’Independent Thought’ reading group at the School of Architecture and Design (SoAD) at the University of Brighton. ‘Independent Thought’ was a student and staff forum for open debate on questions of race and decolonisation, concepts we critically investigated.[1] This paper is a compilation of the findings of the reading group, written predominantly in three voices, but inclusive of the many diverse voices of the reading group itself. The first voice speaks on the African experience of decolonisation. It provides the paper with an internal perspective of the matter, rather than the external investigations of onlookers. The second voice speaks on methods of adopting antiracist pedagogies. It explores how academic institutions and staff can approach the process whilst outlining the realities that they will face. The third voice speaks on achieving a decolonised curriculum. It navigates how the attitudes, experiences, and identities of the student body can be acknowledged and how the students take a very active role in curriculum design. The three voices stand united in the belief that a more fruitful architectural education can be achieved upon transcending the colonial legacies and inequalities perpetuated across the discipline.

We first got together around module assignments in a typical institutional setting and relation, but soon realised a shared interest and desire for change. As there was no space for our collective ambition within the institution and the curriculum, we created one in the form of a reading group, as an extracurricular activity somewhat tangential to our institution. We acknowledge that we come with different backgrounds, experiences, ambitions and positions to this group, and that we are doing different emotional labour. Hence, we always ask ourselves:

What is our position? Where are we speaking from? With whom are we speaking? And to whom are we talking? What is the language we speak? And what is the tone in which we speak? Who will listen to our voice?

In solidarity with the students at the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA) and in response to their critical document 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action', we are working towards lasting and meaningful change in the curriculum and for a critical pedagogy of architecture that is decentralised and pluralistic, that will integrate other modes of categorisation, logics and processes into the content and methods of research. SSoA students' situation, their lived experiences and struggles as reflected in the different accounts in the document, are very much shared by the diverse international and national student body at SoAD at the University of Brighton. In our institution, the architecture course is the most diverse (although less so in the staff body) and we face the same challenges in terms of representation, structure and pedagogy. The Race Equality Charter and the Inclusive Professional Practice working groups are the two current institutional working groups set up to address systemic racism within our institution and enable structural change. Within the architectural humanities, however, the aim is not only to internationalise and diversify representation, resources, methods and examples, but to work towards a decolonisation of research that takes seriously the legacy of colonialism. Moreover, we recognise the need for a different pedagogy, beyond the disciplining function of the institution, that opens up forms of assessment to work beyond the academic conventions.

In the reading group we emphasised the importance of a person's social and political identity, the importance of one's lived experience for identity-based politics, and the role that architecture, the city and the built environment play in materialising, articulating and challenging identity politics. The aspects of a person's identity can be race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, disability and age, and they often combine to modes of discrimination or privilege. This intersectional approach, as developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in her essay 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Colour', considers all the factors that apply to an individual in combination, rather than considering each factor in isolation.[2] Crenshaw demonstrates the importance of addressing race and gender together, as women of colour are marginalised by white women in feminist politics that tackle sexism, and by Black men in antiracist politics that tackle racism. She argues that although racism and sexism often overlap in people's lives, they seldom do in feminist and anti-racist practices, and hence their individual politics proceed as if these experiences occur in exclusive terrains. The ignoring of these differences

[1] We would like to thank the members of the 'Independent Thought' reading group – Shade Abdul, Katy Beinart, Bruna Borges Joaquim, Joe De Kadt, Dhruv Gulabchande, Úna Haran, Angel Harvey-Ideozu, Mia Henderson, Lance Kangethe, Peter Marsh, Elliot Mason, Clarissa O'Driscoll – who have contributed to the thinking and arguments of this paper in more ways than we can acknowledge. This paper is also yours.

[2] Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Colour', Stanford Law Review, 43:6 (1991), 1241-1299 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[3] Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins', p. 1299.

for identity politics often leads to tensions between groups rather than to solidarity, which affects their strength. In contrast, Crenshaw argues that:

> Intersectionality may provide the means to deal with other marginalisations as well. […] Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in constructing group politics.[3]

This sentiment of intersectionality is echoed within our reading group.

I, Vanessa Nkumbula, focus on the African mind in my essay 'Byachikuingwa: The Journey to the African Mind', with key references to *Decolonising the Mind* by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and *Decolonising the African Mind* by Chinweizu Ibekwe.[4] 'Byachikuingwa', meaning 'withdrawal towards our self-rule and freedom,' advocates for the accumulation of knowledge of oneself that leads to the mental withdrawal from Eurocentric thinking to advance academia, in this case architecture, in our favour. Byachikuingwa attempts to take control of the narrative of decolonisation, encompassing the experience of Africans through an ongoing process of reclamation, by creating a term that placed the colonised, in this case Africans, at the centre of their decolonisation. The term is a combination of different words and voices from selected African countries that encompass the words 'withdrawal' and 'freedom'. The aim of the concept formation was to advocate for the gathering of contextual African knowledge that leads to withdrawal from Western trains of knowledge production to advance academics in their favour. In addition to withdrawal, the term continues to seek control of the narrative of decolonisation by championing Africans' lived experiences in a continuous process of self-determination.

In our reading group we continued to demand this process of reclamation by not only exploring but decentring decolonial discourse through the inclusion of multicultural knowledge and practices from various contexts, from Mary Graham's 'Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews' in Australia to Amawtay Wasi's 'Intercultural University of Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples' in Ecuador.[5] Throughout the year, the group has questioned language, syntax and semantics and how they have been used to maintain imperial and postcolonial hierarchies, relationships and logic, particularly through institutions. For instance, in architecture the ongoing use of 'primitive' and 'vernacular' in relation to non-European architecture.

