UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

The U.S. Imagination of Maya Ruins: Critical Reflections on Art and Architecture, 1839-1972

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Art History, Theory, and Criticism

by

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2018

The Dissertation of Elizabeth Deen Miller is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my trek down the rabbit hole to my Uncle Stanley
and my writing to the Flaming Creatures.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Divided into three episodes between the 1830s and 1970s, the dissertation explores the U.S. imagination of Maya ruins vis-à-vis the works of three salient figures in American cultural history. The first point of interest is the nineteenth-century expeditionary tradition and the politics of ruin gazing in southeastern Mexico, concentrating on the illustrated texts of the citizen-diplomat and travel writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and his counterpart, the English architect and draftsman, Frederick Catherwood. Stephens and Catherwood were the first to thoroughly document Maya ruins for a U.S. audience with the two-volume *Incidents of Travel in Central*

America, Chiapas, and Yucatan (1841), *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* (1843), and Catherwood's self-published folio of lithographs, *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (1844). Mayan Revival (also known as "Neo-Mayan") architecture is the second subject, focusing on Frank Lloyd Wright's use of ancient American aesthetics in the 1910s and 1920s to create an "indigenous" modern American architecture in examples like the Ennis House (1923-1924). The third and final subject centers on the long sixties and the configurations of ruination (and ruin gazing), landscape, and the indigene in selected projects and writings of the celebrity of American land art, Robert Smithson. I address examples like "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan," a 1969 photographic travel essay, and Smithson's comedic slide lecture, *Hotel Palenque* (1969-1972). The recuperations of Maya architecture in U.S. contexts provide insight into the ways the imperial behaviors of the nineteenth-century United States can be traced through the aesthetics of modernity that emerged in the early to mid-twentieth century. The import of indigenous aesthetics and subject matter on Anglo-American aesthetic traditions—whether in Catherwood's illustrations of the continent's ruins, Wright's Mesoamerican revival architecture, or the putatively radical de-sublimation at work amongst the American neo-avant-gardists like Smithson—sheds light on the unusual and occasionally overlooked relationship between ruination, U.S. art and architectural modernism, and the hierarchies that in many ways define the American landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The word "history" stands written on the countenance of nature in the characters of transience. The allegorical physiognomy of the nature-history . . . is present in reality in the form of the ruin. In the ruin history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay . . . . Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things.

- Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* 1925

Landscape is neither inert nor neutral. Rather, it is subject to various cultural and social processes, a reminder of the etymological ties between the morpheme, "-scape," and the Old English *sceppan* or *skyppan*, meaning "to shape."[1] In *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics*, Emily Eliza Scott and Kirsten Swenson observe that landscapes taken as the property of "nature" often "sanitize, obscure, and/or naturalize spatial conflicts."[2] Architectural landscapes are no exception to this; for example, the depiction of ruins in the history of art—a "ruinscape," if you will—has strong ties to conceptions of the natural world. And, as Raymond Williams reminds us in *Keywords,* "nature," "native," and "nation" are all words derived from the Latin *natus,* "to be born."[3] It may then come as no surprise that nascence and rebirth, life and death are also tangled in the constellation of landscape, nature, and the architectural ruin. Perched in a liminal state between permanence and decay, ruins communicate the desires and power struggles in man's relation to both the natural world and fellow man.

Ruins, however, are entities that *occur* long before they *appear;* that is, they—bosom friends of landscape—are the province of the gaze. The "ruin gaze"[4]—a process, according to Gustavo Verdesio, through which ruins come to be seen as objects of study—remakes architecture-as-image. As such, ruins are actively evoked and shaped by their spectators. Symptomatic of hegemonic structures, ruin images are continuously renegotiated—caught in a distant past as frozen, nostalgicized remnants of "archaic"[5] civilizations or repositioned (as needed) as harbingers of epochal change tied to conflict and war, industry and modernization.

Historically, architectural ruins supplied affirmation of the processual nature of the human event.[6] By the nineteenth century, ruins became malleable to the purposes of the nation-state—built into the majestic territory of national memory or, conversely, rendered obsolescent as ideological obstructions to "progress" and/or expansion.[7] Their performance as and rehabilitation through ruinscapes—those echo chambers of place that national identity formations attempt to still—bears intimate ties to the imagination of nationhood as it is tied to landscape.[8] Ruins have been institutionalized and conserved. They have been neatly packaged in tourist brochures and on the pages of *National Geographic*. Parallel to these developments, ruins have also become subject to increasing mystification. They have reappeared covertly, transmogrified, in resuscitated forms that skirt the unrecognizable. Such forms have generated new meanings—proper simulacra.

In Europe, nineteenth-century landscape artists like J.M.W. Turner, the Hudson River School painter, Samuel Colman, and many, many others made use of the bony remains of Tintern Abbey. Such ruins have been hammered into the canons of art and architecture and firmly lodged in historical memory. Their configuration in both the history of painting and the politics of landscape is certain. In contrast, imaginaries of Maya ruins are largely unremarked upon as a means of understanding the complex landscape of the Americas. The mere existence (and "discovery" by Europeans) of these twinned feats of engineering and architecture both provided raw material for *and* challenged New World empires in their processes of becoming. The various appearances of Maya ruins in particular in U.S. fine arts and architecture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries point to some of the ways the politics of nationhood and landscape—even national formations of artistic and architectural modernism—are founded on conceptions about indigeneity tied to the inscription of American antiquity in U.S. consciousness.

Divided into three episodes between the 1830s and 1970s, the following chapters explore the U.S. imagination of Maya ruins vis-à-vis the works of three salient figures in American cultural history.[9] The first point of interest is the nineteenth-century expeditionary tradition and the politics of ruin gazing in southeastern Mexico; chapter one, "Ruins Naturalized: Frederick Catherwood's Architectural Landscapes," concentrates on the illustrated texts of the citizen-diplomat and travel writer, John Lloyd Stephens, and his counterpart, the English architect and draftsman, Frederick Catherwood. Stephens and Catherwood were the first to thoroughly document Mexico's Maya ruins for a U.S. audience with the two-volume *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (1841), *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* (1843), and Catherwood's self-published folio of lithographs, *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (1844). Catherwood's illustrations make up a foundational entry point which not only established Maya ruins as homegrown entities deserving of aesthetic contemplation, but also as ciphers of social politics surrounding landscape and indigeneity as well as the notion of hemispheric antiquity.[10]

Mayan Revival (also known as "Neo-Mayan") architecture is the subject of chapter two, "Indigenous Modernism: Frank Lloyd Wright and Mayan Revivalism," focusing on Wright and his use of ancient American aesthetics in the 1910s and 1920s to create an "indigenous" modern American architecture.[11] In various of his mid-career projects, Wright adopted an aesthetic clearly poached from an amalgam of Mesoamerican architectural styles, yet he denied any aesthetic affinities between his projects and their ancient counterparts. Changing attitudes toward both the broadly American landscape and Mesoamerican antiquity circumscribed architecture like Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic Ennis House (1923-1924) in Hollywood as well as the "low" architecture of Wright's Mayan Revivalist contemporaries. Investigating the trajectory of Wright's mid-career alongside the larger role of indigenous antiquity's reappearance in

American architecture of the time forms my inquiry into architectural modernism of the early twentieth century.

The third and final chapter, “Confronting the Ruinscape: Robert Smithson’s Mexico Projects,” centers on the “long sixties”[12] and the configurations of ruination (and ruin gazing), landscape, and the indigene in selected projects and writings of the celebrity of American land art, Robert Smithson. Chapter three addresses examples like “Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan,” Smithson’s 1969 photographic travel essay (and nod to Stephens and Catherwood), and his comedic slide lecture, *Hotel Palenque* (1969-1972). In his works and writings, Smithson both critically emulated and parodied the aspirations of the modernists (like Wright) as well as the nineteenth-century platitudes of figures like Stephens and Catherwood. Yet he arguably also participated in the fetishization of indigeneity so characteristic of artists in his generation and contributed to the American landscape mythology even as he sought to unweave it.

In the introduction to *Ideology, Power and Prehistory,* Christopher Tilley and Daniel Miller clearly identify the properties of works invoked in the “creation of the cultural world” by dominant groups: “(a) They tend to represent as universal that which may be partial. (b) They tend to represent as coherent that which may be in conflict. (c) They tend to represent as permanent that which may be in flux. (d) They tend to represent as natural that which may be cultural. (e) They tend to formalise [sic], i.e. present as dependent upon its own formal order, that which might otherwise be subject to contradiction.”[13] The loosely-termed “representations” described in the dissertation conform to such characteristics. But more than any neat visual argument, the chapters unpack their contents in the context of national identity formation tied to landscape, and to that triangle of meaning Williams observed of the word *natus:* nature, native, nation.

Apart from the basics of chronology, the dissertation does not proceed in a proper narrative arc from beginning to end, nor will it lead the reader to a simple conclusion. Chapter

one is foundational. What was this first substantive (American) gaze at the continent's Maya ruins? What are its parameters and upon which models does it rely? Chapters two and three examine the architectural and artistic production of two of the key players of the modern and postmodern moments in American cultural history. How do the respective works of Wright and Smithson bear on the mythology of the American landscape? What is the place of ancient indigenous architecture in the formations of U.S. modernism? It is not insignificant that both architect and artist (and so many more beside them) engaged indigenous themes and content in making what have been conceived by existing scholarship as "marginal" or "exotic" works when, in fact, these works lie at the core of each figure's oeuvre and figure heavily into their contributions to artistic and architectural modernity. Ultimately, these chapters are portraits—of the mid-nineteenth century, of modernism, and of post-modernism—mediated through the example of Catherwood's, Wright's, and Smithson's invocations of the indigenous American ruin as source material. Thus, they are also portraits of *landscape* in each period, and of each individual's siting of the figure of ruination (or lack thereof) as part of a national landscape.

By addressing the political contexts and changing notions of landscape and architecture in several works by the aforementioned individuals, I explore the role of Maya ruins in the national imagination of landscape and U.S. modernism. The transformative repurposing of Mesoamerican ruins in U.S. cultural production over the periods of interest reveals the complexity surrounding appropriations of indigenous American architecture since Catherwood's drawings essentially introduced the U.S. to the ruins of the Maya.

* * *

Ruins are more transient and changeable than permanent—slippery fictions that speak from their inscriptions (in drawing, writing, or otherwise) more so than from an ontology of buildings. Walter Benjamin's writings have wide relevance to not only the "irresistible decay"[14] of ruins, but also to the recording of the ancient in the modern. From his unfinished Arcades

Project, first published in 1982 under its German title, *Das Passagen-Werk,* one begins to sense, as Benjamin did, a haunting in the peeling veneer of Haussmann's Paris.[15] His intellectual meanders through the Parisian arcades and the radial symmetry of the post-revolutionary urban landscape contain not promise, but violence subdued by the broad sweep of the boulevard and the offerings of commerce.[16] Modern man, in his anxieties, would not undertake to *represent* the ancient world in modernity, per se, so much as he would *return* to it again and again; or it would return to him. Perhaps then we need not theorize ruins themselves so much as their reappearances, using a kind of aesthetic archaeology of art and architectural history. It is the *return* that concerns us here, as well what can be found when we fold back the strata of past and look on at the physiognomy of history.

In the early pages of his investigation into the aesthetics of the uncanny, Sigmund Freud bombards his reader with an exhaustive investigation into the word's (*unheimlich*) various translations.[17] As always with our Sigmund, there is a method to the madness—he demonstrates in semantics the double nature of the uncanny as both familiar and unfamiliar, forever tied to a notion of "home" that forms the root of the word. Roland Barthes, ruminating on a photograph of the Alhambra in *Camera Lucida* (1981), writes of the desire for "home":

> This longing to inhabit [*desir d'habitation*], if I observe it clearly in myself, is neither oneiric . . . nor empirical . . . it is fantasmatic, deriving from a kind of second sight which seems to bear me forward to a utopian time, or to carry me back to somewhere in myself: a double movement which Baudelaire celebrated . . . . Looking at these landscapes of predilection, it is as if *I were certain* of having been there or of going there . . . . Such then would be the essence of the landscape (chosen by desire): *heimlich*, awakening in me the mother.[18]

At last we return, full circle, to landscape, stamped always by the impress of home, of some origin[19]—that "eddy in the stream of becoming" that "in its current swallows the material involved in the process of genesis."[20] The examples dealt with in the following chapters, something like Freud's *unheimlich,* are shifting and sly. They dodge the usual readability of form. What has been swallowed in the stream of becoming? What is this uncanny terrain?

* * *

The import of indigenous aesthetics and subject matter on Anglo-American aesthetic traditions—whether in Catherwood's illustrations of the continent's ruins, Wright's Mesoamerican revival architecture, or the putatively radical de-sublimation at work amongst the American neo-avant-gardists like Smithson—sheds light on the unusual and occasionally overlooked relationship between ruination, U.S. art and architectural modernism, and the hierarchies that in many ways define the American landscape. Rather than a straightforward transfer or exchange of ideas between the United States and Latin America, we can think more productively of these as threads in a rather convoluted web that includes not only a tall order of Anglo-American cultural inheritance, but also the long shadow of Spain as a former colonizer. What spheres do these works inhabit? The recuperations of Maya architecture in U.S. contexts provide insight into the ways the imperial behaviors of the nineteenth-century United States can be traced through the aesthetics of modernity that emerged in the early to mid-twentieth century. Such behaviors can be likewise traced through the compulsion of individuals like Wright to objectify landscape in innovating what he conceived to be truly "American" and truly original. The postmodernist, Smithson, would too succumb to the myth of originality in his displacements of the broadly American landscape.

