

# **Sustainable Design: A Counterpoint to Globalisation?**

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## **Abstract**

Much of the body of analysis and synthesis within the realm of sustainable architecture has focused upon the physicality of the built environment, leaving the complex relationship between culture, climate and place largely undisturbed. Examination of ancient cultures has shown that this complex matrix has been fully accounted for in determining an appropriate synthesis in the formation of *place*. Indeed, climatic and cultural dimensions were traditionally central in informing the making of that which we now call architecture. With the rise of international modernism and the seemingly endless expansion of globalisation, the particularities that cultural dimensions overlay in the design process have been largely left behind.

Yet, in a complex and dichotomous world which simultaneously strives towards globalisation whilst pleading for ethnic, social and political diversity, it is the largely 'undisturbed' dimension, implicit within the many ancient cultures that may provide the key to unlock the paradox. The hypothesis that underpins this paper is that for an architectural proposition to represent a truly sustainable design solution, reference to the cultural domain must be implicit.

The paper will explore historical and contemporary paradigms that affirm the role of particularity, exposing the potential of grounding the concept of place within recognisable cultural identities. Such an approach may indeed provide a counterpoint to the seemingly relentless march of globalisation, reinforcing particularity in an increasingly homogeneous world. Sustainable design providing a point of resistance?

Keywords: Culture, Place, Globalisation, Sustainable Architecture.

### **The Particular versus the Homogenous:**

*'Every people that has produced architecture has evolved its own favourite forms, as peculiar to that people as its language, its dress or its folklore'* (Fathy. H. 1973)

Hassan Fathy describes the paradox of our contemporary culture and, as a microcosm of that culture; contemporary architecture. In our plural world that simultaneously strives for globalisation whilst seeking recognition of ethnic, social, religious and political diversity the battle lines are drawn; *the particular versus the homogenous*.

Fathy sits in direct opposition to the 'modern' view of the world of Architecture articulated by le Corbusier and his collaborator Ozenfant. A world where the particularity of place is sacrificed at the altar of philosophical constructs that manifest themselves as 'white' or 'steel' or 'glass'.

Within such philosophical constructs there is no need for particularity to exist.

*'Can we really believe any longer in the existence of frontiers with regard to ideas? Can we really go on working for a chapel, a school, a clan, a group, a province, a nation? And not for all races, for mankind in fact?.....Such an art is possible, because all men react unanimously to broad daylight, or full night, or red or black, or love and death'* (Weston. R. 1996)

Here, Man is viewed as a universal entity devoid of particularity. Such philosophical positioning has been extruded into the realm of macroeconomics. The world of Fathy's Nubian Mason has been subsumed by McDonalds, Nike and MTV; the economic and cultural colonisation of food, dress and communication. Trans-national corporations, devoid of borders, barriers and thresholds, move capital with fluidity, engaging emerging markets with their brand; itself a mythology of aspiration.

The result is a loss of particularity and identity of both physical and metaphysical dimensions. As emerging economies strive for recognition they mimic the 'International Style' of architecture (and variants) to signify, in the semiotic sense, economic significance. The paradox of course is that in striving to signify economic, and by implication, cultural significance, *particular* identity evaporates as any sense of collective memory is demolished, literally and metaphorically.

Nowhere is such a paradox more evident than contemporary Malaysia. The ambitions of WAWASAN 2020 when manifested as architectural artefacts are loaded with western symbolism yet, devoid of local *particular* identity except in some cases where cultural significance, again in the semiotic sense, is represented as mere parody. I term this phenomenon *Globarchation*.

The consequential disconnection of the artefacts of Globarchation from the particular climate in which they sit further reinforces this loss of identity. In Malaysia for example, these symbols of globalisation often require spectacular air-conditioning to dump the excessive solar gain drawn in through their glass facades, the warm air only to be cast back after elaborate processing, into the hot-humid environment.