In *Africa's Tarnished Name*, Chinua Achebe highlights that 'the point is to alert us to the image burden that Africa bears today and make us recognise how that image has moulded contemporary attitudes, including perhaps our own, to that continent.'[6] Achebe goes on to say that in order to change this, the world 'needs to hear Africa speak for itself after a lifetime of hearing Africa spoken about by others.'[7] While the text is explicit in its reference to the African context, these sentiments are shared by Ariella Aïsha Azoulay in her 'Open Letter to Sylvia Wynter: Unlearning the Disappearance of Jews from Africa'.[8] In her letter, Azoulay critiques the use of 'Judeo-Christian' in Sylvia Wynter's '1492: A New World View', exploring the origins and use of the term in relation to her Arab Jewish heritage.[9] She ends the text by inviting Sylvia Wynter and others to begin and continue the conversation towards a new world view that references various perspectives and interests, not unlike Walter D. Mignolo's call for a pluriverse and multipolar world.[10]

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[4] Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Decolonising the Mind (Oxford: James Currey, 1986); Chinweizu Ibekwe, Decolonising the African Mind (Lagos: Pero Press, 1987).

[5] See Mary Graham, 'Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews', Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology, 3:2 (1999), 181-194 <https://brill.com/view/journals/wo/3/2/article-p105_3.xml?language=en> [accessed 12 October 2021]; Amawtay Wasi, 'The Closing of the Intercultural University of Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples', UNPFIP Network < http://unpfip.blogspot.com/2013/12/the-closing-of-intercultural-univeristy.html> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[6] Chinua Achebe, Africa's Tarnished Name (Milton Keynes: Penguin Books, 2018), p. 46.

[7] Achebe, Africa's Tarnished Name, p. 16.

I, Tilo Amhoff, when introducing race as a subject matter in the architectural humanities modules at the University of Brighton some years ago, was hoping to create a space that allows questions of race to be addressed in our architecture programmes. In a recent lecture a colleague and I were asked by one of our students:

> 'How do you, as white people, feel teaching a course that does not support and/or accommodate people of colour? Additionally, my knowledge of ancestry was stripped from me during the transatlantic slave trade.'
>
> 'Why did North America and/or Europe not accommodate the migrants of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and South America, considering they purged these countries of their natural resources, exploited their cultures and beliefs, and destroyed their homes?'

As Philip S.S. Howard asserts: 'the white anti-racist worker, despite their opposition to whiteness, is still privileged by that whiteness.'[11] Moreover, in a recent Racial Literacy Training for staff at the School of Architecture and Design (SoAD), *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Sala was recommended to address one's own complicity.[12] This investigation of whiteness and white supremacy was also vital for the 'Unlearning Whiteness' statement from the Black Faculty of the School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University, in support of 'On the Futility of Listening', the statement of the Black Student Alliance.[13] In the statement the Black Faculty also centre 'unlearning whiteness', the 'understanding of anti-black racism through a deep analysis and investigation of whiteness and white supremacy.'[14]

In the reading group we explore academic literature, conceptual frameworks, and modes of theorisation that can be translated across cultural and intellectual contexts, and that can reposition the connections between a global context of our disciplines and our understanding of it. In that respect, the reading group aims to open up questions around decolonial thinking in relation to and across territorial and disciplinary boundaries. Moreover, at a time in which students are often encouraged to be the consumers of their education, the reading group is a vital reminder of a potential in which students are instead the producers of their education, critiquing the education they are presented with and, either independently and/or together with staff, developing alternative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary modes of learning. The reading group builds on the work of previous excellent research on space, race and architecture by Yat Ming Loo (University Nottingham), Ana María León (University of Michigan), Huda Tayob and Suzanne Hall (LSE) and Tania Sengupta (UCL), to name just a few. As an exploratory platform, the reading group also has the potential to be a working group for the co-design of the curriculum at the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Brighton. We work to make changes to the architectural humanities' core curriculum for the next academic year and to co-design a more specific curriculum on modernity/coloniality for an elective module.

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[8] See Ariella Aïsha Azouley, 'Open Letter to Sylvia Winter', The Funambulist, 30 (2020), 22-29 https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/reparations/open-letter-to-sylvia-wynter-unlearning-the-disappearance-of-jews-from-africa-by-ariella-aisha-azoulay> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[9] See Sylvia Winter, '1492: A New World View', in Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas, ed. by Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), pp. 5-28.

[10] Walter D. Mignolo, 'On Pluriversality and Multipolar World Order: Decoloniality after Decolonization; Dewesternization after the Cold War', in Constructing the Pluriverse: The Geopolitics of Knowledge, ed. by Bernd Reiter (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 90–116 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv11smf4w.8> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[11] Phillip S.S. Howard, 'On Silence and Dominant Accountability: A Critical Anticolonial Investigation of the Antiracism Classroom', in Anti-Colonialism and Education: The Politics of Resistance, ed. by George J. Sefa Dei and Arlo Kempf (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2006), p. 49.

[12] Layla Sala, Me and White Supremacy (London: Quercus Books, 2020).

[13] Black Student Alliance, 'On the Futility of Listening: A Statement from the Black Student Alliance at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation [BSA+GSAPP] to the Columbia GSAPP Dean, Faculty, and Administration' <https://onthefutilityoflistening.cargo.site> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[14] Black Faculty, 'Unlearning Whiteness: A Statement from the Black Faculty of Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation' <https://unlearningwhiteness.cargo.site> [accessed 12 October 2021].