In many ways, the "lineage" implied by sequencing (as chapters) expositions of radically different sets of works is not a lineage whatsoever; the examples are as seemingly heterogeneous as they are historically disparate. However, what these three figures have in common is not only their engagement of the subject matter of Maya ruins, but also the integrality of these supposedly marginal or peripheral works to both their larger practice and to the mythical constitution of the modern American landscape. The differential assimilation of Maya forms into these ostensibly contrasting examples evidences the double (dare we say uncanny?) nature of U.S. national identity—at turns romanticizing and erasing indigenous

America, all the while dependent on the figure of the Other like uncanniness depends on the figure of "home."

The works of Catherwood, Wright, and Smithson continue to have a significant bearing on both the American landscape myth and the understanding of Maya antiquity in the United States. However, scholarship on Catherwood fails to provide a full account of his artistic legacy; his archives are lost, and the original drawings are gone. In addition—much to the vexation of he and Stephens's biographer, Victor Wolfgang von Hagen—Catherwood was much less of a public figure than Stephens. R. Tripp Evans's *Romancing the Maya: Mexican Antiquity in the American Imagination 1820-1915* (2004) has proven to be enormously influential in my regard of the *Incidents of Travel* texts; Evans's argument, however, is a largely literary (rather than visual) analysis focusing on competing claims over Maya antiquity generated within U.S. travel writing, archaeology, and the Mormon religion.

Wright's exploits in Mayan Revival architecture and Smithson's slide works and are examples that illustrate changing engagements with the cultural legacy of Maya ruins, yet a discussion of Wright's and Smithson's employment of Mesoamerican antiquity that addresses broader cultural and political ramifications has yet to be written. Wright's archives have migrated from his former studio in Arizona, Taliesin West, to Columbia University, where scholars can sift through plans and drawings or brave the imperious tone of Wright's letters in response to the pleas of his frustrated commissioners. Wright scholars and architectural historians like Anthony Alofsin, Neil Levine, and Dmitri Tselos tell tales of the "primitivist" segment of Wright's career at variance with what you will find in chapter two. What these authors lack in their writings on Wright's Mayan Revival experiments is an assessment of how the mid-career works speak to (rather than diverge from) Wright's legacy as the headlining American architect of the twentieth century, or how they gain new meaning against the backdrop of architectural revival during the

early decades of the twentieth century or beside the work of the (non-canonical) Mayan Revivalists.

As regards scholarship on Smithson, the donation of his papers to the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art in the 1990s resulted in a wealth of publications by scholars like Eugenie Tsai and Thomas Crow that foreground some of his early and lesser-known works. Jennifer L. Roberts's *Mirror-Travels: Robert Smithson and History* (2004), wherein Roberts investigates parallels between Stephens and Smithson, has the most resonance with my work on Smithson. It is indeed one of the most rigorous treatments of the Smithson archives I have come across, but significant contextual clues to Smithson's confounding practice are neglected in Roberts's ocular-centric historiographic analysis of "indifference"[21] in Smithson's Mexico works. Mark Linder is the only scholar to have pointedly addressed architectural crosscurrents in Smithson's work.[22] I seek to extend a reading of Smithson's work beyond what Linder addresses, a means of situating the unusual Mexico works within his larger practice and locating his attachment to a rather Anglo-American notion of the picturesque. Finally, Maya scholar and filmmaker Jesse Lerner's *The Maya of Modernism: Art, Architecture, and Film* (2011) addresses a vast array of works and figures (that includes Stephens, Wright, *and* Smithson). Lerner, however, generates a kind of survey, making thematic arguments in lieu of focused and extended analyses of individual cases.

The time span of roughly 1840 to the early 1970s is significant for several reasons. Most obviously, Stephens's and Catherwood's first set of *Incidents of Travel* volumes in 1841 and Smithson's 1972 slide lecture bracket the time period under consideration.[23] In *Esthetic Recognition of Ancient Amerindian Art* (1991), George Kubler describes 1841 as the decisive year for the recognition of aesthetic value in indigenous examples, citing Stephens and Catherwood as the lynchpins in this direction. Related to Kubler's argument, the time span addressed saw the academicization and institutionalization of the fields of ethnography,

anthropology, and archaeology detailed by James Clifford in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (1988) and in examples like Curtis Hinsley's *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology, 1846-1910* (1981). Meanwhile, aside from the writing of figures like James Oles (who does not deal directly with Maya subject matter), the conceivably imperialist dealings of the U.S. with Latin America in particular are largely excluded from many of the conversations that characterize twentieth-century art and architectural historical scholarship about recuperations of ancient Mesoamerican aesthetics and subject matter.[24]

The period of focus includes a wake of approximately three quarters of a century on each end of the *fin de siècle,* years of enormous upheaval and growth as the nineteenth century transitioned into the twentieth. The subjects of the dissertation also straddle the emergence of the concept of cultural heritage, the establishment of hegemonic narratives within U.S. art and architectural criticism, and the colonial-neocolonial-postcolonial divide.[25] The three major figures of interest—Catherwood, Wright, and Smithson—and their mediation of one particular landscape—the Maya ruin—demonstrate key examples of these phenomena as they played out in U.S. fine arts and architecture.

Each case of this dissertation exemplifies a confluence of ideas about landscape, heritage, nationhood, nature, and modernity. The broader aim of such a project is to plant the seeds for a more complex understanding of the political and cultural crosshairs of U.S.-Mexico relations over the three periods of interest—crosshairs that in many ways have defined the meaning of "landscape" in the United States. The project unpacks the replications, representations, mystifications, reifications, and even losses of the Maya ruin in fine arts and architecture to problematize the politics of culture across two seemingly disparate constructions—the ancient Maya and the modern (U.S.) American. By parsing out some of the deeply rooted notions surrounding the American landscape and how various ideas about

architecture and ruination have played out in the works of these three key figures of the nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries, we can take a further step in understanding the idiosyncratic convergence of art/architectural modernism with the politics of nationhood in the United States. Each chapter contains examples that illustrate not only the hierarchies of vision governing privileged sites like ruins, but also the "promiscuity of modernism."[26] Accordingly, the various transpositions of Maya ruins examined serve as a lens that exposes the underbelly of the hegemonic mythology of the American landscape.

[1] See Tim Ingold, "Landscape or Weather-World?," in *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge, and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011), 126-127, quoted in Emily Eliza Scott and Kirsten Swenson, "Introduction: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Land Use," in *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 3. Scott and Swenson quote Ingold: "Of early medieval provenance, ['landscape'] referred originally to an area of land bound into the everyday practices and customary usages of an agrarian community. However, its subsequent incorporation into the language of painterly depiction . . . has led generations of scholars to mistake the connotations of the suffix *-scape* for a particular 'scopic regime' of detailed and disinterested observation. They have, it seems, been fooled by a superficial resemblance between *scape* and *scope* that is, in fact, entirely fortuitous and has no foundation in etymology. 'Scope' comes from the classical Greek *skopos*—literally 'the target of the bowman, the mark towards which he gazes as he aims'—from which is derived the verb *skopein*, 'to look.' . . . . Medieval shapers of the land were not painters but farmers, whose purpose was not to render the material world in appearance rather than substance, but to wrest a living from the earth . . . . Nevertheless, the equation of the shape of the land with its look—of the *scaped* with the *scopic*—has become firmly lodged in the vocabulary of modernist art history."

[2] Scott and Swenson, "Introduction," 6.

[3] Raymond Williams, "Nature," in *Keywords* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 219, quoted in Emily Eliza Scott and Kirsten Swenson, "Introduction: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Land Use," in *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 4.

[4] Verdesio identifies the "ruin gaze" as a colonial or neo-colonial act "because of the way in which the gaze resignifies and therefore appropriates the space where an Other or Others once lived." See Gustavo Verdesio, "Invisible at a Glance: Indigenous Cultures of the Past, Ruins, Archaeological Sites and Our Regimes of Visibility," in *Ruins of Modernity,* eds. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 343-344.

[5] As early as 1917, the art historian Herbert Spinden conceived of an American archaic period as "a fundamental underlying cultural substratum for all New World high cultures." See Gordon R. Willey, "The Interrelated Rise of the Native Cultures of Middle and South America," in The Anthropological Society of Washington, *New Interpretations of Aboriginal American Culture History, 75th Anniversary Volume* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1972; repr. 1955 edition), 28. Positivist thinkers like British sociologist Herbert Spencer used evolutionary ideas to support simultaneously biological *and* social transformations from "a state of primitive homogeneity to complex heterogeneity." See Jackson T. Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 20-21.

[6] They also provided a means of achieving nostalgic distance from the past or closure (from colonial violence, for example). Guyatri Spivak maintains that "a nostalgia for lost origins can be detrimental to the exploration of social realities within the critique of imperialism." See Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader,* ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 87.

[7] To this we might add Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley's observation that "archaeological materials are usually temporally extensive and may reveal major shifts in the symbolic position held by similar artifacts in relation to ideology over time." See Miller and Tilley's introduction to *Ideology, Power and Prehistory*, eds. Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 4.

[8] Norman Bryson in conversation with the author, March 27, 2018.

[9] Though the Maya civilization stretched across a portion of Mesoamerica comprised of modern-day Guatemala, Belize, Southeastern Mexico, and the western parts of Honduras and El Salvador, the subjects of the dissertation zero in on U.S.-Mexico relations as the locus of transnational issues in which all three major figures of the dissertation are implicated.

[10] I use the terms "hemispheric antiquity" and "American antiquity" in this dissertation somewhat interchangeably to refer to a geography of antiquity belonging to the Americas (located in the Western Hemisphere). George Kubler describes the ethnocentrism of world geography: "In its present coding as five continents, America alone has been mapped as hemispheric . . . . America extends from pole to pole, separated from all others by oceans, and separating Europe from Asia, in a pattern suited to call it the

New World, as first perceived by European map-makers. Hence American, from the beginning of the name, has been regarded as a unit, as when Waldseemüller in 1507 named the New World for the navigator Amerigo Vespucci." See George Kubler, "Aesthetics since Amerindian Art before Columbus," in *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past,* ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 37.

[11] The descriptor, "Mayan," is in fact a misnomer. Mayan refers only to the language, while "Maya," as both a noun *and* adjective, describes the people and their culture. On a similar note, Wright's prolific writings include mention of "indigenous" architecture and architectural ornament time and again, but *his* use of the term is not to be confused with suggestion of indigenous peoples and their architecture. Instead, his use of "indigenous" is more along the lines of his self-prescribed organic architecture.

[12] This term is frequently rehearsed in academic circles as a reference to the time period from "the late 1950s to the middle 1970s." See, for example, Arthur Marwick, "The Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties: Voices of Reaction, Protest, and Permeation," *The International History Review* 27, no. 4 (December 2005): 780, or, more recently, titles like Christopher B. Strain's *The Long Sixties: America, 1955-1973,* published in 2017. Donna M. De Salvo notes Fredric Jameson's assertion that the 1960s didn't end until 1972 to 1974 in *Open Systems: Rethinking Art c. 1970.* (London: Tate Modern, 2005), exhibition catalogue, 12.

[13] Miller and Tilley, "Ideology, Power and Prehistory: An Introduction," 14.

[14] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* trans. John Osborne (London and New York: Verso, 1998; repr. Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963), 178. The tail end of the epigraph appears in *many* existing academic texts that take ruins as their subject. Indeed, Michael S. Roth, Claire Lyons, and Charles Merewether gave a rather large nod to Benjamin in the title of a 1997 exhibition catalogue for the Getty Museum; see Roth and Lyons, *Irresistible Decay: Ruins Reclaimed* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1997), exhibition catalogue.

[15] In the mid-nineteenth century, Napoleon III selected Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann to undertake a massive, decades-long urban restructuring of Paris. The arcades, however, the centerpiece of Benjamin's project, "come into being in the decade and a half after 1822." Benjamin's project is a gaze back at the nineteenth century from the crow's nest of the twentieth. See the English translation, Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999), 3. The (original, German) posthumous version was published under the title *Das Passagen-Werk,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982).

[16] This is a subject theorized also by Michel Foucault. See *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd ed., trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995; repr. 1977).

[17] Freud begins his formative text on the uncanny, "Das Unheimliche" (1919) with the following lines: "Only rarely does the psychoanalyst feel impelled to engage in *aesthetic investigations*" (italics mine). Though Freud's use of "aesthetic" was not meant to connote an art object, but rather form more generally, this revealing introductory sentence has sanctioned art and architectural theory's recuperation of the Freudian uncanny ad infinitum as a concept married right away to an investigation of aesthetics. See Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David Mclintock (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 123. I also refer here to Anthony Vidler's elaboration of the Freudian uncanny in his 1992 book, in which Vidler explores various themes and concepts of modernity (chiefly the Freudian uncanny) relative to the figure of the architecture. See Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994).