Furthermore, the essential roots of the diverse and complex culture that is modern Malaysia are ignored. Concepts implicit within collective memory such as the family, intricate patterns of social interaction and hierarchies are left behind in the acceleration towards recognition upon the globalised economic stage.

Perhaps, as Fathy suggested, there is something of value in the *particular* that must once again become implicit, if the process of making place is to become truly sustainable.

This paper will, through examination of the rich tradition of ways of making place in particular cultural and climatic contexts, suggest opportunities for architecture to develop forming a point of resistance to globalisation by engaging with the concept of particularity through the collective memory.

The hypothesis of this Paper is to develop phenomenological methodology of interrogation of traditions of making place that may inform the development of contemporary architecture which is attentive to the concept of *particularity* and thus by implications sits as a point of resistance to *Globarchation* and, by extension, globalisation.

### **Interrogating Particularity:**

*'Ezra Pound said that music degenerates if it moves too far away from dance, and poetry shrivels if it becomes too remote from music and song. In the same way, architecture has its own origins, and if it moves too far away from them it loses its effectiveness. The renewal of an art means rediscovering its deepest essence.'* (Pallasmaa 1996)

The *a priori* question implicit in Pallasmaa's statement is how do we interrogate 'essence'? There is a rich tradition of such consideration within architectural theory in the engagement with phenomenological philosophy.

Husserl's definition of phenomenology as '*a systematic investigation of consciousness and its objects*' holds temptation for those such as Norberg-Schulz, Frampton, Gregotti and more latterly such theories are evidenced in the work of Architects such as Peter Zumthor, Tadao Ando, Steven Holl and Glen Murcutt.

I propose to explore the traditions of making place, specifically *domus* (in this context-dwelling), from a phenomenological perspective within the hot-arid climates of the Middle East. Such traditions are born of the paradigm that fuses the complex inter-relationship between the trinity of culture, climate and place realised through collective memory.

The choice of interrogating the domestic scale is purposeful. Such interrogation reveals the intensity, complexity and paradoxes that arise when making habitation for a diverse constituency bound by that most fundamental of human relationships; family.

### **Culture, Climate and Place as Representation of Collective Memory:**

Bahrain is an archipelago of some thirty islands with, at its centre, Bahrain Island. The archipelago lies in the Persian Gulf, 14 miles East of Saudi Arabia. Bahrain Island is 240 square miles in area. The majority of the population of 634,137 are Arabs, with a significant number of immigrant workers. Arabic is the official language and English, Farsi and Urdu are spoken by the immigrant workers from Europe, India and Iran.

Archaeological evidence exists that the island was settled by the Sumerians in the third millennium BC and around 2000BC was the centre of Dilmun trading routes. In the seventh century Muslims conquered and ruled until the sixteenth century when the Portuguese occupied the Islands until 1602 when the Persians took control. In the nineteenth century the British signed treaties with the ruling family of Bahrain offering protection from Turkey in exchange for strategic access to the Gulf. In 1869, the British installed an Emir and in 1935 Bahrain became the site of a British Naval base to police Gulf interests.

Anti-British attitudes emerged but it was not until 1971 that Bahrain declared independence and the British left. Oil drilling began in 1932 under British occupancy and when the price of crude oil rose sharply in the 1970s and 1980s the economy of Bahrain benefited significantly. Bahrain has, since independence, striven to provide economic stability through diversification strategies and has developed as a regional, if not global, hub for finance, education and commerce.

It is clear that the roots of Bahraini culture are complex and diverse but predominantly lie within the Arab traditions, informed in turn by Islamic codes and social and cultural imperatives. This rather begs the question within the context of the ambitions of this Paper; is there any such thing as 'Islamic architecture'?

The noun 'Islam' defines a religious tradition with an implicit resonance in describing a way of 'being' on earth and of course, beyond. If by the term

'Islamic Architecture' we are not referring to an architecture that serves the religion such as the Mosque, what are we referring to?