A very important concept for our reading group was the notion of 'unlearning' or 'unlearning with companions', which Ariella Aïsha Azoulay developed in her most recent book *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*. For her, 'unlearning' encompasses a variety of practices, for example, questioning our habits of studying the world through the concepts and categories of a few selected thinkers and/or relying on the state archives. This means no longer privileging the accounts of imperial agents, such as scholars, and instead using other modes, including the many refusals in people's actions. For Azoulay:

> unlearning with companions is a withdrawal from the quest for the new that drives academic disciplines and an attempt to engage with modalities, formations, actions, and voices that were brutally relegated to 'the past' and described as over, obsolete, or worthy of preservation, but not of interaction and resuscitation.[15]

This also requires us to move away from objects of study that are thought about to companions that are thought with and with whom entering the archive or museum could be imagined as a form of co-citizenship, opposing imperialism, colonialism and racial capitalism. Moreover, 'unlearning', Azoulay argues,

> is a way of assuming that what seems catastrophic today to certain groups, was already catastrophic for many other groups, groups that did not wait for critical theory to come along to understand the contours of their dispossession and the urgency of resisting it and seeking reparation.'[16]

For her, 'unlearning', moreover, is a way to rewind the idea of progressive history, and to facilitate a 'potential history, a form of being with others, both living and dead, across time, and against the separation of the past

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[15] Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism (London: Verso, 2019), p. 16.

[16] Azoulay, Potential History, p. 17.

from the present, colonized peoples from their worlds and possessions, and history from politics.'[17]

I, Vivian Wall, following Dei and Kemp ask: 'How much can be accomplished if we decide to negotiate around domination or oppression?'[18] When it comes to architectural education, it seems that the content we are taught is as filtered as the coffee that we drink. In contrast, my essay 'architectural edYOUcation' is a call for education that transcends inequality and prejudice. The essay encourages educators within the field to critically examine the content delivered within the curricula, exploring how it reflects the cultural identities, expressions and experiences of the student body.

In the Encyclopaedia Britannica the humanities are defined as 'branches of knowledge that concern themselves with human beings and their culture, or with analytic and critical methods of inquiry derived from an appreciation of human values and of the unique ability of the human spirit to express itself.'[19] However, the architectural humanities, especially in architectural education, still too often prioritise one culture (European) while denouncing the human spirit, despite all the work of colonial, postcolonial and subaltern studies.[20] In our reading group, we acknowledge that the world views of cultures beyond the European context are only scarcely represented in academic literature, with even fewer of these texts being written by scholars with lived experience of what they write. As a result, papers by authors with a cultural connection to the subject matter became prominent. In 'Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews', for example, Mary Graham discusses the attitudes of Australia's aboriginal people towards land and the human spirit.[21] She states 'that each human bears a creative and spiritual identity which still resides in land itself.'[22] Within the aboriginal's worldview, land is sacred, and human beings are seen as its custodians, not its owners. Architecture in theory and in practice is ultimately connected to land, space and people. When embarking on a mission to decolonise this field of research, indigenous perspectives are invaluable as they challenge our postcolonial relationship to the aforementioned.

Academic writing is often an unsuccessful platform for multicultural expression since present-day academia itself is bound up with colonisation. Seeking to challenge this, 'Independent Thought' became a collaborative investigation of the kaleidoscope of human experiences and expressions. The conversation centred around how these can find their place in the architectural humanities, encouraging us to question our current methods of defining academic or scholarly material and push the boundaries of its restrictive traits. For example, a common characteristic of academic material is the creation of an impersonal account of the subject matter

[17] Azoulay, Potential History, p. 43.

[18] George J. Sefa Dei, 'Introduction: Mapping the Terrain – Towards a New Politics of Resistance', in Anti-Colonialism and Education: The Politics of Resistance, ed. by George J. Sefa Dei and Arlo Kempf (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2006), pp. 1-2 (p. ?).

[19] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Humanities | Description, History, Meaning, & Facts', in Encyclopaedia Britannica <www.britannica.com/topic/humanities> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[20] See for example Dipesh Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 2000.

[21] Graham, 'Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews', 181-194.

at hand. This is justified in favour of objectivity. As this technique leaves a variety of perspectives overlooked, the group identified it as a form of exclusion which is further perpetuated in the language in which academic material is written. Writings often consist of a language imposed rather than one which was chosen. A significant example is the use of the English language, which was forced upon countless nations. Regarding it as the default within academia is an exclusive act and leaves many experiences unrepresented, especially when valuable information is lost in translation. In addition to favouring objectivity and the English language, academic language itself is very distinct and tends to be devoid of emotion. Although the intention may be to present a rational argument based on reason, it often creates content that is difficult to understand and interpret. The group sees this as a form of exclusion as the invalidation of emotion and personal experience within academia is synonymous with the invalidation of marginalised communities' perspectives and underrepresented voices within academia.

Instead, the reading group seeks to expand our modes of receiving knowledge and find ways to represent the intangible, reintroduce creative expression, and incorporate the human spirit. This transcends literature and opens us up to other forms of expression such as poetry, film, and music. For example, 'How Architecture Impacts Our Mental Health' is a deeply impactful short video in which the spoken word poet LionHeart speaks of architecture's effects on one's wellbeing.[23] We are taken to the urban context of London, as he recounts his experiences growing up in Kentish Town. This piece radically transformed our ideas of inclusivity in the architectural humanities, enabling us to hear the voice being represented, see who was speaking, and view impactful imagery alongside the powerful words being spoken. Fela Kuti's *Afrobeats* music and his performance venue The Shrine is also a great example of 'unlearning', demonstrating not only creative expression and learning 'otherwise', but importantly also reminding us of the value and importance of all the learning that happens outside the space of academia. *Afrobeats* offers education, learning and 'unlearning' through the direct and creative expressions of music, communicating the themes of Kuti's writings that centre on the injustices in Nigeria under neocolonialism and neoliberalism. Kuti also includes the intangible and the human spirit. As Dele Sosimi highlights, the performance venue was called *The Shrine* because Kuti 'asked for a minute of silence to pay homage to the ancestors and the gods.'[24]

Part of its academia's colonial legacy is the denial of access to the education that colonisation aimed to spread around the world. The establishment of schools and formal education through missionary societies in the colonies was performed with the intention of converting Africans to Christianity and teach them enough to serve in colonial

[22] Graham, 'Some Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews', p. 183.