[18] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981), 40. It is of no small consequence that, as Michael Taussig observes in *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 177, America is "imagiz[ed] . . . as a Woman" in colonial practices of the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries.

[19] Dennis Porter observes that this passage in *Camera Lucida* "reanimates the notion of 'homeness' in . . . *Heim, Heimlich,* and *Heimat* or 'home,' 'homey,' and 'homeland.'" See Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 187.

[20] Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* 45.

[21] See Jennifer L. Roberts, "Landscapes of Indifference: Robert Smithson and John Lloyd Stephens in Yucatán," *The Art Bulletin* 82, no. 3 (September, 2000): 544-567.
[22] See Mark Linder, "Sitely Windows: Robert Smithson's Architectural Criticism," *Assemblage*, no. 39 (August 1999): 6-35.
[23] Architectural historians Harry Francis Malgrave and David Goodman note the first nails in the modernist coffin—the passing of Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, "the last two 'masters' of the gilded pantheon," in 1969, the year of Smithson's expedition to the Yucatan. See Harry Francis Malgrave and David Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the Present* (West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).
[24] Several texts published by Dumbarton Oaks represent efforts to remedy this gap in scholarship—Elizabeth Hill Boone's *Falsifications and Misreconstructions of Pre-Columbian Art* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1978) and edited collection of essays, *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past* (1993). Such works tackle a number of worthwhile topics, but they neglect discussion of Wright and Smithson. Meanwhile, works like Peter Briggs's edited volume, *The Maya Image in the Western World* (Albuquerque: Regents of the University of New Mexico, 1986), exhibition catalogue, deals with some of these issues and individuals, but the writings included ultimately approach fine arts and architecture from the cultural histories of archaeology and anthropology.
[25] James Clifford discusses both neocolonialism and post-colonialism at length in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). Postcolonialism as a discourse did not emerge until the 1950s and 1960s with the writings of figures like Frantz Fanon and Edward Said. However, the typical understanding of colonialism as the expansionist process through which territories are acquired and/or directly exploited underwent substantial changes at the close of the nineteenth century. Neocolonialism designates the process through which imperialism was sublimated into indirect forms of control (via, for example, linguistic or cultural means) during the twentieth century.
[26] Mariana Wardwell in conversation with the author, June 4, 2014.

CHAPTER 1

Ruins Naturalized: Frederick Catherwood's Architectural Landscapes

The finding of an object is in fact a refinding of it.

-Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," 1905

In his visit to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, the Victorian Era novelist Anthony Trollope was put off by the "bastard gothic"[1] architecture of the Smithsonian Institution in the nation's capital city. He was even more displeased with the "useless, shapeless, graceless pile of stones"[2] that made up the Washington Monument. He likened the spectacle to the "genius of the city," which he described as "vast, pretentious, bold, boastful, . . . ugly, uncompromising, and false."[3] The political yearnings and cultural deficits of the growing nation were a fact that did not go unnoticed. No great architectural antiquities decorated the substrata of the post-revolutionary United States. In short, there was nothing for U.S. architects to emulate; this shortcoming was blatantly clear in the eclectic revivalist architecture that sprang up in the nation's expanding metropolises and vast stretches of land. The United States was without a hallowed past like that of Europe. Some outsiders conceived of this lacunae as a virtue. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote in 1827: "America, you have it better / Than our old continent; / You have no ruined castles / And no primordial stones. / Your soul, your inner life / Remain untroubled by / Useless memory / And wasted strife."[4] Within the U.S., however, the supposed blank slate of the American past was an aporia augmented by the inferiority complex of a growing nation that was at once a post-colonial territory and a nascent empire. Mounting economic and political power called for a myth of origin in the American landscape.

In the late 1830s, the United States fastened its attentions on Mesoamerican antiquities and native America with vigor in step with the rapidly unfolding tentacles of Manifest Destiny west and south across the North American continent. Indigenous archaeological remains within

U.S. borders were unsuitable for such a purpose as they would have undermined the "exclusivist universalism"[5] of the Anglo-American perception of a moral and God-given right—"animated by history in its most direct and aggressive form: progress"[6]—to the nation's territories. Moreover, the indigenous architectural landscape within U.S. borders did not conform to the normative European standards of "settlement" nor "architecture."[7] The lack of an architectural pedigree rebuked by Trollope and praised by Goethe was also a partial means of justifying expansion. Curtis Hinsley observes: "Integral to the [U.S.] national teleology was a picture of the American continent waiting through the ages, pristine and nonhistorical, for the White man's arrival in order to play out a providentially assigned role . . . . Accordingly, Americans lent no moral significance to Indian 'history,' which was, as they saw it, not history at all, but the meaningless meanderings of a benighted people."[8] Since the provenance of the American landscape could not be founded in the remains of the mound builders within the borders of the continental United States, the great pyramids of the Maya emerged as a convenient, if peripheral, locus of U.S. attentions.[9]

In 1839, U.S. travel writer John Lloyd Stephens and English architect and draftsman Frederick Catherwood embarked on a jointly diplomatic and proto-archaeological expedition through Mexico and Central America. The regions visited by the duo were in a state of uncertainty and turmoil during the first half of the nineteenth century and were outside the purview of U.S. settlement and expansion. Modern-day Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua comprised, beginning in 1821, the precarious Central American Federation. After the Mexican War of Independence from 1810 to 1821, the first Republic of Yucatán in Southeastern Mexico was established in 1823, almost immediately after which it was voluntarily annexed to the Federal Republic of United Mexican States. Yucatán declared independence from the Mexican state a second time in 1841, and it would not be part of Mexico again until 1848. In the wake of Mexican independence and fueled by external political

maneuvering, secessionist Yucatán was also on the eve of what would become a half-century long caste war. Moreover, in U.S. crosshairs were predecessors of the Panama Canal—the prospects of a transcontinental canal by way of Nicaragua and a railroad to connect the eastern and western shores of the Americas at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.[10]

Stephens was not adept at politics as a citizen-diplomat, and he tendered his resignation as American Minister to the Central American Federation with a brief notice to Secretary John Forsyth that "after diligent search, no government found."[11] Thereafter, the majority of he and Catherwood's time was dedicated to excavating and documenting the wealth of antiquities at their fingertips. Two separate expeditions—the first from 1839 to 1840 and the second from 1841 to 1842—culminated in the publication of two sets of two-volume works: the 1841 *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* and *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan,* published in 1843. Accompanied by approximately two hundred engraved reproductions of Catherwood's original drawings, the writings in the *Incidents of Travel* volumes chronicle the duo's travels to dozens of Maya archaeological sites. Not long after publication of the second set of volumes, Catherwood published an 1844 folio of selected illustrations at his own expense. The folio, titled *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, includes a chromolithographed title page and twenty-five exquisite lithographic plates of much greater size and detail than the engraved illustrations for the *Incidents of Travel* texts.[12]

Stephens and Catherwood were not only the first to exhaustively document Maya ruins for U.S. audiences. They were also among the first and certainly the most recognized in attributing the architectural remains of the Maya to indigenous American rather than migratory or "Old World"[13] builders, thereby laying claim to a period of hemispheric American antiquity that satisfied, albeit "incidentally," the nationalistic desires of the growing country.[14] The duo, and Catherwood in particular, not only marked out the ruins of the Maya as subject matter worthy of aesthetic consideration; they also instituted a "ruin gaze"[15] for an American audience. In this

chapter, I explore the consolidation of this ruin gaze evident in Catherwood's illustrations of Maya ruins. Though widely considered for his groundbreaking contributions to architectural illustration, Catherwood's drawings merit reexamination in the context of both European and American landscape traditions as well as the more populist art form of the panorama.

Catherwood's forays with panoramic depiction in England as well as his own venture, a gas-lit rotunda in Lower Manhattan, had a substantive bearing on several of the scenes from his 1844 folio, *Views of Ancient Monuments*. The late eighteenth-century neologism, "panorama," is now somewhat synonymous with "vista," but the word came about as a descriptor of the art form, a replacement of the initial name for panoramic depiction, "*La Nature à Coup d'Oeil,*"[16] which, roughly translated, means "nature at a glance." Over time, "panorama" has also come to connote "prospect," "survey," or "appraisal"—all terms unsurprisingly used in land surveying or its various outcomes; and though himself a British transplant, Catherwood generated an incidental means of envisioning landscape for the burgeoning United States. Catherwood's illustrations, in their invocations of and departures from various landscape traditions, racialized tropes, and allegorical invocations of ruination, convey the impulses and anxieties of the American ruin gaze, domesticating Mesoamerican antiquity and staking out an architectural pedigree for the hegemonic mythology of the Anglo-American landscape.

The ruins of the Maya—now among the most celebrated archaeological sites in the Western Hemisphere—are not landmarks of a fully constituted indigenous past, but mirages in historical memory. Unlike the archaeological remains of domestic U.S. indigenous populations, Maya ruins are in a region that in the early nineteenth century was without a political apparatus to withstand the dually increasing military and cultural monopoly of the United States in the Americas. Apart from fulfilling the apparent lack of an American classical antiquity, Stephens's and Catherwood's aesthetic recognition of their architectural subjects was also deeply rooted in the social politics of landscape representation.

Nineteenth-century U.S. national identity was uniquely contingent on uneasy historical juxtapositions: the *terra nullius* fictions of discovery, the expansionist clutches of Manifest Destiny, the country's rising status as an imperial power, and latent fears of hybridity, all intimately tied to the "problem" of indigenous populations. As a former colony, the United States of the nineteenth century was bound up in negation—an Anglo-American empire dis-identified as imperial, dependent not only on a vaguely Orientalist purview of indigeneity, but also in many ways upon the figures of Spain, the most prominent (albeit waning) colonial rival during the nineteenth century, and England, former colonizer.[17] As the U.S. unfurled across the North American continent, so did its aspirations to justify the violence wrought by such expansion in a double movement of repulsion (tied to the eradication of the American Indian) and romance (evidenced by the emergent ideal of the waning "noble savage"). This disarray is refracted in Catherwood's illustrations, which interpolate between allegorically-laden pastoral, picturesque, panoramic, and sublime ruinscapes.

The "Lost" Maya

Before Stephens and Catherwood embarked on their travels in 1839, knowledge of Maya ruins was sparse. Aside from Spain's intentional eradication of indigenous cultural artifacts, where ruins offered the convenience of "pre-fab" building materials the structures were dismantled and rehabilitated as roads and buildings for the cities and towns of Spanish America.[18] Prior to the waning of the Spanish Empire, the seat of its colonial authority was in Central Mexico. There, Hernán Cortés captured the emperor Cuauhtemoc at Tenochtitlan, defeating the Aztecs—an event that would amass mythic significance for the Spanish conquest of the Americas akin to Christopher Columbus's fabled "discovery" of the New World. The Spanish crown had consolidated its power in and around the area of Mexico City; thus the independence of the newly minted Mexican state in the 1820s was tied to a symbolic re-

appropriation of the Aztec kingdom—a reclamation of heritage that would be built into Mexican national identity over the course of the next century.

On the other hand, the Maya—a "lost" people according to the dominant fictions of Spanish (and, generally-speaking, much Western European) lore—were of peripheral significance to first the Spanish, then the Mexican state. The Spanish crown carried out no architectural surveys of Maya ruins until the final decades of the Spanish Empire's hold on Mesoamerica. Yet even these—the documentation of the 1787 Antonio Del Río expedition, for example—fell into obscurity in the Guatemalan royal archives of Charles III. In the context of the geographic and symbolic marginality of these regions to Mexico (inherited, in part, from Spain, but held together also by the lingering racism of the *casta* system), Maya ruins were an easy target for the American ruin gaze.

With the exception of the writings of Prussian naturalist Alexander von Humboldt in his travels through New Spain between 1799 and 1804, nineteenth-century European explorers almost exclusively described the stylistic influence and, on occasion, the ancestry of indigenous builders themselves, as coming from the *elsewhere*.[19] Humboldt, in contrast, sought to thwart presumptions of the New World's inferiority and belatedness. Yet Humboldt, whose work Stephens greatly admired, made no remark on the ruined cities of the Maya. His *Views of the Cordilleras and Monuments of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas,* a wonder of bio-geographical study, instead focuses on the ruins of Central Mexico in and around his route through Acapulco, Mexico City, and Veracruz, in addition to a wealth of material from his travels through South America and Cuba.

Transatlantic migration theories that explained away Mesoamerica's ancient stone ruins formed the slim core of writings available to interested onlookers like Stephens and Catherwood, but such texts were not widely accessible to the American public. The 1822 publication of *Descriptions of the Ruins of an Ancient City*—an embellished English translation

of the rescued documents from the Del Río expedition featuring engravings by Jean-Frédéric Maximilien de Waldeck—inspired the duo's travels. The text includes suggestions of Maya "intercourse with the Romans" and "reasonable ground for hazarding a conjecture that some inhabitants of that polished nation [Italy] did visit these [Mesoamerican] regions."[20] According to Del Río, the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans had visited "long enough to enable the Indian tribes to imitate their ideas and adopt, in a rude and awkward manner, such arts as their invaders thought fit to inculcate."[21] Such assertions followed a neat lineage of inheritance from Old World to New.