*'If Islamic is not an adjective defining a religious quality, should it be understood as a word that identifies a special kind of architecture, that of a civilisation reflecting or determined by, special qualities inherent in Islam as a cultural phenomenon.'* (Grube. E. 1978)

In his essay 'What is Islamic Architecture?' Ernst Grube argues that 'Islamic Architecture' has particular qualities that set it apart from architecture of other cultural phenomena. Grube hypothesises that there are particular and identifiable qualities that ensure 'Islamic Architecture' is distinct.

One such quality that Grube identifies is concentration on the interior. Such concentration is informed by extremes of climate and the need to radically moderate climate between interior and exterior. However, that which may have originated as a bio-climatic response has, over time, become imbued with cultural significance.

Grube argues that the Islamic house is the most recognisable example of this concentration, organised around an inner courtyard, effectively presenting itself to the outside world as a blind box only interrupted by a '*single low door*'. (Grube. E. 1978)

It is clear that this internal focus also characterises the tradition of making urban place, the ancient *medinas, qasbahs, and souks*, presenting clear thresholds between public and private, reinforcing the concept of 'inside' and 'outside' and of course, by implication, the significance of the threshold itself.

Such urban morphology is exposed in Murharraq, an ancient settlement in Bahrain, now, under threat from the twin pressures of renewal and globalisation.

Grube (1978) calls this concept 'hidden architecture', architecture which has no need of external symbolism and the significance of place is only discovered upon entry, the crossing of the threshold.

*'.....rarely does a façade give any indication of the inner organisation of purpose of the building in question, and it is rare that an Islamic building can be understood, or even it's principal features identified by its exterior.'* (Grube. E. 1978)

This 'hidden architecture' extends in the exploration of the relationship between form and function. The western (modernist) tradition strives to build a relationship between the function of a building and the way the building manifests itself in form. The 'hidden architecture' of Islam sits in counterpoint. Perhaps this ambiguity reaches back to the birth of Islam itself; the Prophet Muhammad is reputed to have preached to crowds from the court-yard of his

house in Medina, a pulpit or *minbar* later constructed to facilitate understanding of the Prophet's words. Perhaps the ambiguity is born paradoxically of the semiotic signification central to Islam.

*'The Ka'ba, the symbolic locus of Islam'* (Jairazbhoy. R. 1978)

Perhaps as the ultimate Platonic solid,

*'.....this shape was more noncommittal than any other in that it reflected a minimum of human personality.'* (Jairazbhoy. R. 1978)

A 'blind' architecture.

Grube further develops these concepts of hidden and blind architecture through his interrogation of interior space. He is explicit in determining that little attention is paid to the exterior, the interior being the realm of decoration.

*'Decoration in Islamic Architecture serves several functions, but its main effect-and very likely its main purpose-appears to be the creation of non tectonic values, the dissolution of all those elements that in other architectural traditions emphasise the structure, the balance and counter-balance of loads and stresses-the actual mechanics of building.'* (Grube. E. 1978)

This again provides a significant counterpoint to the western (modernist) tradition where purposefully, significance is attached to tectonic expression, elements laid bare and, in many instances, becoming a form of decoration through the absence of applied decoration.

An excellent exemplar of the paradigm described by Grube is the Isa bin Ali Al-Khalifa house (known as the 'Sheik Isa House), in Murharraq, Bahrain. A hidden architecture born of tradition, place and of, course climate.

Built in 1800 AD by Sheik Hassan bin Ahmed Al Fatih, the building later became the house of Sheik Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa who ruled Bahrain for a period of 63 years. The house sits within the historic settlement of Murharraq at the Northern end of Bahrain Island and is adjacent to the historic Grand Mosque.