[23] LionHeart, 'How Architecture Impacts Our Mental Health' <www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8K-M2N_Rxs> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[24] Robert Barry, 'Remembering the Shrine: Fela Kuti's Shamanic Temple and Political Soapbox', FactMag <https://www.factmag.com/2015/10/15/fela-kuti/> [accessed 12 October 2021].

societies rather than take part in it. During colonisation, for example, Trust Schools affiliated with the mines in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia were established. These schools catered to colonial settlers, and alongside those were Government Schools that catered to indigenous Zambians. Access to Trust Schools was granted to indigenous Zambians if the guardian of the child worked as office staff. The quality of education between Trust Schools and Government Schools differed so greatly that indigenous Trust School alumni had better chances of accessing further education and jobs in the colonial society. This process of constant exclusion maintains an indigenous underclass by granting limited access to historically segregated spaces. In addition, present-day access to higher education outside the African continent is further made difficult with systems such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) that is required despite students being formally educated in the English language. Aimé Césaire indicates that indigenous Africans and Asians are denied access to education, going on to say, 'the colonised man wants to move forward, and the coloniser holds things back.'[25]

Moreover, while education is now, in principle, more accessible to marginalised communities, the institution and its curricula however do not always speak to their experiences. Though eager to participate in academia, a large population from historically marginalised groups recognises this disconnection. Even though academic institutions have evolved since their inception, the content does not reflect its student body, as Vivian Wall has highlighted in her work. Clareese Hill addresses this through her own academic experience in her article 'Survival Praxis through Hood Feminism, Negritude and Poetics', in which she critiques institutional hegemonic practices that subversively discourage individuality and holistic identity.[26] Hill helps us understand that it is not hypocritical to critique academia while participating in it since we are forced to participate to survive within a postcolonial world.

Marginalised communities are often restricted in their expression of self and robbed of the ability to emote. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that much academic research is often impersonal, emotionless and unable to represent the intangible. Bearing this in mind, we are very inspired by the Transformative Pedagogies at the Graduate School of Architecture (GSA) at the University of Johannesburg, introduced by Lesley Lokko. We similarly encourage and demand an engagement with indigenous knowledge systems, cultures, people and languages. Importantly for Lokko, 'theories must be generated that are informed by life as it is lived, experienced, and understood by local inhabitants.'[27] This would involve the ongoing critique of knowledge, its location and its production. Safe Space was one of the initiatives at the GSA, and for us stood as a good example of intertwining conversations about race and identity with other forms of expression, often more performative, within the curriculum.[28] These conversations also inform how students approach their design projects.[29] The *Transformative Pedagogies* creates a space for these conversations and expressions. Safe Space also speaks to us about navigating the space of the institution, in contrast to the Intercultural University of Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples *Amawtay Wasi* in Ecuador, which was shut down in 2013.[30]

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[25] Aimé Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1972), p. 46.

[26] Clareese Hill, 'Survival Praxis through Hood Feminism, Negritude and Poetics', Architecture and Culture, 9:2 (2021), 238-248 (p.241) <DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/20507828.2021.1879460> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[27] Lesley Lokko, 'A minor majority', arq: Architecture Research Quarterly, 21:4 (2017), 387-392, (p. 389) <DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1359135518000076> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[28] Lokko, 'A minor majority,' p. 390.

In conclusion, in the ‘Independent Thought’ reading group we argue for the architectural humanities to be more subjective, to allow for more personal accounts, to be based on one’s own lived experience and expressions of individuality. This in turn would also mean to promote a greater diversity of languages and oral traditions, including Creole languages, and to allow for emotive responses and accounts. We argue for writing that could incorporate lived and bodily sensory experiences, greater diversity of methods and media, alternative forms of creative practice, the use of visual narratives in the architectural humanities, and the power of spoken word and music performances.

As we see decolonisation as an ever-changing – and, we also felt, never-ending – process and struggle, one that is very fluid, dynamic and impossible to achieve in a linear fashion, the reading group could only ever be a small beginning. The process of decolonisation must be continuous and continued in order to counter the ongoing recolonisation processes in academia and beyond. We therefore named our reading group ‘Independent Thought’, referring on the one hand to the decolonisation processes of the Independence Movements and, on the other hand, to the ambitions of critical thinking. The name ‘Independent Thought’ also conveys our own specific ambition of working towards decolonisation, the ‘withdrawal towards our self-rule and freedom’, without having to use a term that constantly recentres the processes of ‘colonisation’. In that respect, the ‘Independent Thought’ reading group becomes a new alternative space, a beginning of liberation and a small exercise of autonomy and freedom.

What did we really change, though? What did we really achieve? We probably only touched a few lives, but for the period of the reading group we created and maintained a space for a critical discussion on race and space, and on architectural education and its institutions. This is not nothing, and it is vital for the people involved and for our institution. It made a difference, in the moment, and it has a concrete legacy in the forms of a changed curriculum and this paper, but hopefully also a more intangible legacy beyond that. We believe in incremental change, and in effecting change in our immediate environments. And it is our hope that the members of the reading group will continue the legacy of the group into their new contexts. May the seeds of the reading group also bear fruit in places and people elsewhere.

[29] See Lesley Lokko, ‘GSA Safe Space Online Series’ <https://www.imoriginal.co/single-post/2017/11/29/6-PART-ONLINE-SERIES-GSA-SAFE-SPACE> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[30] See Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, ‘A New Social Condition of Knowledge’, in On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 69-74.