Stephens, Catherwood, and the Old World

Prior to meeting one another, both Stephens and Catherwood made the rounds of typical sites for a young gentleman's Grand Tour. After his studies as a draftsman, Catherwood traveled through Greece and Rome, making architectural sketches. A decade later, Stephens, an upper-middle class lawyer from New Jersey, made the transatlantic journey at the advice of a family doctor to visit the "particularly salubrious climate"[22] of Italy to improve his health. Stephens caught the antiquarian bug and stayed on to travel after his recovery. He was unknowingly following in Catherwood's footsteps through Eurasia—both would go on to visit Egypt and the Holy Land on separate occasions, though Catherwood would not return to England for several years.

Both architect and adventurous lawyer dreamt of antiquities. And both traveled with pen in hand, Catherwood as a classically-trained draftsman and Stephens as an emerging travel writer. Struck by Catherwood's remarkable artistry, British aristocrat Robert Hay enlisted the architect's skills for a personally funded expedition up the Nile River in 1828—Catherwood's induction into expeditionary draftsmanship. In 1833, Catherwood broke away from what would become the decade-long Hay expedition to work for a brief period as an architectural advisor for

mosque restoration in the Levantine territories under the purview Pasha Mehemet Ali before joining yet another expedition to the less traveled regions of Sinai and Arabia Petraea.

Only a few years later, in Jerusalem, Stephens came across a map made from lithographs of Catherwood's sketches of the city, but it was not until both figures returned to London that Stephens made Catherwood's acquaintance. A new form of entertainment sated the thirst for landscape depiction—a rotunda on Leicester Square that housed panoramas of scenes both sought after and previously unknown to London audiences. It was here that entrepreneur and alumnus of the Royal Academy, Robert Burford, used Catherwood's sketches as schema for three large panoramic murals of Jerusalem, Thebes, and Baalbec. Indeed, the kind of vision invoked by Catherwood's panoramic scenes would play a consequential role in his landscape illustrations of the Americas. Having visited the pictured scenes, Stephens attended a lecture by the draftsman, and the two were quick to discover their common interest in ruins. Soon after, Catherwood would follow Stephens back to New York, where he farmed out his skills as an architect and lecturer before purchasing a tract of land to complete his own and greatly successful panoramic rotunda in Lower Manhattan. Meanwhile, Stephens's sorties in travel writing overseas received a great deal of praise and attention, and he was able to garner a publishing deal with Harper and Brothers to print some American travel writing. Catherwood was up to the task of joining Stephens to acquire new material for his panorama and illustrate the grand and mysterious antiquities the two anticipated from perusing the findings of the 1805 Guillermo Dupaix expedition and de Waldeck's 1838 *Voyage pittoresque,* a text inspired by the latter's earlier engravings for the Del Río translation.[23] Shortly thereafter, Stephens and Catherwood set sail to visit ruins about which very little accurate information was known.[24]

Indigenous Paternity

The ruins of the New World posed a considerable threat to existing narratives. The more or less interchangeable terms, "Orient" and "Levant"[25] are the Latin and French terms, respectively, for "rising." It seemed that as the sun rose in the East, casting historical light over the great pyramids of Giza and the Old City of Jerusalem in the nineteenth-century altars of history, it could not too rise in the west over the indigenous ruins of the Americas. The authority of a historical timeline emanating from ancient Greece, Rome, and the Orient was ostensibly unshakable and preserved or replicated in much travel writing of the nineteenth century.

The counterarguments Stephens and Catherwood posed in writing to prior accounts of the region's archaeological heritage merit brief consideration. In both the *Incidents of Travel* volumes and Catherwood's 1844 folio of selected illustrations, writer and draftsman took pains to discredit fantasies about the origins of "those mysterious buildings which have given rise to so much speculation."[26] In contrast to earlier claims of transatlantic paternity, Stephens wrote: "We are not warranted in going back to any ancient nation of the Old World for the builders of these cities; that they are not the works of people who have passed away, and whose history is lost . . . there are strong reasons to believe them the creation of the same races who inhabited the country at the time of the Spanish conquest, or of some not very distant progenitors."[27]

In a brief introduction to his 1844 folio, Catherwood echoed and reemphasized views shared with Stephens that the ruins they had encountered attested "in their ornaments and proportions, to the prevalence of an indigenous and well-established system of design, varying from any known models in the old world."[28] Later in his introduction, Catherwood praised the efforts of earlier antiquarians, yet he took a mercurial turn to chastise the "eminently unphilosophical"[29] musings of his predecessors:

> With regard to the various theories that have been formed to trace the nations that peopled the American continent, through their migrations, to their original habitations in the Old World, we find them all resting for support upon a few vague similarities of rites

> and customs, more or less common amongst every branch of the human family. Besides, the idea that civilisation [sic], and its attendant arts, is in every case derivative, and always owing to a transmission from a cultivated to an unpolished people . . . only removes further back, without explaining the original difficulty of invention, which must somewhere have taken place; and if at any time in one country, undoubtedly a similar train of circumstances may have led to similar results in another.[30]

Catherwood went on to reemphasize in even clearer terms his adamant view of indigenous patrimony:

> The results arrived at by Mr. Stephens and myself, after a full and precise comparative survey of the ancient remains, coincide with this opinion, and are briefly: —that they are not of immemorial antiquity, the work of unknown races; but that, as we now see them, they were occupied, and possibly erected, by the Indian tribes in possession of the country at the time of the Spanish conquest,—that they are the production of an indigenous school of art, adapted to the natural circumstances of the country, and to the civil and religious polity then prevailing,—and that they present but very slight and accidental analogies with the works of any people or country in the Old World.[31]

Still, both Stephens and Catherwood, in their separate publications and in the fashion of other writers of their day, made repeated allusions to Old World examples. In the first set of *Incidents of Travel* volumes, Stephens was "reminded" at different junctures of "park scenery in England,"[32] "the finest monuments of the Egyptians,"[33] even "the great waste-places of Turkey and Asia Minor."[34] In the 1843 publication, Stephens drew out similar comparisons; for example, a ruined structure appeared "similar to the earliest arches . . . of the Etruscans and Greeks, as seen at Arpino in the kingdom of Naples, and Tiryns in Greece."[35] Stephens commented at length on the formal qualities of several stone idols at Copan, in Guatemala, remarking of one sculpture on "workmanship . . . equal to the finest Egyptian sculpture."[36] Yet, to Stephens, the terror-inducing grotesqueness of another stela in the same group was suggestive not of gifted and industrious craftsmen, but instead of a "blind, bigoted, and superstitious people."[37] Stephens and Catherwood fostered a "perception of similarity within radical difference"[38] with regard to the natives and their ancient architecture. In drawing out analogies with familiar aesthetic references, Stephens's narration both set the region's ruins on par with the antiquities of the Old World and imaginatively severed ties (despite his claims to the contrary) between

indigene and ruin and between former colonizer and former colonial territory, thus freeing the antiquities for cultural reassignment.[39]

In his self-published folio, Catherwood too compared indigenous Mesoamerican ruins and those of the Old World, noting that "the same principle [of arch construction] was used in the earliest times by the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Etrurians."[40] Catherwood claimed that the Maya use of architectural decoration is "like the same art amongst the ancient Egyptians," even adding that "they had attained a step beyond the practice of that nation [Egypt], approaching more nearly to the less severe style of art found in the frescoes of Pompeii and Herculaneum."[41] Catherwood placed American antiquity within the hierarchy of established precedents for beauty and order in ruination, a reaction, perhaps, to longstanding perceptions that American antiquities were undeserving of aesthetic consideration.

American Degeneracy, Alterity, and the Amerindian

Without its own cache of ancient monuments (at least those deemed worthy of a ruin gaze), increasing national self-awareness added fuel to what was a partially inherited and partially self-perpetuated inferiority complex. The "theory of [American] degeneracy"[42] dated to the late eighteenth-century publication of *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* by the natural philosopher, George Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. According to Buffon's systematic treatment (and extension of the "esthetic revulsion"[43] toward the Americas espoused by Francis Bacon), a later date of emergence "from the Flood" was the going explanation for the perceived inferiority of *all* American species and backwardness of the continent as a whole.[44] Buffon's thesis, augmented by Abbé Corneille de Pauw, also surfaced in the writings of Immanuel Kant. Kant stated that de Pauw was "worth reading," and referred to Amerindians as "a half-developed Hunnish race . . . incapable of self-rule and destined for extermination."[45]

Stephens's and Catherwood's dual insistence on disparity and equivalence between Maya ruins and Old World antiquities took place during the same period that the archaeological inheritance within U.S. borders was positioned as inferior to the continent's ancient stone ruins. Study of the earthworks of the Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys discovered in 1780 and systematically researched after the War of 1812 culminated in an 1820 publication by Caleb Atwater. However, Atwater did not "find" an indigenous antiquity with any aesthetic potential among the relics of the American Indians within U.S. territories. Instead, like many of his contemporaries, Atwater's writing on the mound building civilizations formed a tributary in a rather ethnocentric narrative. He speculated on waves of migration and displacement from north to south—an attempt to articulate one end of the seemingly unbridgeable gulf between, as described by Curtis Hinsley, the "high civilization of the ancient Americans" and the "more primitive condition of the historical Indians."[46]

In his writings on mimesis and alterity, Michael Taussig elaborates on the duality essential to "Janus-faced" conceptions of the Other. This sense, he argues, "corresponds to the great mythologies of modern progress. The good savage is a representative of unsullied Origin, a sort of Eden before the Fall when harmony prevailed, while the bad savage is the sign of the permanent wound inflicted by history, the sign of waste, degeneracy, and thwarted narrative."[47] The same year of the first *Incidents of Travel* volumes*,* the first U.S. agent in South America and Secretary of State, Joel R. Poinsett, described the activities of the Department of American History and Antiquities. The Department, he wrote, studied "'the Indian races, now fading from the earth; their mounds and pyramids, and temples and ruined cities,' as well as questions of their origins and subsequent 'degeneration.'"[48] The "degeneration" to which both Taussig (albeit critically) and Poinsett refer—initially theorized by Buffon—was thus displaced from characterizations which included Anglo-America and inscribed firmly in the institutionalized view of living Amerindians.

Antiquarian Illustration and Aesthetic Consideration

Classical colonialism entailed an explicit relocation of the politico-economic core of power and subsequent disenfranchisement of the colonial subject. By the nineteenth century, nations increased their investment in the relocation of *cultural capital*. For example, the French campaigns in the Orient, starting in 1798, entailed not only the acquisition of physical specimens of cultural property, but also the immaterial assets of aesthetic import and artistic style. Nations thus acquired "formal and official visible hallmark[s] of the moral and political authority of empire."[49] The work of antiquarians and natural historians in the Americas was no exception, and a whole system of knowledge was henceforth relocated *elsewhere*.

These "elsewheres" included emerging cultural institutions like the Smithsonian, founded in 1846, only a few years following Stephens's feverish plans for transporting Mesoamerican antiquities he and Catherwood encountered in Guatemala: "All day I had been brooding over the title-deeds . . . [and] suggested to Mr. Catherwood 'an operation.' (Hide your heads, ye speculators in up-town lots!) To buy Copan! Remove the monuments of a by-gone people from the desolate region in which they were buried, set them up in the 'great commercial emporium,' and found an institution to be the nucleus of a great national museum of American antiquities!"[50]

As Stephens pronounced in his first volumes of 1841, "The field of American antiquities has been opened."[51] Yet around the time of Stephens's and Catherwood's expeditions, Europeans did not conceive of the ancient monuments of the Americas as they viewed the ruins of classical antiquity. The European naturalist perspective typically "saw *ars Americana* as grotesque or crude,"[52] a correlate of nineteenth-century conceptions of indigenous populations. Despite Stephens's proclivities to occasionally engender such views of the specimens he encountered, Catherwood's illustrations painted a different picture. Figures like Humboldt had certainly done an admirable job of dispelling theories of degeneracy from the perspective of a

natural historian, but it was not until the decisive year of 1841 that Catherwood's documentation paved the way for *aesthetic* recognition of New World antiquities.[53]

R. Tripp Evans observes the remarkable inaccuracies of antiquarian depiction among Catherwood's predecessors.[54] Early illustrators of the ruins were seemingly without the cognitive apparatus to understand what were, at the time, alien forms. Classical antiquity and the Orient provided more familiar aesthetic vocabularies through which many expeditioners quite literally *saw* the subjects of their study. For example, Jose Luciano Castañeda's drawings from the 1805 Dupaix expedition depict variously Egyptian-type and Greco-Roman forms. A short time later, the 1822 British publication of the del Río expedition included Waldeck's rather embellished engravings of original drawings by Ricardo Almendáriz, which already contained a variety of inaccuracies and discrepancies with del Río's written content. Waldeck's later engravings from his own expedition, published in the 1838 *Voyage pittoresque*, were not much of an improvement, suggestive of Egyptianized examples in accordance with one of the (several) recurring European views of ancient America—that of Levantine descent.