The house takes up a whole city block and is predominantly single storey. Sheik Isa House has four distinct but inter-connected elements, the Sheik's accommodation, family quarters, guest quarters and servant's quarters. In the tradition of 'hidden architecture', the house has only two points of entry, one to the North, serving the Women's quarters and courtyard, the second, usually used by men and guests, is to the east, providing access from the house to the adjacent Grand Mosque.

Sheik Isa House encapsulates the Grubian concept of 'hidden architecture', focussing as it does upon the interior whilst the exterior remains restrained and minimal.

*'It has very impressive external elevations; massive, immensely long, white and blank with ranks of marzams (water-spouts) casting long diagonal shadows.'* (Muazzam. A. ed. Undated)

The house is planned around four courtyards, a small private courtyard that services the Sheik's accommodation, the Women's courtyard at the centre of the house, the servant's courtyard and the men and visitor's courtyard. These courtyards not only articulate the plan in spatial terms but also reflect cultural and social hierarchies, given expression through the ordering and mediation of space.

In addition to cultural and spatial articulation, these courtyards supply and control the emission of light deep into the plan and provide opportunity for cross ventilation, imperative in the extreme climatic conditions of Bahrain.

The plan is deep and impacted, all rooms bearing direct relationships to the respective courtyards that provide spatial articulation and shade through shadowing. At first floor level there are extensive roof terraces which again are articulated by the courtyards or *hoosh* and spatial separation is additionally provided by precise disposition of the six rooms at first floor which include the *majlis* the men's meeting room.

Bahrain is on Latitude 26° 30' N, Longitude 50° 30'E and conforms to Koppen's climatic type classification of BWh. The mean air temperature is 26.5°C with distribution ranging from 17° to 33.6°C across the year. The absolute air temperature ranges from a maximum of 45°C to a minimum of 10.6°. Mean precipitation varies from 0mm in the summer months to 18mm in February with an annual rainfall of 85mm. Mean relative humidity ranges across the year from 67% to 81% in December with an average of 73%.

Such an extreme climate requires a determined architectural response. The thick external and internal walls provide high thermal mass, the minimal openings and thick walls shade interior space and the courtyards provide ventilation opportunities and shade by shadowing. In addition, a substantial wind-tower, positioned adjacent to the family quarters was added after the building was completed by Sheikha Aisha, wife of Sheik Isa. This tower with ornate decoration provides effective ventilation to the family room and is the one internal element that, because of its height, registers externally in the street. In accordance with the Grubian paradigm, decoration is evident only within the interior. The *liwan* (portico) to the Sheik's quarters exhibits '*a very elaborate decorative composition*', (Muazzam. A. ed. Undated) with three bays each with pointed polylobal arches and decorative friezes. In addition, the door has a

highly decorated frieze surrounding it. These decorative friezes are found throughout the house with a particularly fine example still evident within the children's quarters.

It is clear that Grube's paradigm of 'blind' or 'hidden architecture' is exemplified with the Sheik Isa house in Murharraq, Bahrain. The internal focus with a consequential 'blind external face', cultural and social hierarchies given expression through spatial ordering and a built form that is responsive to extreme climatic conditions resonate with the particularity of place.

If we interrogate this paradigm further we can distil certain iconographic elements, which function as cultural, social and climatically responsive mechanisms.

The *hoosh* (courtyard) is an essential element of the Islamic *domus*. It is paradoxically, a place of communing and of separation. It mediates between spatial and cultural organisations and simultaneously provides climatic comfort and controls light. It is the outside manifested internally but in a controlled and filtered manner.

The *malqaf* (wind-tower or wind-catcher) is a bio-climatically responsive device that encourages the movement of air through pressure differentiation, effectively ventilating space. To work effectively the *malqaf* requires height and this height provides signification, in the semiotic sense, of the act of habitation.

The *mushrabiya* (lattice-faced oriel window) exemplifies the traditional integration of culture, climate and place. The open lattice structure facilitates ventilation and the projection allows external views to the street whilst retaining privacy for the viewer as social and cultural imperatives demand. The *mushrabiya* is paradoxically, an external manifestation of Grube's concept of the 'hidden architecture' of Islam.