Biographies

Tilo Amhoff is Senior Lecturer in Architectural Humanities at the University of Brighton. He co-edited *Produktionsbedingungen der Architektur* (2018), with Gernot Weckherlin and Henrik Hilbig, and *Industries of Architecture* (2015), with Katie Lloyd Thomas and Nick Beech. He is Chair of the Steering Committee of the Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA) and founder member of *Netzwerk Architekturwissenschaft*, where he co-directs the 'Architecture and Building' group. His interest in critical pedagogy has led him to facilitate the co-design and decolonising of the Architectural Humanities curriculum at the School of Architecture and Design, and the co-creation of spaces of learning without assessment.

Vanessa Malao Nkumbula is a freelance architect in her home country of Zambia and has recently graduated from the March RIBA II at the University of Brighton. She is a strong advocate for decolonisation, particularly in education, after going through an undergraduate programme in Zambia that focused on European Architecture. She has particular interest in critiquing and re-theorising language and its use in relation to post-colonial contexts to align them with decolonial discourse. Vanessa's work is strongly influenced by her desire for an alternative practice that fosters reclamation of space, action, and expression that is informed by the African experience.

Vivian Wall is an Architectural Designer practicing social and inclusive design across the built environment. Whilst pursuing her BA in Architecture at the University of Brighton, she wrote a critique of the exclusivity of architectural education and its denunciation of diverse perspectives. Her work and dedication to the field have been awarded by 'Women in Property' and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). As proud national of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, she amplifies the voices of post-colonial states and has made it her mission to ensure that every contribution to her field is a conscious cultural creation.

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(Not Just) A Skin-Deep Image Problem?

Emre Akbil and Leo Care

This provocation asks, in this age of image saturation: how can we represent people in our architectural designs that are specific, appropriate, representative and diverse? Using Kimberlé Crenshaw’s notion of intersectionality, the paper explores the potential of an ‘image equality archive’ created in The University of Sheffield's School of Architecture, to act as an interactive resource for students to question, examine and evaluate the representation of peoples in their design projects.

The paper explores the minefields that reside in architectural representation of human figures due to colonial structures that remain untouched. The archive then is proposed as a tool to open conversations around these structures that tend to make figures at categorical intersections invisible.

Finally the paper ends with future uses of the archive and a speculative institutional framework that could grow around it in order to ensure that conversations remain open and sustainable in terms of its capacity to make structural changes within the architectural pedagogy of design projects across the school.

A Provocative Image?

Picture the scene: an architecture student stands in front of their work (or more recently turns on their microphone and skims across their Miro Board) and presents their design project to a group of peers, tutors and invited guests. Their verbal and visual presentation beautifully captures the physical and social context of their site and surrounding neighbourhood, with a detailed understanding of potential user groups. The student goes on to articulately express how a range of key issues encapsulating environmental imperatives, material considerations, humanitarian influences and appropriate forms of construction have all been thoughtfully woven together into a carefully crafted building that is sensitively anchored to locale, people and place. All of this care and attention, consideration and design intent, is then encapsulated in the key drawing, which is inhabited by… the same photoshopped, white-skinned, sunglass-clad, briefcase-toting, twenty-something, go-getters that appear in everyone else's projects – not just at Sheffield or any other school of architecture, but probably the whole world! In one swift and possibly caffeine-induced last-minute decision, the whole ethos and actively pursued sense of contextual responsiveness is wiped out, as easily as if someone had splashed an internationally available globally franchised frappuccino over it!

In this age of image saturation, limitless selfies, access to photos of virtually anything – from new cosmological frontiers to people's toenail clippings – surely we can and should be able to represent people in our architectural designs that are specific, appropriate, representative and diverse?

Questions surrounding the monoculture of people so often represented in student architectural design images abound. Is this just a graphic misstep? Or is it a manifestation of more deep seated and unconscious racial, ableist and societal biases? Does the narrow band of figures that regularly appear in student work represent a lack of awareness in the bodies that are conceived of to dwell, use, inhabit and exist in their architectural designs? A more troubling question is whether this issue is also a manifestation of a much wider social and ethnic hegemony within architecture's culture and curriculum? 'Anti-Racism at SSoA: Call to Action' provided the impetus to go beyond finding answers to these questions and to form an initiative to start to reveal and address them.

Intersections at London Road

The second year undergraduate cohort at SSoA have been working in the London Road area of Sheffield over the academic year of 2020-21. This is one of the most ethnically diverse areas of the city, which in itself is one of the most diverse in the UK. This location provides an interesting place to explore issues of marginalisation and representation within a real life context, as well as within student project scenarios. In order to bring the issues of equality in representation to the fore, we introduced Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality, which was originally theorised to address the marginalisation of Black women within anti-discrimination law in US as well as critiquing discrimination and/or exclusion of Black women in feminist and anti-racist politics.[1]

Introducing theoretically grounded positions enabled students to embrace the importance of intersectionality and encouraged them to reconsider their categorisations of people, as well as the labels that we use to refer to each other. Crenshaw's tenet also challenged students to consider the reality of societal cross-sectionality. For example, is it appropriate for a person who is experiencing homelessness to be represented in an architecture project for a public building? If so, there should be consideration that such a person can also be temporarily homeless yet +physically disabled+female+Black. These seemingly simple initial considerations started to inform students' thinking and reinforce the social connections between their work and the human context within which their designs are situated.