Early recordings of American antiquities often privileged legibility and simplicity over accurate detail, using typically frontal (or otherwise pared down) depictions that fill a picture plane unlittered by scenery. Consider, for the sake of comparison, the palace tower at Palenque. Almendáriz's *Palace Tower at Palenque* is inaccurate from an architectural standpoint (not to mention, rather banal), especially in comparison to the patently imaginative descriptions in del Río's notes and in later publications of the drawings; in Almendáriz's illustrations, the tower is free-standing and decorated with inset openings and "decidedly non-Maya elliptical archways."[55] Castañeda's depiction of the same tower nearly two decades later for the Dupaix expedition is equally flawed, yet surprisingly dissimilar from Almendáriz's drawing. The larger schema of the pyramid (including the tower) features none of the lush surrounding jungle. Castañeda flattened perspectival space into a single plane as though he

had imagined a slice through certain (also imagined) elements of the structure. He then added an additional level to the tower such that its apex forms something of an obelisk, an Egyptian architectural flourish very popular in Europe that draftsman of the time had a great deal of familiarity with.

Next to Almendáriz's illustration, Catherwood's drawing of the tower conveys a remarkable integrity to architectural design. More noticeably, however, his drawings include detailed renderings of the environs of each specimen—an altogether different ruinscape than the clinical, yet erroneous treatments of Catherwood's antecedents. Had Catherwood been solely committed to capturing architectural details, we might expect to see the sparse flora of Almendáriz's tower or bare reconstructions like Castañeda's drawing of the same structure in 1805. Instead, Catherwood gives rise to "complete" landscapes in the artistic sense.

Additional to Stephens's and Catherwood's written descriptions, the aesthetics bound up in Catherwood's landscapes aided in linking the Old World to American ruins. The broad vistas Catherwood captured in the *Incidents of Travel* volumes*,* like Plate XIII, "Uxmal, Casa de los Palomos [sic]," feature spectacularly backlit ruins that rise monumentally before the viewer. The work demonstrates lessons inherited, no doubt, during Catherwood's training. Tutored by J.M.W. Turner and Sir John Soane, Catherwood studied at the School of the Royal Academy in London. Soane introduced the young artist to the architectural renderings of Giovanni Battista Piranesi.[56] A great advocate of neoclassical architecture, Soane conveyed to those under his tutelage the "sublime elegance of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman architecture,"[57] but it was Piranesi's grand yet detailed treatment of his subjects that turned Catherwood's attentions to antiquities. Like the Roman ruins in Piranesi's 1774 etching, *A View of the Upper Parts of the Ruins of the Baths of Diocletian,* the architectural remains in Plate XIII dramatically recede into the distance, filling the left portion of the picture and disappearing toward a vanishing point near the right edge of the image.

Consider also Plate XXII from Catherwood's 1844 folio, "Teocallis, at Chichen-Itza." The viewer gazes up at the ruins from a low vantage point and angle that suggest both the pyramid's lofty height and the depth of the structure's massive, sprawling base. The pyramid and its crowning edifice are majestic, pleasantly bathed in sunlight and framed on the left by a backlit grove of trees and on the right by some palms and low-lying shrubs. A few stones and broken fragments litter the foreground, among them the yawning serpent head of a carved cornice. One can detect Catherwood's aptitude for landscape composition and regard for Piranesi's architectural renderings; the perspective and orientation of *The Pyramid of Caius Cestius* (ca. 1750-1778) are more or less the same as Plate XXII. Though Piranesi's scale and shadowing are noticeably more theatrical—his towering pyramid fills a great deal more of the picture plane and its soaring faces are contrasted with Catherwood's nonetheless monumental *Teocallis*—the two both demonstrate meticulous attention to architectural elements, a similar penchant for foreground details that provide a sense of scale, and a dual dedication to aesthetic import and didactic content.

Catherwood's "General Views" and Panoramic Vision

In contrast to a gaze which interpolates in Stephens's prose (and in the largely simplified engravings for the *Incidents of Travel* volumes) from scenes of awe and majesty to run-down vernacular scenery, the compositions in Catherwood's 1844 folio of lithographs are by and large harmonious and meticulously-rendered. The distant ruins depicted in several of the images: Plate VI, "General View of Palenque;" Plate VIII, "General View of Las Monjas, at Uxmal;" Plate XIII, "General View of Uxmal, Taken from the Archway of Las Monjas, Looking South;" and Plate XVI, "General View of Kabah" comprise a picturesque—approaching panoramic—backdrop to scenes of human activity (a feature Piranesi often used to suggest the scale of his architectural subjects). R. Tripp Evans argues that the idyllic architectural specimens in the

background of Catherwood's scenes allegorize the remote "distance" between magnificent ancient past and the "present degradation"[58] and cultural poverty Stephens and Catherwood perceived among the region's contemporary, subaltern constituents and, occasionally, their ruins. Yet the depictions of ruins in the "General View" illustrations punctuating the folio may alternatively suggest a look out at the *future*. Their distant skies perhaps correspond to the growing horizons of the imperial gaze and the rather far-reaching attempts to mark out a sense of belonging—of destiny—in the broadly American landscape.

Even more important than staking out architectural origins was the means to *visualize* the landscapes containing such specimens, the desire for visuality itself being of premier significance with the emergence of the modern viewing subject of the nineteenth century. Unusual also in their treatment of both space and temporality, the "General View" scenes have more in common with the type of perspective and didactic comportment of panoramic depiction than with most canonical landscape painting.[59] Featuring elevated points of view over seemingly endless landscapes, the "General View" illustrations in particular depart from the more frontal, close-up schemes such as Plate V, "Idol and Altar, at Copan," and dramatically-rendered Piranesian ruins like "Teocallis, at Chichen-Itza." They instead show far-off ruins and clusters of structures level with the horizon as a means of suggesting great distances, situating the viewer as one peripheral to any foreground action but still intimated by sight *into* the landscape at hand, a characteristic feature of panoramic painting.

Linked to the "ideal landscape" of the nineteenth century—characterized by a rationally ordered, "clear, harmonious landscape" and "*coulisse* arrangement of foreground elements around a distant vista"[60]—panoramas superseded the type of painterly legibility granted by the frame. First developed in England at the close of the eighteenth century, panoramas were a somewhat architectural means of envisioning an illusionistic landscape in 360 degrees.[61] A special rotunda-style building played an essential role in the display of panoramas. From a

viewing platform looking out at multiple perspectival viewpoints distributed around a curving, cylindrical canvas, the viewer (from the correct spot) was meant to have the impression, aided on occasion by artificial foliage and props, of witnessing a topographically variegated scene from a heightened and central point of view—a tower, rooftop, or hillock, in many cases.

Panoramas, though often mathematically rendered along the curving surface with the aid of proto-photographic devices, were more about a representation of space linked to the emergent subjectivity of the viewer than they were about "the real." The nineteenth-century viewer was not positioned neutrally in such scenarios. One was immersed in a broad expanse of vision, often situated just above painted scenes of activity in the foreground on their way to a bird's eye view, much like Catherwood's viewer of Kabah or Uxmal gazes from enormous heights out over the heads of both resting and toiling laborers at the far-off seam of the horizon; we (the viewers) regard the scene from just above it. Without the typical rectangular canvas bounding the gaze into the well-known "window within a wall" scenario posited by Alberti, the panorama drew its onlooker *into* the scene, creating a viewer that simultaneously faces and is inside the image. Catherwood's scenes are not rendered in 360 degrees, but sight is nevertheless unbounded in the "General View" plates, scattered along a spreading, distant horizon.[62] Some scholars argue that such a gaze imprisoned its onlooker because it relied on the exact positioning of the viewer for the perspective to be more convincingly illusionistic.[63]

Both the ideal landscape and panoramic painting marked out artistic attempts to replenish landscapes with a sense of realism lost to the fanciful, classical landscapes of eighteenth-century Mannerism. As such, a consistent feature of the ideal landscape was a strict frame of historical reference, an attempt at a presentation of wholeness augmented in panoramic painting. A typical nineteenth-century landscape uses stage set-like vegetation as visual parentheses marking out the left and right side(s) of the frame. In contrast, and much like the panoramic view organizes the visual experience of its viewer, Catherwood's "General View

of Las Monjas, at Uxmal" pictures an ostensibly limitless expanse that seems, unanchored at its edges, to exceed the bounds of the illustration and go on "forever" outside the pictured scene. Horizons are tricky, signaling both the limits of the gaze and that which lies beyond. Though originally a technical term in mathematics and science, the horizon played a pivotal role in nautical exploration and even, as a concept, in the discovery of the New World. In terms of representing perspectival space, the horizon dictates the vanishing point in a painting, and the elevated line of sight implicated in panoramic depiction, like Catherwood's "General Views," gives the viewer the distinct sense of witnessing landscapes never seen before—those which lie beyond the horizon of typical landscape painting.

The spatialization of time in Catherwood's "General View" plates—their storytelling function—makes for a totalizing view in which everything (like panoramic scenes of war) is revealed at once. Much like Roland Barthes observes of Jules Michelet's paintings for *Histoire de la France,* such views as Catherwood's placed the artist "more or less in the position of God whose great power is precisely to hold together in simultaneous perception, moments, events, men and causes that are humanly dispersed through time, space and other orders."[64] Panoramas, above all, taught their viewers about a kind of sight emergent in the nineteenth century. Historian Stephen Oettermann argues that panoramic vision was "the pictorial expression or 'symbolic form' of a specifically modern, bourgeois view of nature"[65]—a "nature" precisely informed by human intervention in the landscape and territorial expansion.

Denise Oleksijczuk posits the argument that panoramas were principally concordant with the aims of British imperialism—"metaphor[s] . . . for the social reality of the British Empire and of the uncontainable singularities of the spectator's body."[66] Nevertheless, panoramic vision was taken up ardently by the Hudson River School painters, and New York's first panorama was exhibited only a year after Robert Barker opened his London rotunda. Indeed, as a form of entertainment, panoramas were popularized in the nineteenth century almost simultaneously on

both sides of the Atlantic, reaching their peak (in Europe, at least) in the 1830s, when Catherwood returned from his long expatriate stint in the Levant. He there became acquainted with the art form in London's premier and longest standing panoramic exhibition space at the time, the Leicester Square Panorama, which John and Robert Burford purchased from the Barker family in the 1820s. Here Catherwood made his mark. The draftsman was already accustomed as a trained architect in the mathematically precise rendering of perspective and quite adept at capturing architectural detail with a camera lucida, a device often used by both panoramists and architects at the scorn of the beaux arts institutions which saw landscapes rendered with the aid of this tool as lacking artistry. As such, his illustrations already utilized the instruments and demonstrated a combined aptitude for both landscape depiction and architectural draftsmanship perfectly suited to panoramic depiction.

Scenes of distant and exotic lands quickly became a trend, though an emphasis remained on picturing identifiable architectural scenes. In the 1830s, facing an increasing demand for new material, Robert Burford commissioned Catherwood to create drawings and watercolors for three panoramas from his extensive recordings of the Levant. Three of the five plans (excluding preliminary drawings of Damascus and later, of old Guatemala) were executed as painted panoramas and successfully exhibited in the Leicester Square Rotunda: *View of the City of Jerusalem and the Surrounding Country* from April 1835 to February 1836, *View of the Great Temple of Karnak and the Surrounding City of Thebes* from June 1835 to June 1836, and *View of the Ruins of the Temple of Baalbec* from June to December 1844.[67] Catherwood's ventures with panoramic illustration were, however, not limited to his efforts in London. The year prior to his expedition with Stephens, Catherwood had opened a rotunda of his own on the corner of Prince and Mercer Streets in Manhattan. There he imported and displayed several of Burford's panoramic paintings, including the inaugural *View of the City of Jersualem* based upon Catherwood's own drawings of the ancient city. It is thus unsurprising that Catherwood

entertained a type of panoramic vision in the “General View” illustrations of his 1844 folio.

The Picturesque Indigene

At the close of the eighteenth century, landscape designer William Gilpin wrote a treatise on the aesthetics of the picturesque. His writings convey an idea of beauty not in landscape itself, but in *pictures* of landscape divorced from a concept of aesthetics with religious and/or moral overtones. The *raison d'être* of the picturesque landscape is in service of the gaze, and the nineteenth century served as an echo chamber of sorts for Gilpin’s 1794 treatise. Bernard Comment links the emergence of the picturesque to Diderot’s reaction to the previous era’s straightjacketed standards of beauty proponed by Locke and Hume. In contrast, the picturesque landscape was one of variety and irregularity, with only occasional need of learned “correction.”[68] The emphatic visuality of the nineteenth century’s hungry gaze was made, in part, according to the parameters of a kind of romantic picturesque-sublime, described, at turns, in Gilpin’s treatise as “a form of ‘high delight’ that overwhelms the autonomous ego: ‘some grand scene strikes us beyond the power of thought. . . . In this pause of intellect; this *deliquium* of the soul; an enthusiastic sensation of pleasure overspreads it, previous to any examination by the rules of art’.”[69] It was not long before the picturesque landscape traversed the Atlantic. By the mid-nineteenth century, what began in Gilpin’s writings as British elite conventions of landscape representation had been naturalized to the extent that American audiences were able to “forget the labor of admiring”[70] the landscape.