*'The dominant emphasis, therefore, is on domestic privacy and the seclusion and segregation of women. The Arabic name sakan to denote the house is related to the word sakina, 'peaceful and holy', and the word for woman, harim is related to haram (harem), 'sacred area', which denotes the family living quarters.'* (Petherbridge. G. 1978)

In interrogating this typology from a phenomenological perspective we uncover layers of sediment of both artefact and meaning. We understand the cultural and social demands for separation, the role of the *hoosh* as mediator and ventilator. We understand the concept of *blind* and *internalised* architecture and illuminate the subtlety of relationship between culture, climate and place.

If a case has been made that at the fundamental level of *sakan*, or in western terms, *domus*, Islamic architecture has a traditional of essential typological



elements that connect the trinity of culture, climate and place, and, furthermore these elements remain embedded within collective memory. The question of course remains as to how such typological resonance might appropriately inform contemporary a paradigm for dwelling.

#### **A Point of Resistance to Globarchation:**

Paradoxically, such a paradigm might be drawn, at least in conceptual terms, from looking both forwards and backwards chronologically and, looking both without and within, culturally. Paradoxical, as the concept of Globalisation can be defined as the compression of space and time.

Without doubt, the manifesto designed by Hassan Fathy reflects a lyrical architectural and social ambition rooted in cultural imperatives encouraging ancient traditions of making place to resonate within a contemporary world. But what of elsewhere in time and space?

The work of the contemporary Australian Architect Glen Murcutt represents an interrogation of place that transcends the modernist constructs of universality manifested as *Globarchation*. Australia, whilst having indigenous peoples with significant history, is, like Bahrain, within the contemporary context a 'modern nation-state'. The first peoples are have thought to have arrived on the continent 50,000 years ago but it was not until the first English settlers arrived in the eighteenth century, that Australia began to move from an identity of ancient tribal homelands towards the modern nation-state that we recognise today.

Climatically, Australia is diverse ranging from the hot-arid climate of the Northern Territories to the hot-humid climate of Northern Queensland. Such climatic diversity has shaped and continues to inform the landscapes of Australia. It is these landscapes that inspire the work of one of Australia's leading contemporary architects, Glenn Murcutt. Murcutt is often referred to as a 'green' architect or a 'bio-climatic' architect. Such crude nomenclature ignores the subtlety of his response. Murcutt draws from the landscape, itself shaped by climate and thus his work is, by implication, climatically responsive.

*'My architecture has attempted to convey something of the discrete character of elements in the Australian landscape, to offer my interpretation in a built form.'*  
(Drew. P. 1985)

This profound understanding of and response to landscape is further enhanced by engagement with such ancient typologies as the New Guinea long houses that he witnessed in his childhood, the aesthetic of the aircraft that traversed the huge expanses of landscape, and later, influenced by exposure to the modern movement of Western Europe and America. His work is also informed by the concept of *utility* that such raw and unpopulated landscapes demand. These diverse and apparently conflicting influences come together in the synthesis of

*domus* in a manner that are uniquely 'of place' in the generic sense, and furthermore, 'of the climate', in terms of *specific* response to *specific* place.

Australia stands as a microcosm of the globalised world, much of its contemporary architecture stands as a perfect expression of *Globarchation*. From the first settlers of the eighteenth century, the inhabitants have drawn their architectural expression from Europe and later, America and most recently South East Asia, a cultural, as well as physical colonisation. In an interview with Phillip Drew (2001), Murcutt is explicit in his critique of this colonisation articulated through built form:

*'To me there is no such thing as an Australian Building, they are modified European Buildings. It is a fiction.'* (Drew. P. 2001)

Drew (1985) goes onto develop this argument and suggests that this may be a colonisation in ignorance.