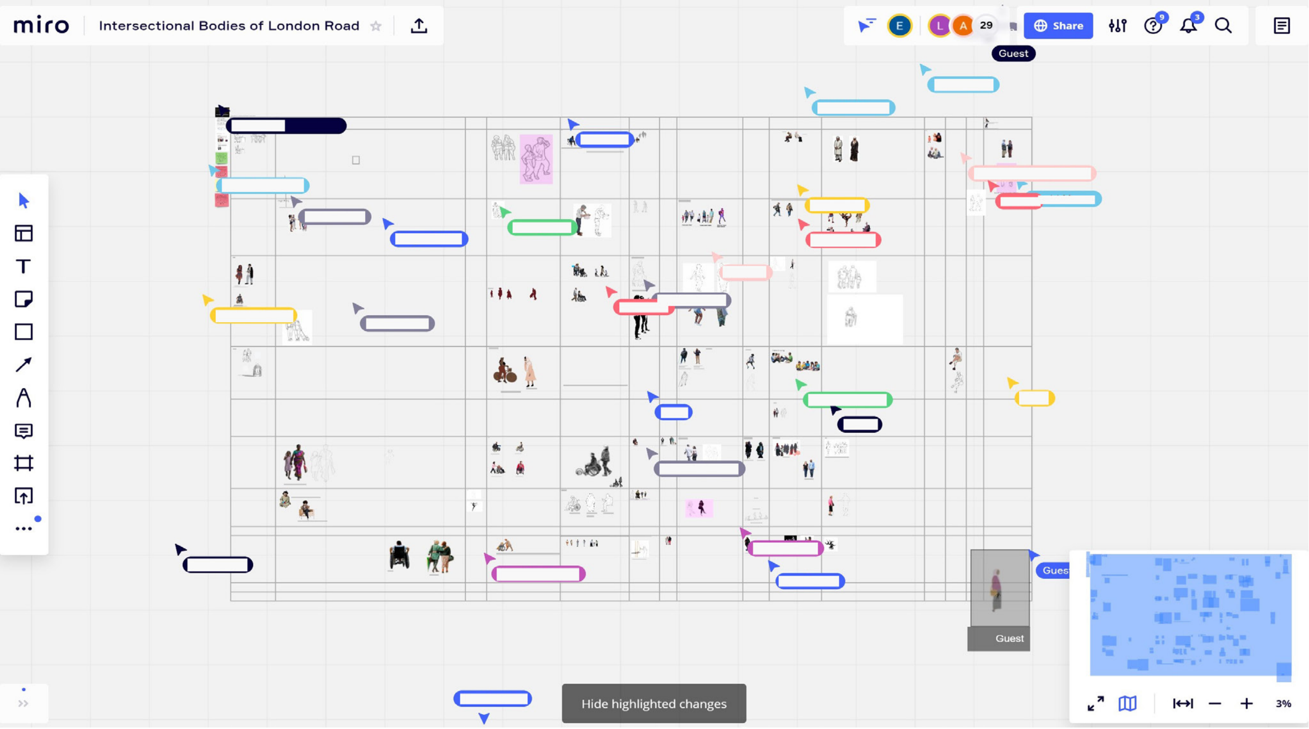

Figure 1. Screenshot of an online workshop looking at the representation of human figures, with students contributing to the Image Equality Archive of diverse and appropriate peoples, 2021.

As well as questioning and testing issues of intersectionality, students were also asked to source and create images that represented these newly appreciated peoples that could be directly used in their work. The figures were then discussed and shared amongst the year group. The outcome of this collaborative work marked the inception of a collection or archive of images and drawn figures.

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[1] Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color', *Stanford Law Review*, 43.6 (1990), 1241–1300; Devon W. Carbado and others, 'INTERSECTIONALITY: Mapping the Movements of a Theory', Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race, 10.2 (2013), 303–12 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X13000349>.

The Image Equality Project: Can an Open-Source Archive Help Imagine Intersectional Difference?

Initially the archive of human figures was used for slowing down the processes of design production and allowing space for reflection on critical questions such as: how do race, class, gender identity, and ability intersect?[2] However, it needs to be said that 'equalising & diversifying curriculum in all aspects' is more than a skin-deep image problem and goes beyond the representation of human figures in architectural drawings.[3] The human figure, often introduced as an element of scale, has a modernist, patriarchal and colonial history in architectural drawings and is a manifestation of a deeper hegemony. The oppressive lineage of architectural representation cuts across architectural history and goes deep into architectural graphic standards where women, figures of colour and others are excluded.[4] The monoculture of people being represented in architectural drawings is manifestation of a wider problem of architectural knowledge production and its modern/colonial heritage. For Anibal Quijano, 'coloniality of power' is intertwined with coloniality of knowledge and its social classification of the world.[5] Othering and racialisation are at the heart of colonisation processes. According to Nnaemeka, hierarchical categorisation and fragmentation were part of the colonial process of racialisation.[6] Contemporary forms of veiled racism operate by erasing the ethnic and racial differences created during long processes of colonisation keeping the established structures intact. Gender/race/class are the modern and colonial categories fragmented and put into competition as 'colonial difference' through which coloniality of power is enacted according to Lugones and Mignolo.[7] Transitioning to a post-racial and post-ethnocratic society demands recognition of the colonial history where colonial difference is reproduced, concealing othered histories of minorities. Avoiding systems of classification and categories closes off trajectories of emancipation and empowerment for minorities within established structures. Rather than avoiding classification, decolonisation of categories should be understood as a process of untangling the disempowering systems of classification, erasing the margins and the minor conditions of living that dwell within. Hence we argue that redefining categories and forming an archive of human figures represented through an intersectional lens is a decolonial work. Then the question that can be explored further is as follows: can the Image Equality Project become a tool to support transitioning from 'colonial difference' to a mutualised understanding of difference learned from decolonial feminisms such as those voiced by Audre Lorde and Maria Lugones?