Notions of the picturesque had caught on to the degree that Stephens dropped the term repeatedly in observations of his surroundings. For example, he remarked on “a *wild, picturesque,* and *romantic* scene”[71] in the activities of women drawing water from a village *cenote*.[72] Later in the journey, accompanied by a small engraving, Stephens observed the “picturesque appearance” of a street “occupied exclusively by Indians.”[73] In the *cuadro* of Ticul,

the indigenous passersby formed “picturesque and pleasing spectacles,”[74] and in contrast to “entering the disturbed villages of Central America, among intoxicated Indians and swaggering white men,” Stephens described a scene in Bolonchen of “Indian women in the centre [sic] drawing water from the well . . . relieved against a background of green hills rising above the tops of the houses” as having “a beauty and picturesqueness of aspect that no other village in the country had exhibited.”[75]

If not a moral imperative, there is at least a clear social imperative in Stephens’s references to the picturesque qualities of various landscapes. Apart from the obviously gendered comments—(it is, after all, mostly views of women that incite Stephens to wistful contemplation of the natives)—the idyllic scenes of his descriptions have a function not unlike William Bartram’s reflections on Native American settlements in *Travels* (1791)[76]—as “ephemeral” entities unaffiliated with European settlement, hence unthreatening. The somewhat simple, ovoid engravings featuring Catherwood’s illustrations of such busy vernacular tableaus are a marked contrast to Stephens’s remarks about the indolence of the native population elsewhere in the *Incidents of Travel* texts; but by chronicling such scenes using the language of the picturesque, Stephens and Catherwood reassigned the contemporary populace as pastoralized relics and as part of a landscape beholden to the “civilized” gaze of its onlookers. The neutrality of the natives in Catherwood’s drawings foreshadowed what would become an erroneous trope about the Maya in U.S. literature widely understood as the “peaceful Maya theory,” which positioned the Maya as the antithesis to the warring “savage.” Yet, in accordance with Bartram’s view of Amerindians, the natives pictured *Incidents of Travel* were consigned to the realm of the picturesque as a means of making them one with landscape as non-historical actors.

Architectural Landscapes and the Picturesque-Sublime

In contrast to the aforementioned vernacular scenes, the "General View" vistas, or the static frame of foliage and gentle modeling in Plate VII, "Principal Court of the Palace at Palenque," several engravings, and many of the descriptions in the *Incidents of Travel* texts convey an unabated struggle with an oppressive jungle, its changeable weather, and the biting insects and maladies therein. Rather than affirming pleasantly moralizing ruination, engravings like "House of the Birds" and Plate XVIII, "Rankness of Vegetation," picture ruins directly overtaken, even strangled, by the sublime and wrathful flora that surrounds them. Catherwood illustrated what Stephens also observed—a merciless natural world and advanced state of decay for which "no sketch can convey a true idea of the ruthless gripe in which these gnarled and twisted roots encircle sculptured stones."[77]

Of another grove of ruinous fragments, Stephens played witness to boundless and mercurial natural energies: "It was a wild-looking place, and had a fanciful, and almost fearful appearance; for while in the grove all was close and sultry, and without a breath of air, and every leaf was still, within this cavity the branches and leaves were violently agitated, as if shaken by an invisible hand."[78] Corresponding to Bartram's observations of the American South in the 1780s, Stephens's frequent use of adjectives like "wild" echoed another popular view of the regions themselves—as untamed and in need of civilized guidance into the hallowed halls of Western history. Stephens had a penchant for describing the jungle about him in dramatic terms. The vegetation of his meanderings energized and even animated the journey; he was given over to claiming and "transmit[ting] to posterity"[79] the remains of an *American* past. As such he identified with the antiquities he described, like he described the journey itself, as victims to the clutches of nature.

The images in *Views of Ancient Monuments* also convey ruins couched in a loamy jungle. In contrast to Stephens, however, and to several of the engravings for the *Incidents of*

Travel volumes, Catherwood of his own accord was less apt to depict a sublimely unforgiving wilderness. By and large, the lithographs of Catherwood's self-published illustrations show ruins in a wilderness bathed in lazy sunlight and perfectly in view amidst vegetation (most obvious in the "General View" plates) that seems to have rolled itself back to reveal the topography of the landscapes at hand. This feature stands in stark contrast to some of the engravings for *Incidents of Travel,* with the exception, perhaps, of the final lithograph of Catherwood's folio—"Colossal Head, at Izmal." Two figures crouch expectantly in the foreground of the image, facing away from the viewer toward a grimacing visage, "perhaps of some deity,"[80] carved into the stone of a looming rock face. One of these characters, possibly Stephens donning shirt and hat, wields a rifle and leans slightly forward from a shirtless native to his left. An unknown (and unlikely) source of light bathes the left-hand portion of the wall, casting a shadow below the protruding, sculptured face. Apart from the spotlit segment of stone, the wall and surrounding shrubs, many of them gargantuan as compared to the figures of explorer and native, dwindle into darkness and shadow. In the distance, a small, dim moon rises atop some low-hanging clouds.

As he described in the introduction to the 1844 folio, the ruins impressed upon Catherwood "feelings of wonder"[81] and "sentiments of awe and admiration,"[82] hallmarks of the painterly sublime articulated in a 1757 treatise by the British statesman, Edmund Burke. The ruins of the Romantic Period suggest a losing battle against the forces of the natural world, an allegory of man's own mortality. Accordingly, the figures in Catherwood's final lithographic plate are dwarfed by their surroundings, seemingly frozen in trepidation before a gaping rock face and mammoth jungle leaves. Yet there exists also a redemptive potentiality in the aesthetics of sublime ruination—a collaborative project between man and wilderness and a means through which nature is brought to bear on ruination.

Romancing the Ruinscape

The dramatic light and murky, somewhat ominous blur of vegetation in “Colossal Head” are not unlike a scene from a Gothic novel. Indeed, the ruins of the great Gothic cathedrals became the fodder of romantic literature and painting during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Catherwood’s confident application of chiaroscuro and dramatic capture of his natural surroundings, like that of the American landscape painters in the ensuing decades, owe a great debt to the romantic tradition.[83] Romanticism would find a quick home in the adolescent United States of the nineteenth century.

The Stephens and Catherwood expeditions were concurrent with the advent of a uniquely (U.S.) American wilderness ethos evident in the writings of Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Transcendentalism was linked to a fledgling romantic nationalism and a new spiritualism in nature. In the United States, these ideas were taken up with remarkable vigor by the Hudson River School painters. Headed by Thomas Cole, the Hudson River School also included figures like Frederick Church, Albert Bierstadt, and Asher B. Durand. The dramatic formal qualities characterizing the works of the Hudson River School, like those of Catherwood’s illustrations, were not without precedent among the European landscape painters, nor were they out of character for a national literary romance with, for example, the Leatherstocking Tales of James Fenimore Cooper, which glorified the wild American frontier.[84] Cooper’s writings formed part of an emergent and racialized mythological legacy wrapped up in the American landscape, and scenes from Cooper’s novels, in fact, were among the first subjects depicted by Cole.

The ruinscapes Catherwood captured in the 1840s were an immediate antecedent to the popularity of artists like Durand and Cole, conveyors of the fine arts movement that struck the flint of a wilderness ethos staked out in decades prior by the Transcendentalists. As previously described, Stephens and Catherwood paid no particular heed to strict archaeological inquiry, a discipline as yet unfounded in the early nineteenth century. As such, Catherwood’s scenes

present, at turns, both romantic and allegorical landscapes in the first steps toward intervention and domestication as the duo uncovered various architectural and sculptural relics. Durand's growing oeuvre would eventually include scenes of similar bearing, vistas that feature evidence of agrarian intervention with suggestive titles like *The First Harvest in the Wilderness* (1855) and *Pastoral Landscape* (1861). Like Durand's spectacles of natural wonder juxtaposed with rural bliss, Catherwood's illustrations seem to suggest not only broad expanses of landscape, but also regions wanting of the gentle and learned hand of "civilized" intervention.

Stephens and Catherwood affirmed hemispheric antiquity at the same time that their written and visual testaments validated U.S. intervention to rescue the architectural remains of Southeastern Mexico and Central America from native ignorance. Stephens frequently used the terms "*our* continent" in describing the duo's journeys, and Catherwood's drawings like Plate XXIV, "Temple, at Tuloom [sic]," depict an overgrown site with Stephens poised to save the day. Other illustrations include native figures seated and listless in the foreground or staring dumbfounded at the ruins before them, illustrating the pressing need for intervention.

Like Catherwood, American landscape painters were also heavily influenced by European artists such as Turner, but the renderings of the natural world by the Hudson River School artists are markedly unlike the turmoil and immediacy of so many paintings of the European romantic sublime. The fierce gales and roiling seas in scenes of trepidation like Turner's *The Shipwreck* (1805) were supplanted with awe-inspiring, light-bathed vistas of the Catskills, the Adirondacks, and, of course, the Hudson River Valley. As the American frontier pushed further on toward the Pacific Coast at mid-century, the Hudson River School also grew in popularity, broadening its purchase on the visualization of the landscape to include scenes from the south and the American West. Of a different creed than that affiliated with the ghostly pinnacles of ruined abbeys studding the French, English, and German countryside painted by Caspar David Friedrich and Louis Daguerre, American landscapes featured the spires of

nature—soaring mountains and majestic, unspoiled canyons of vistas like Bierstadt's oil on canvas, *Merced River, Yosemite Valley* (1866). The great abbeys of the romantic landscapes of Western Europe—Friedrich's iconic *Abbey in the Oak Forest* (1818) or Daguerre's *The Ruins of Holyrood Chapel* (c. 1824)—were instead staked out in the cathedrals of nature described only a few decades later by one of the great proponents of the American wilderness and Bierstadt's near-contemporary, John Muir. The vistas of the Hudson River School, like Catherwood's "General Views," were telltale signs of a national landscape myth that was gaining traction at a rate proportional to its swelling territories.

In one particular regard, the Hudson River School paintings form an obvious exception to European precedent; the United States lacked architectural relics to measure up to the glorious ancient heritage of Europe depicted in paintings like Lorrain's *River Landscape with Tiburtine Temple at Tivoli* (c. 1635) or Turner's *The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire* (1817). Cole's espousal of confident modernity that took shape in *The Course of Empire* (1833-1836), a five-part series completed upon his return from a tour in Italy, was quite different from the typically ruin-less landscapes of the Hudson River School. Though allegorically ahistorical, the architecture pictured in Cole's series is patently turned over classical yardstick, also inspired by Burford's first panoramic venture into literary subject matter—a display of "Pandemonium" from John Milton's epic poem, *Paradise Lost,* at Leicester Square.[85]

Cole's series does more than allow the viewer to meditate on the fragile and ephemeral nature of civilization. The paintings also illustrate a number of racialized Anglo-American tropes and inheritances, situating a placeless European past assuredly in the politics of the American present. From the first painting of the group, sub-titled *The Savage State,* the series proceeds to the Elysian theme of *The Arcadian or Pastoral State,* to *The Consummation of Empire, Destruction*, and finally, *Desolation*.

In seeming contrast to its subtitle, the concluding painting of Cole's fantasy of transformation portrays a return to nature in its unpeopled, calm, and allegorically suggestive ruinscape, a fitting American nod to the virtues of natural solitude espoused by the darlings of Transcendentalism, Thoreau and Emerson. However, what merits further consideration is the conspicuous transformation from the "savage" to "pastoral" states at the beginning of the series. In the landscape of the first painting, one can make out unclothed, dark-skinned figures in the throes of the tumultuous wild. A "primitive" character with bow and arrow ambles after a bounding deer in the foreground, another group of flailing figures engage in some unknown activity at mid-ground, and a gathering in the distance encircles a great fire amidst teepee-like structures which Cole, as a North American, would have had particular familiarity with—never mind its disjunction from the unmistakably European models of the following paintings.

The mountains of *The Savage State* are shrouded in blackened, smoky clouds backlit and in apparent retreat from the dawning of civilization in the east. Cole's evocative cloudscape is animated much like its "savage" human constituents. The sky roils, untamed, while the untroubled horizon and tranquil scene of the second painting of the series reveals a markedly different picture. Bathed in sunlight and pastoral stillness, the "same" landscape is decorated with a sparse swath of pale-skinned inhabitants and a Greek post and lintel stone structure. A shepherd tends his flock and a woman in classical draperies looks after her two children. The "savage" picture of the series antedates this rustic idealization of the ancient Greek past, while the "civilized" and presumably Roman- or Venetian-type empire that rises and falls in the third through last works in the series mark out the persistent vision of Greco-Roman antiquity even in post-Revolutionary U.S. circles. Greek antiquity, in this case, is positioned as esteemed origin, while the "savage" scene is positioned as prehistory; no remains of "primitive" civilization form an intermediary image between the savage and Arcadian states.