*'It is more important than ever than Australians identify with the land and allow the special qualities to nourish and inform their lives and culture, as it did for the aborigine. The land must be allowed to sink into the Australian psyche.'* (Drew. P. 2001)

Ironically of course it is precisely this 'colonisation' through form, material and language that is at the centre of contemporary *Globarchation* within emerging economies across the World.

The Marika-Alderton House, located in the northern tropical climate of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territories of Australia encapsulates Murcutt's engagement with particularity of place. The house was designed for an indigenous Aboriginal client implicitly possessing a cultural heritage that stretches back some 50,000 years. The climate is wet-tropical with seasonal monsoons and an average summer temperature in excess of 30 degrees C, humidity of 80%-90% and the area is subject to Cyclone events of some 200kph velocity.

Prior to developing a design proposition Murcutt researched the Aboriginal cultural heritage for some three years, staying with the Client and immersing himself in the particular way of life. Murcutt distilled from this research the affinity with environment that is central to this cultural heritage.

*'What is most notable about indigenous (Aboriginal) people is their deep, intimate and harmonious relationship to the land, which has spiritual, practical, social, aesthetic and cultural dimensions.'* (Beck. H. and Cooper. J. 2002)

In such a harsh climate, indigenous populations have, for thousands of years, lived *with* the land rather than seeking to dominate their environment.

The building, whilst making explicit references in the plan to the modernism of Western Europe and America, is as resonant of the New Guinea Longhouse of Murcutt's youth, as it is of the Farnsworth House of Illinois, USA. The building, in plan and section, is driven by the interpretation of profound cultural values. The demand to see the horizon and culturally significant markers in the landscape, the defence against the entry of evil spirits and the requirement to see out without being seen are principles of *being* that are deeply rooted within this particular cultural heritage.

In addition to these very particular cultural demands, the extremes of climate demanded very particular bio-climatic design responses in providing shade, harnessing cooling winds and giving shelter from the monsoon rains. The synthesis of form and materiality that is informed by these cultural tradition and the climate, ensure that Murcutt's response is *of place* and, as an antidote to Globarchation; *particularity*. The building meets these potentially conflicting demands through itself becoming an element of the landscape, capable of opening and closing like a flower, dissolving edges and subsequently reinforcing them.

*'The Marika –Alderton House represents a radically simplified variant on his notion of an adaptable shelter in symbiosis with landscape, elements and usage.'*  
(Fromonot. F. 1995)

It is the *particularity* of place that inspires Murcutt and, in the case of the Marika-Alderton House further informed by the *particularity* of a cultural heritage. The result is a building where form, materiality, tectonics and social and cultural synthesis, provides a counterpoint to *Globarchation* and, by implication a point of opposition to Globalisation.

What emerges is an architectural artefact that is of its place. It does not attempt to represent itself as an Architecture of Australia; Murcutt recognises the folly of such an aspiration. This is Architecture of *particularity*. It is an Architecture that resonates with physicality, history, culture, climate and a palpable sense of place. This is *domus*. This is *sakan*.

The Sheik Isa house in Murharraq, Bahrain does not set out to represent itself as *Islamic Architecture* per se, although it self-evidently is just that (and so much more). The *hoosh*, the *malqaf* and the *mushrabiya* are as symbolic, as they are pragmatic responses to cultural or climatic particularity and resonate in our understanding as deeply as the *verandah* may resonate in Queensland, Australia or Sabah in Malaysia, albeit for very different cultural and climatic reasons.

The purpose of this Paper is not to propose Architecture of pastiche. The *verandah* is inculcated within the Australian collective memory as a cultural metaphor and signifier, in the Semiotic sense, of a particular heritage. Yet,

Murcutt does not employ the *verandah* in a manner, which would be understood as being of this complex tradition.