The sensibility towards the minor intersections at the margins – women+ethnic minority, Black+women, disabled+LGBTQ+ – needs time and effort to be visible and be represented within the visual story or scenario of an architectural project. The building user as an intersectional identity is not only a cutout image that is stored in the archive, but is part of the spatial story of any student project. The Image Equality Archive acts as the link between these diverse spatial stories and the ongoing work of collective imagination for equality in representation of the user and habitation in architecture. Yet the archive has its risks and vulnerabilities. Representing diversity without understanding the context of minor intersections risks replicating established structures and stereotypical forms of representation. The archive supports open conversations around intersectionality and makes visible the minefield that resides within our imaginaries that will remain invisible if the subject of representation is left untouched. We also understand that figures inserted into the archive are tools for uncomfortable conversations. However, an image in itself will not be enough to initiate conversations. Because this is an ongoing process, the archive needs an institution or a body that can take care of the space of conversation, maintaining its safety and openness. The form of conversation should go beyond the human figure and clearly frame its relations with intersectional discourse through reflective practices on habitation and use.

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[2] Isabelle Stengers, *Another Science Is Possible: A Manifesto for Slow Science* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018); Connie Pidsley and others, 'Anti Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action' <https://feministssoa.group.shef.ac.uk/?p=1628> [accessed 18 May 2021].

[3] Pidsley and others.

[4] Lance Hosey, 'Hidden Lines: Gender, Race, and the Body in Graphic Standards', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 55.2 (2001), 101–12 <https://doi.org/10.1162/104648801753199527>.

[5] Aníbal Quijano, 'Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America', *International Sociology*, 15.2 (2000), 215–32 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580900015002005>.

[6] Obioma Nnaemeka, 'Racialization and the Colonial Architecture: Othering and the Order of Things', *PMLA*, 123.5 (2008), 1748–51 <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2008.123.5.1748>.

[7] Marìa Lugones, 'Toward a Decolonial Feminism', *Hypatia*, 25.4 (2010), 742–59 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01137.x>.

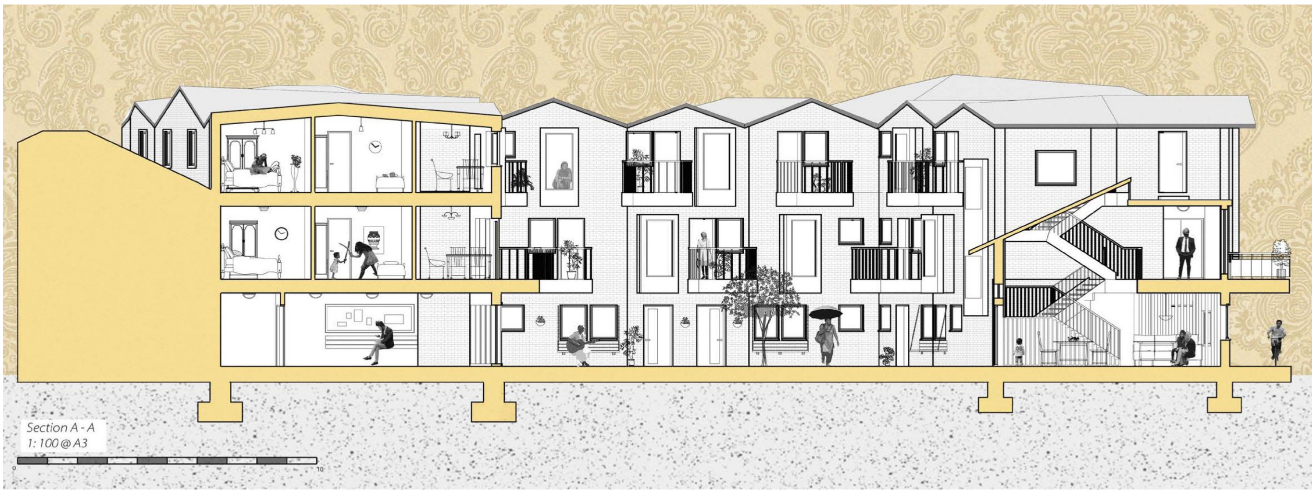

Figure 2. Detailed Section drawing, inhabited by an ethnically specific group of housing dwellers and users, by Anu Shemar, 2020.

A View of the Way Ahead?

An anti-racist curriculum in the making demands a reflective practice of “category work” embedded into learning processes. According to Bowker and Leigh Star, ‘categorical work and boundary infrastructures’ are political technologies where communities redefine their boundaries and the manner of classification of actions, things and behaviours.[8] Using the Image Equality Archive as an open source tool, students as a community can redefine their tools of representation, rethink categories that frame the human figure in architecture and take part in repairing fragmented and hierarchical classification of the human body. The archive then can be used as a stepping stone for an antiracist curriculum in a broader framework of actions and initiatives.

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[8] Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (Cambridge, Mass.: CogNet, 1999), 285-87.

The open source archive can be seen as a complementary tool which can transcend the programme and the brief of the architectural studio and expand its scope, challenging the pedagogical boundaries within and across schools of architecture. Achille Mbembe conceptualises the archive as a process for 'an instituting imaginary'.[9] The archive can potentially become a tool for 'affective pedagogy' through which we imagine and engage in collective and decolonial learning processes.[10]