Here is allegorical history with a hierarchical twist. Each pictured epoch privileges the current (to the nineteenth century) notions of civilization. They demonstrate the allegiance of Anglo-America, Cole included, to Greek and Roman antiquity, while the pre-historical "savage" scene might be viewed as the artist's tacit indication of the then-contemporary national position toward its indigenous populations. Cole is an Anglo-American artist, and the work was not only commissioned by U.S. merchant Luman Reed, but also first displayed "to great acclaim"[86] in New York and subsequently donated to the New York Historical Society in 1858, "forming the foundation of its acclaimed collection of American landscape painting."[87] Thus the series, in essence, issues an implicit justification for the urgent territorial acquisition of the U.S. landscape replete with a civilizing imperative symbolized by Greco-Roman culture. This kind of ersatz recollection of a past time, not unlike Piranesi's anachronistic ruin fictions like *Via Appia and Via Ardeatina* (1756),[88] is a common archetype in the history of the ruinscape to which Cole devoted his energies in the wake of his European tour. However, *The Course of Empire* indicates not only the U.S. reliance on Old World architectural models, but also a uniquely American predisposition to view the indigene as out-of-time and continuous with an untamed nature. However, investments in "historicizing" primeval and "Other" landscapes in visual representation did not stop with Cole's series.[89] This inclination principally entailed paintings of the American West, while Catherwood's images (though drawings) perhaps indicate the fullest expression of these emergent tropes.

Allegorical Indigeneity

Vacillating between the aesthetic character of Cole's sublime *Savage State* and classically harmonious *Arcadian or Pastoral State,* Catherwood's depictions are indicative of the schizophrenic nature of U.S. claims in the region. Like Cole, Catherwood utilizes indigene, Anglo counterpart, and architectural subject in schemes with the required ideological

components for the growing American empire that formed an audience to his illustrations. The allegorical effects extend to the tautologies of the ruin gaze itself, a paternalizing gaze that at once claims hemispheric antiquity in the figure of indigenous ruination in the same measure that it dispossesses regional inhabitants from any cultural entitlements. Catherwood's drawings were in line with the dawning of nineteenth-century U.S. "consular archaeology," which "enacted a complex of attitudes best described as 'imperial.'"[90]A parallel also existed between the "incidental," yet at times moralizing, character of Stephens's travel writing and the messages of Catherwood's landscapes. The dually primitivizing (of indigenes) and celebratory (of ruination) landscapes of Cole, Catherwood, and others of their time were not terribly unique. Henri Baudet describes a "fundamental duality" inherent in the view of the Other by a western audience—an "actual physical outside world which could be put to political, economic, and strategic use"[91] and yet another "outside world onto which all identification and interpretation, all dissatisfaction and desire, all nostalgia and idealism seeking expression could be projected."[92]

At first glance, the human figures populating the foreground of so many of Catherwood's pastoral landscapes in *Views of Ancient Monuments* would seem surprising given his known predilection for capturing architectural detail. However, the confluence of "primitive" societies with the construct of nature, a feature of both the *Incidents* texts as well as the 1844 folio (like Cole's *Savage State*), was typical of proto-ethnographic inquiry. "Building at Xampon" in *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* depicts a remnant of a vaulted passageway, *paredes antiguos* [old walls] that once formed the corner of a larger building. A celestial body peeks over the top of a blackened cloud, casting the isolated ruinous fragment and the vines and trees that surmount it in a theatrical play of light and shadow. A dark figure of a dog feeds on its prey just in front of the ruined spectacle, and another dog scampers across an overgrown field of brush to join the other. Of mythical significance to Western pagan antiquity, the light-bathed and more recognizable figure of the stag in this sublime allegory is the victim of the untidily-rendered wild

canines. The shady predators are a possible substitute for absent natives, continuous with the ominous sky and spindly gnarls of shadowy foliage atop the ruin. Such unrelenting forces (nature and native) have degraded and left to ruin the mournful spectacle before our eyes. The dogs' triumph over their prey is perhaps a parallel to the agents of the natural world that have overtaken the decrepit ruins at hand, antiquities unrecoverable by Stephen's and Catherwood's civilizing project, allegorized by the stag.

Counterposed against "Building at Xampon," the expansive "General View" lithographs that appeared in Catherwood's 1844 folio are almost compositionally indistinguishable from Cole's virginal Arcadia. Moreover, these ruinscapes have an allegorical function similar to Cole's pastoral scene before them. Catherwood's folio of images shares with Cole's fictionalized recollection of the past another important respect—all but four of the twenty-five lithographic plates include scenes of natives in various states of activity and repose.

In "General View of Kabah," several figures punctuate the foreground. Here, a cloudless sky washes distant pyramids in soft light. The ruins are surrounded by pleasantly indistinct foliage, and a woman wearing contemporary Yucatecan attire rests in the foreground, perhaps a rendering of Chaipa Chi, a local domestic laborer Stephens and Catherwood had regretfully left behind at Uxmal before traveling on to Kabah.[93] Just left of the crouching woman, a team of barefooted natives strain under the weight of a massive doorjamb they are in the process of transporting under the watchful eye of Stephens, who stands *contrapposto* in the center of the lower register of the illustration. Allegories abound in Catherwood's drawings, with natives fulfilling a number of roles ranging from natural "primitive" to indifferent labor object. One is detailed here; subordinate to the central figure of Stephens, the workers are represented as either unaware or unimpressed by the precious cargo they carry under the direction of Stephens toward its civilized future as a museum relic or garden ornament.[94]

"Temple, at Tuloom" echoes this rendering of an implicit social hierarchy. Indigenous

laborers in partial states of dress toil in the foreground to remove a felled log from the site, punctuated by a dark-skinned native looming larger (and closer) than the others and holding a nearly identical stance as the figure of Stephens in the background. Stephens's feet begin at the level of his counterpart's averted eyes, and he is involved in the task of measuring out the building he has uncovered, a direct contrast to the distracted gaze of idling native laborer. In the *Incidents of Travel* texts, Stephens repeatedly attributed lack of historical knowledge about the indigenous ruins and various other failures of the region to not only the enfeebled Spanish, but also to the ignorance of the natives. Even the titles of the volumes suggest something of Stephens's perception of the region's native inhabitants as merely "incidental," and even burdensome, to the duo's exploits. Catherwood reaffirmed Stephens's implicit assertions; Stephens's position in the picture's register communicates his "higher" role as the learned and civilized beholder of the ancient edifice to which the natives act only as accessory and labor. The depiction of the natives is indicative of the cultural impoverishment Stephens and Catherwood perceived among the region's inhabitants, while the cultivated antiquarian view—the future, if you will—is symbolized by Stephens's coextension with the ruins in the background.

Catherwood's landscapes are telling in their somewhat contradictory depictions of native populace and indigenous ruin. To some degree, the illustrations indicate continuity between the three attributes of man, ruin, and the natural world, but not without hierarchical indication doled out as needed. As mentioned, several landscapes include native figures at work for Stephens. The figures clear brush, hoist and haul away tree limbs, and carry away the spoils of their labor in the case of the doorjamb in "General View of Kabah." In comparison to Catherwood's genre-type scenes like Plate XVIII, "Well and Building at Sabachstsche," or Plate X, "Archway; Casa del Gobernador, Uxmal"—the latter of which includes a gathering of five figures engaged in a suspiciously out-of-time and presumably ritual act of animal sacrifice rife with Edenic

connotations—the figures of the "General View" plates are often turned away from the viewer and rather faceless in spite of the significantly greater detail of the lithographic prints. This indicates the visitors' view of contemporary inhabitants as culturally bankrupt and anonymous exploited labor, or apart from that, frozen in primitivizing scenarios for a westernized audience, as in the "Archway" image from Uxmal. The natives of Catherwood's folio are at times hard at work for Stephens and company, in varying states of indolent repose, or absorbed in the activities of rather anachronistic genre scenes. All the illustrations featuring human activity, however, pass timorous judgment on the native unawareness of the region's wealth of antiquities, a trove perceived only by the *Ingleses* ("Englishman," as Stephens and company were constantly referred to during the expedition) conducting excavations and documenting the scene.

Picturing Empire

Stephens's and Catherwood's travels took place during the early advent of photography and some of the first efforts to utilize photographic technology abroad—an important hallmark in the shift from antiquarian culture to more scientific and academicized approaches that gave rise to the fields of ethnography, anthropology, and archaeology. Moreover, efforts with photography and proto-photographic mechanical aids played an integral role in the development and instructive capacities of panoramic vision. As previously mentioned, Catherwood recorded drawings using a camera lucida, a device first patented by William Hyde Wollaston in 1807. The device acts as a prism through which once can view a properly scaled image of a pictorial subject on a drawing surface, and aids in sketching precise details *in situ* with accurate perspective.

Though the camera lucida was still understandably novel at the time, the daguerreotype camera was an even newer technological apparatus introduced in 1839 and used by

Catherwood on the second voyage in 1841. These early innovations in photographic technology produced images that hardly resemble what we know of photography today. Daguerrotypes are made by fixing a non-reproducible image onto a copper plate treated with fumes to make the surface light sensitive. The plate is exposed and a latent image is developed with mercury vapor and subsequently fixed with a liquid chemical treatment. The darkest areas of a daguerreotype appear mirror-like, and the shadows cast by the ruins, especially in bright sunlight, created deep, dense contrasts that drowned out a great deal of decorative detail. This resulted in an aesthetic effect not to Catherwood's liking. Hence he withdrew his efforts in employing the daguerreotype camera as his principle means of documenting the ruins, preferring instead to draw using his camera lucida and record details in as complete a fashion as possible.[95] Catherwood's early use of the daguerreotype foreshadowed the remarkable vistas typical of American landscape photography that would begin to play an important role in the potent national consciousness of the American wilderness in years to come.

Photography and nineteenth-century image-making more broadly were sometimes a means to unsavory ends, conveying ideologically powerful messages that, like Stephen Oettermann observes of panoramic depiction, "presents, blurs, and idealizes the circumstances of land ownership"[96] against the backdrop of imperialism's socio-political realities. In U.S. foreign policy, the power-politics expression of hegemony that formed the engine of both the protectionist Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny would come to fruition in the mid- to late nineteenth century as the world economy began to intrude on Latin America. At a time when geopolitics played a particularly important role in the newly independent Mexico, the unstable Central American Federation, and the antebellum United States during the years leading up to the Mexican-American War, the consolidation of American cultural patrimony and envisioning of territory by figures like Stephens and Catherwood corresponded to the nation's adolescent international maneuvering. In the same strokes with which native populations were forced to

evacuate their land with the onslaught of nineteenth-century territorial expansion in the domestic United States, the country had also found a "new world classical"—an antiquity fit for a burgeoning world power but at a comfortable distance from the systematic erasure of the American Indian.

In Guatemala, during the maiden Stephens and Catherwood expedition, Stephens noted newspapers received by courier "burdened with accounts of an invasion of that country [Mexico] by the Texans . . . . supported and urged on by the government of the United States."[97] He continued: "We [Americans] were considered as bent upon the conquest of Mexico,"[98] an observation soon to come to partial fruition. Bitter struggles on Mexico's northern border ensued as 1845 approached—the year Texas was annexed into the United States—soon to be followed by the Mexican-American War from 1846 to 1848. In any map of the region's state of affairs between the 1830s to the mid-nineteenth century, the larger part of what constitutes present-day Yucatán, Chiapas, and Campeche (like Texas and a few others adjacent areas along the Gulf Coast) is labeled as a separatist entity. This did not, however, bar expeditions like Stephens and Catherwood's from taking place. On the contrary, it authorized them. And as the state of affairs for Texas panned out in the mid-1840s, upheavals proved advantageous to not only territorial maneuvers, but also extraneous cultural claims. Manifest Destiny reflected the dreams of an ever-expanding empire, one that hardly stopped short at the shifting trajectory of the Rio Grande. By the late 1840s, a number of Eastern U.S. Democrats called for the annexation of the entire country of Mexico, and talks continued into the 1850s.[99]

The dawning race war in the Yucatán paralleled the stark racial categories of much early nineteenth-century American writing. Premised also on economics, the caste war in Yucatán prefigured in many ways the coming of the U.S. Civil War. Within the U.S., in the midst of uncertainty and turmoil during the antebellum decades (additional, perhaps, to the fact that the archaeological remains of the mound builders were located principally in what would become

the Confederate states coupled with the fact that indigenous ruins were yet to be "discovered" in the American Southwest), the U.S. required affirmation of its confused nationhood and rapidly expanding geography.