Simply put;

*'A Murcutt building is verandah.'* (Beck. H and Cooper. J. 2002)

### **An Antidote to Globarchation:**

*'A house may seem built for practical purpose, but in fact it is a metaphysical instrument, a mythical tool with which we try to introduce a reflection of eternity into our momentary existence'* (Pallasmaa 1996)

At its fundament, the *idea* of dwelling; domus or sakan, has physical and metaphysical dimensions.

The fundamental difficulty for the architect is in understanding the particularity of particular place and secondarily, developing appropriate contemporary reinterpretation. In this context, the International Style is an easy and universally recognisable and celebrated response.

In his essay *'The Geometry of Feeling'* Juhani Pallasmaa suggests that architectural theory has for some time interrogated the loss of meaning within contemporary architecture. He goes onto hypothesise that such interrogations that rest in the interrogation of the paucity of meaning in form, or absence of cultural significance, rather miss the point. He holds that modern architecture is founded upon a reductionist and elemental approach, exemplified by the ideology of the Bauhaus School.

*'Surely the meanings of an artistic work are born out of the whole, from a vision that integrates the parts, and in no way is the sum of the elements.'* (Pallasmaa 1996)

So, within Pallasmaa's hypothesis we must strive to employ Husserl's concept of *'pure looking'* or *'viewing the essence'*.

He strives to articulate a basic vocabulary for interrogating architecture, born of an *'Architecture of Memory'*.

*'-the house as a sign of culture in the landscape, the house as a projection of man and a point of reference in the landscape;*

*-approaching the building, recognising a human habitation or a given institutional form for the house;*

*-entrance to the building's sphere of influence, stepping into the building, being near the building;*

-having a roof over your head, being sheltered and shaded  
-stepping into the house, entering through the door, crossing the boundary between interior and exterior;  
-coming home or stepping inside the house for a specific purpose, expectation and fulfilment, sense of strangeness and familiarity;  
-being in the room, a sense of security, a sense of togetherness or isolation;  
being in the sphere of influence of the foci that brings the building together, such as table, bed or fireplace;  
-encountering the light or darkness that dominates the space, the space of light;  
-looking out of the window, the link with the landscape' (Pallasmaa 1996)

Such a vocabulary, which engages with the *particularity* of place, encourages a transcendental and meditative engagement and deep reflection upon lyrical and poetic dimensions of place. Such methods sit in antithesis to the reductionist, indeed, (western) post-enlightenment methodology of elementalisation.

However, it can be argued that paradoxically, Pallasmaa's vocabulary is implicitly culturally loaded as it moves from generic conceptualisation (i.e. the notion of 'being') to cultural specific elements (i.e. 'the sphere of influence-see Sheik Isa House [above]).

I therefore propose a vocabulary that strives to be generic in order to shed cultural influences drawn from Pallasmaa's ambition:

-the macrocosmic territory;  
-thresholds of that territory;  
-thresholds of entry;  
-the microcosmic territory;  
-thresholds of that territory;  
-elements of the territory;  
-tectonics of that territory;  
-the dialogue of territories

Using this vocabulary it is proposed to examine *domus* across a range of cultural and climatic conditions with the ambition of capturing a transcendental and poetic engagement with the particularity of place. The paradox of course is that such a methodology engages with the ethos of universality expounded by le Corbusier and Ozenfant; the fundamental difference being this is a tool of *analysis*, rather than a methodology of *synthesis*.

The objective of such engagement is to uncover the layers of sediment of *particular* circumstances that have become embedded within *particular* collective memories that might inform a contemporary design response founded within these *particular* circumstances. The design of any artefact predicated

upon this textual analysis would *per se* be 'Sustainable', born, as it is, of the *particular*.

Furthermore, such an approach would, at a fundamental level, eschew the demands of globalisation for homogenised design responses. The methodology, predicated upon examination of the particular would demand by implication design responses that are particular to culture, climate and of course place.

This may be a paradigm that may allow us to once again, in the Heideggerian sense, to  *dwell poetically*.

Wherever we are. *Knowing* where we are. *Being* where we are.

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