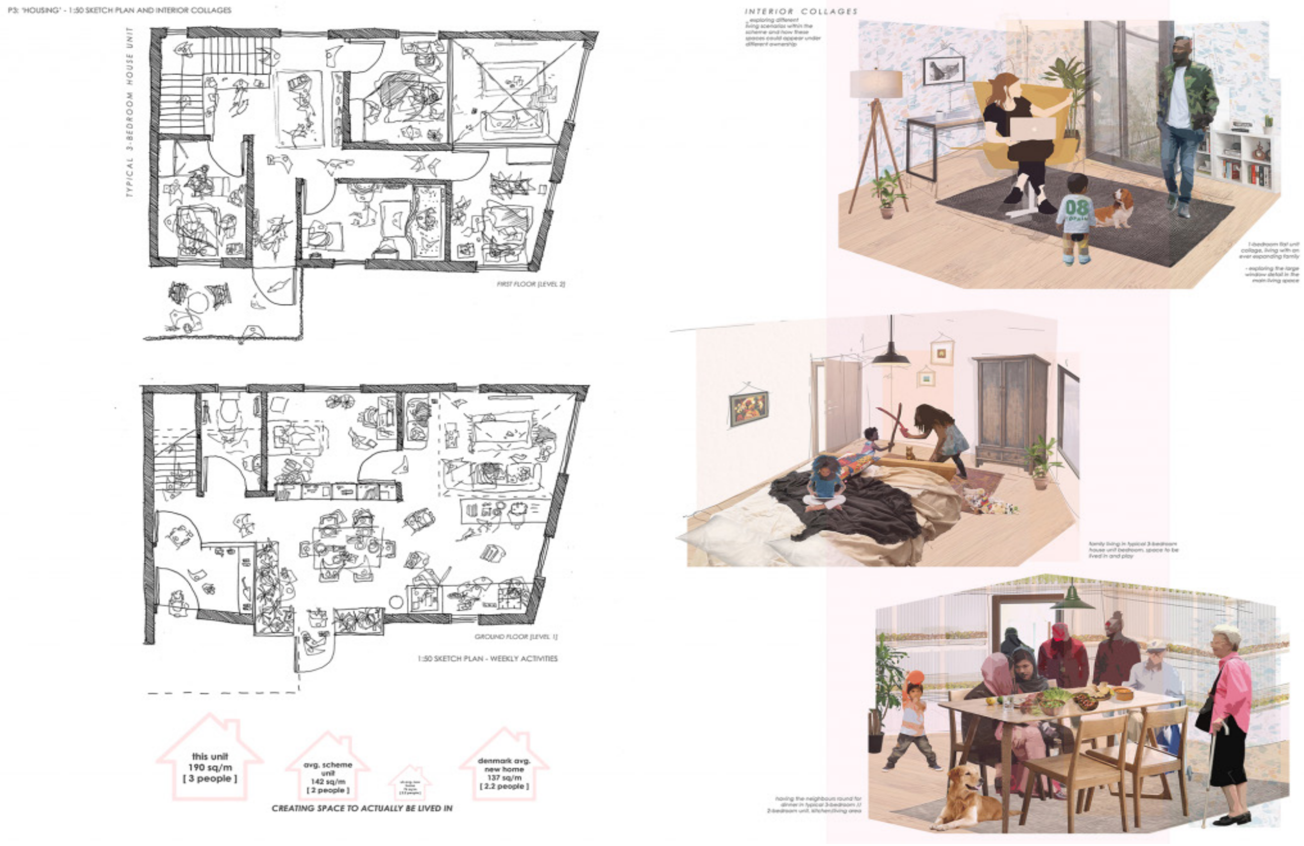
P3: 'HOUSING' - 1:50 SKETCH PLAN AND INTERIOR COLLAGES
TYPICAL 3-BEDROOM HOUSE UNIT
FIRST FLOOR [LEVEL 2]
GROUND FLOOR [LEVEL 1]
1:50 SKETCH PLAN - WEEKLY ACTIVITIES
this unit 190 sq/m [3 people]
avg. scheme unit 142 sq/m [2 people]
denmark avg. new home 137 sq/m [2.2 people]
CREATING SPACE TO ACTUALLY BE LIVED IN
INTERIOR COLLAGES
_exploring different living scenarios within the scheme and how these spaces could appear under different ownership
1-bedroom flat unit collage, living with an ever expanding family
- exploring the large window detail in the main living space
family living in typical 3-bedroom house unit bedroom, space to be lived in and play
having the neighbours round for dinner in typical 3-bedroom // 2-bedroom unit. kitchen/living area

Figure 3. Perspective images and plan details, inhabited by a diverse range of family groupings, by Jasmine Yeo, 2020).

So, what kind of alternative socialisations and instituting practices can take form with the help of the Image Equality Archive? Can the open source archive and its intersectional framework become a tool for communities of students? Can architecture students' unions take over the archive, curate it, link it to diverse programmes across the school and create transversal relations with other student communities? All these questions offer possible steps towards the creation of student architectural designs that have greater awareness and understanding of intersectional building users. But much more than a representational issue, there is the potential for the archive to be an easily accessible tool to aid the transformation of the architectural curriculum into one that is more inclusive, diverse and reflective.

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[9] Achille Mbembe, 'Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive'.

[10] Pelin Tan, 'Decolonizing Architectural Education: Towards an Affective Pedagogy', in *The Social (Re)Production of Architecture: Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. by Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (Taylor & Francis, 2017), 77–92.

Biographies

Emre Akbil is an architect and urbanist working to build speculative relations with social, political and ecological thresholds of architecture and urbanism to enact minoritarian and commons-based political creations. Alongside a group of architects and planners, he has initiated ‘Imaginary Famagusta,’ an urban practice that navigates the ethnocratic urbanism of Cyprus and produces spatial imaginaries for reconciliation through urban commoning. Emre is a University Teacher at Sheffield School of Architecture where he explores decolonial, feminist and ecological tactics in critical spatial pedagogies. He is currently co-leader of the MA in Urban Design programme and studio tutor in the second year undergraduate programme.

Leo is an architect and Senior University Teacher at Sheffield School of Architecture. Having led the MArch course and second year undergraduate programme, Leo now leads the third year undergraduate course. Leo’s pedagogical approach is based on enabling students to engage in ‘live’ learning opportunities and experiences. To support this work Leo co-founded Live Works, the first university-led urban room and participatory design office, within the school. He is also the pioneer and resident of Open House Project, a self-build cohousing project in Sheffield.

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