Distracted by its Civil War, the activities of the U.S. in Mexico after mid-century were suspended for a time. However, Southern Mexico's geo-political potential for cross-continental railroad transit and shipping still made it a valuable card in the hand of any nation-state hoping to compete with the quickly growing, yet war-torn United States.[100] Owing to complications from the 1860s on, the U.S. interest in Mexico specifically and Central America more broadly switched from territorial acquisition to economic penetration, with archaeological endeavors serving as precursor and backdrop to this shift in imperial tactics. Even in his observation of the early construction of the Nicaraguan canal, Stephens conspicuously signaled this imperial shift, noting not only the "cheapness of labour [sic] in Nicaragua,"[101] but also a canal's potential to "furnish . . . a motive and reward for industry, and inspire . . . a taste for making money, which, after all, opprobrious as it is sometimes considered, does more to civilize and keep the world at peace than any other influence whatever."[102]

The economic and political conditions of westward (and southward) expansion on the American continent play a crucial role in interpreting Catherwood's and Stephens's sorties in Southeastern Mexico and Central America. Having teased out the acquisitions of what was once Northern Mexico and is now the Southwestern United States during the Mexican-American War, territorial expansion finally reached California and the Pacific Northwest. In California, Spanish missionaries had cultivated large swatches of land across San Diego, but after the denouement of Spanish America, buildings were abandoned for a dozen years until their occupation by the U.S. Cavalry in 1846. The story then goes on much the same, or similar, to any other in a nation of like stories—an insurrection of Anglo-settlers raised the flag of a bear in revolt, declaring the Republic of California. Then the finding of gold at Sutter Mill in 1848 set off

a fuse that would soon burn that memorable, open compass shaped state of California into the absent-minded daydreams of an entire nation. After his adventures with Stephens, Catherwood supervised the arduous construction of the first railroad in South America, returning finally to the United States during the onset of the Gold Rush frenzy to work as a construction engineer on California's first railroad in 1849.[103]

The traditions of both expeditionary and territorial claims rely on the inference of privileged use reinforced by the warrant that "setting up shop" by railroad, settlement, resource extraction, or otherwise constitutes the first in a long series of entitlements to landscape.[104] In 1851, the Mariposa Battalion forcefully removed the Ahwahneechee from Yosemite Valley, and a little over a decade later, President Abraham Lincoln officially granted the greater Yosemite region to California, a gesture which would incite what the National Park Service website refers to in shockingly neutral terms as the "intermingling of peoples." Indigenous exploitation, suppression, and outright removal was crowded out by fluctuating sentiments towards the region's former colonizers, the Spanish. Stephens's often denigrating and conjoined observations of indigene and Spaniard were typical of Anglo-American writing in the first half of the century, which sought to vindicate American expansion into formerly Spanish territory so often at the *actual* expense of these territories' indigenous inhabitants. This phenomenon, aptly titled the "Black Legend"[105] not only characterized U.S. perceptions of cultural superiority over the Spanish, but also over "lazy" mestizos, mulattos, and uncivilized to fanatical Indians. As such, it formed a convenient pairing with the idea that the ancient ruins of Mesoamerica were the mythical creation of an "unknown" people.[106]

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, competing ideas about the ancestral beginnings of the Maya never achieved the prestige and popularity of Stephens's *Incidents of Travel* volumes.[107] In contrast to their expeditionary forebears, Stephens and Catherwood were among the first in western accounts to propose indigenous origins that owed no allegiance to

Classical, Levantine, or mythological paternity.[108] However, the fruits of his and Catherwood's expeditions nevertheless amounted to a movement away from explicit colonial behavior and toward a more sublimated form in cultural imperialism. Together, Stephens and Catherwood effectively drew up not only a cultural backdrop for the necessity of Monroe Doctrine stewardship, but also a "right" to Mexican antiquities premised on the nation's continental adjacency with its neighbor to the south and predicated on aesthetic sovereignty over the ruins of the continent. The American ruin gaze constituted a satellite antiquity to rival Europe's cultural property shored up in not only ancient Greece and Rome, but also in its colonial holdings in Africa and the Far East. For the United States, ties between nationhood and landscape had symbolic manifestations that ostensibly undergirded atrocities in domestic politics.[109]

The Figure of Home

In his 1849 text, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture,* John Ruskin argued that "every form of noble architecture is in some sort of the embodiments of Polity, Life, History, and the Religious Faith of the nations."[110] Cultural claims to the ruins of the Maya—predicated on geographic contiguity with the growing territorial reach of the United States during the nineteenth century—were no exception to Ruskin's dictum. A key tenet of in the configuration of U.S. nationalism emerged during the decades surrounding Stephens's and Catherwood's proto-archaeological expeditions. This new identity was situated around a quasi-mythological fiction of the American landscape merged with the dual valences of desire and repulsion toward indigenous civilizations. The indigene, the ruin, and the surrounding environs in Catherwood's depictions are at once romantic and wild, picturesque and sublime, classical and primitive. Consistent with panoramic depiction, the gaze of Catherwood's folio landscapes and detailed, fold-out frontispiece for the *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* volumes was contingent on a kind of

space and temporality unique to the nineteenth century, giving visual form to imperial sight by setting out a landscape in its seeming entirety over a sequence of images.

The metaphysical quality of nationalist sentiment is entrenched in the search for "intrinsic essence in some specific and tangible form."[111] The paradigm of indigenous paternity fulfilled such a function to the extent that the ruins of the Maya inflated, rather than impinged upon, the imperial comportment of the nineteenth-century United States, setting off a long string of American archaeological investigations throughout the remainder of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The antiquities of a displaced cultural heritage were at once an absent center and a house of cards for the aims of a growing nation that, according to Curtis Hinsley, was "based in both a powerful natural history tradition of New World uniqueness and peculiarity . . . and an equally potent politico-religious tradition of exceptionalism and teleological purpose for the western hemisphere."[112]

As "Incidental" as Stephens's and Catherwood's documentation was to national sentiment, the works nevertheless contain a mystification of the American landscape. Edward Said, writing on literature and decolonization, emphasizes the indispensable role of culture to the project of imperialism: "The search for authenticity, for a more congenial national origin than that provided by colonial history, for a new pantheon of heroes, myths, and religions, these too are enabled by *the land*."[113] I extend these remarks to the role of Maya ruins in U.S. national consciousness. The religious and explicitly (colonial) economic motivations of earlier expeditions began to be phased out and replaced by the more implicit claims characteristic of the United States, claims tied very closely to a growing national identity and based on the *visualization* of the nineteenth-century American landscape. Thus, an increasingly paternal gaze at the territories of the United States found an unusual comrade-in-arms in the ruins of the Maya, mirrored contrivances that, like Roland Barthes's mythology, "transform[ed] history into nature,"[114] and subsequently, nature into landscape. Architectural ruination anchors this

phenomenon, at once conflated with land in the history of landscape depiction and, in the case of Maya antiquities, evidence of a majestic human past free of association with the dispossession occurring within U.S. borders.

Architectural allegory, which from a philosophical standpoint has been invoked broadly to represent the human event, was increasingly put to use for nationalist purposes by U.S. politicians. John Locke's blank slate takes a backseat to the eminent (and eminently confused) domain of architecture in U.S. history. Professor of American Studies, Duncan Faherty, describes that in the midst of Civil War, President Lincoln "accessed the ways in which post-Revolutionary Americans had habitually imagined the construction of the nation as unfolding in a palimpsestic architectural landscape and not on the famous figure of the tabula rasa."[115] He continues, citing early Americans' obsessive writing about the built landscape, a means of "proffer[ing] the architectural figure of the home as a locus for their attempts to understand and interpret both post- and pre-Revolutionary histories"[116] of expansion and settlement. Faherty points up Lincoln's emphasis on the function of architecture "as a figure crucial to national stability because . . . the construction of the republic was grounded in acts of architectural imagination."[117] The hegemonic inscription of Maya ruins in the peripheral vision of the United States was one such act of architectural imagination. Consistent with the emergent subjectivity of the nineteenth-century viewer, such endeavors laid the foundations of entitlement to a (broadly) American landscape.

[1] Anthony Trollope, *North America,* vol. I (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1863), 19. See also Curtis M. Hinsley, Jr., "'Magnificent Intentions': Washington, D.C. and American Anthropology in 1846," in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts,* ed. Bettina Messias Carbonell (West Sussex, UK: Wiley & Blackwell, 2012), 129.
[2] Ibid., 20.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Den Vereinigten Staaten," in *Nachgelassene Werke,* vol. 16 (1827; Stuttgar and Tübingen: Cotta, 1842), 96, quoted in Dirk de Meyer, "Catastrophe and its Fallout – Notes on Cataclysms, Art and Aesthetics," in *Tickle Your Catastrophe! Imagining Catastrophe in Art, Architecture and Philosophy*, ed. Frederik Le Roy (New Hampshire: Academia Press, 2011), 25.
[5] Octavio Paz, *Claude Levi-Strauss: An Introduction,* trans. J.S. Bernstein and Maxine Bernstein (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 95.
[6] Ibid., 96.
[7] As Jane Jacobs and Stephen Cairnes observe: "Architecture in this model of property rights is not simply something that comes after property, but operates in the name of enclosure as proof of rights sanctioned by Godly contract. Architecture's presence proves creative productivity and the refashioning of an indeterminate nature toward purpose. An absence of architecture is proof of idleness, itself a sign of squandering . . . . Indeed, in the Age of Reason architecture, with its mix of utility, beauty, and permanence, operated as the cosmetic of territorial order *par excellence*." *Buildings Must Die: A Perverse View of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 52.
[8] Curtis M. Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846-1910* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 22.
[9] By the nineteenth century, numerous indigenous archaeological sites had already been discovered within the United States. As early as 1780, Thomas Jefferson excavated one such "mound," known locally as "the Indian Grave." See David I. Bushnell Jr., "'The Indian Grave' – A Monacan Site in Albemarle County, Virginia," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (October 1914): 107.
[10] Stephens and Catherwood were involved with commercial exploits in the region. See John L. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan,* vol. I (New York: Dover Publications, 1969; London: Arthur Hall, Virtue & Co., 1854), 396-420. Citations refer to the Dover edition. Stephens writes: "My principal object in leaving Sonsonate had been to acquire some information in regard to the canal route between the Atlantic and pacific by means of the Lake of Nicaragua and the River San Juan." Quoted also in Ann and Myron Sutton, *Among the Maya Ruins; the Adventures of John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967), 77. By 1850, plans for transcontinental transit were met with the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, establishing joint cooperation between the U.S. and England to begin construction of a canal. See Richard V. Salisbury, *Anti-Imperialism and International Competition in Central America 1920-1929* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1989), 10.
[11] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America,* vol. 2, 127.
[12] The *Incidents of Travel* texts feature simplified and rather small reproductions of the original drawings. Catherwood was dissatisfied with the engraved illustrations; he rejected the first set of wood engravings in favor of steel engraving. As a result, there is a striking difference between the reproductions of illustrations intended for the mass publication in the *Incidents of Travel* volumes and those in Catherwood's self-published 1844 folio of prints. See Colin McEwen, *Stephens & Catherwood Revisited: Maya Ruins and the Passage of Time* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2015), exhibition catalogue.
[13] The "Old World" consists of Afro-Eurasia, the regions of the world that have been part of European historical understanding since Ptolemy, in contrast to the "New World" of the Americas discovered by European explorers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
[14] I use the term "hemispheric antiquity" to refer to a geography of antiquity belonging to the Americas, which occupy the Western hemisphere. George Kubler explains that "America alone has been mapped as hemispheric . . . . America extends from pole to pole, separated from all others by oceans, and separating Europe from Asia, in a pattern suited to call it the New World, as first perceived by European map-makers." See George Kubler, "Aesthetics since Amerindian Art before Columbus," in *Collecting the Pre-*

Columbian Past, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 37. Though I use the term, "American," in such a way at various points in this essay, I am not unaware of the problematic nature of the adjective, and seek to employ it with the utmost criticality.

[15] "Ruin gazing" here refers to the dually colonial and cultural process through which ruins come to be seen as objects worthy of study. See Gustavo Verdesio, "Invisible at a Glance: Indigenous Cultures of the Past, Ruins, Archaeological Sites and Our Regimes of Visibility," in *Ruins of Modernity,* eds. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 343-344.

[16] See Bernard Comment, *The Painted Panorama* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 7.

[17] María deGuzmán problematizes at length the rhetorical and symbolic figure of Spain in Anglo-American national identity in *Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-Whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2005).

[18] John L. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. I (New York: Dover Publications, 1963; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1843), 51. Citations refer to the Dover edition. Stephens makes reference two great "cerros hechos a mano, *i. e.,* hills made by hand" from which the Spaniards used the evenly hewn rocks and megaliths of ancient structures to build "all the edifices in the city [Merida], so that the ground which forms the plaza major remained nearly or quite level." The oldest buildings along Mérida's *plaza de la ciudad* include its cathedral, erected between 1561 and 1598 with the bricks of former ruins. Mérida was named by Francisco de Montejo, who observed similarities between the ancient stone edifices upon which the colonial city was built and the Roman ruins of Mérida in Spanish Badajoz province. See Peter O. Koch, *John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood: Pioneers of Mayan Archaeology* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2013), 175.

[19] Few deviations from the quasi-mythological accounts of trans-Atlantic paternity existed prior to the nineteenth century. Francisco Xavier Clavijero posed a significant exception as the first Spaniard to advocate for "the preservation of the remains of our [Mexico's] *patria's* antiquity." Clavijero's argument was groundbreaking in that it "did not consider the Indian past as an alien phenomenon, but, on the contrary, converted it into a past belonging to those born in Mexico, that is to say, the creoles. It was also the first work that, under the influence of Enlightenment ideas, considered the indigenous cultural legacy as valuable in itself and even comparable to classical Old World cultures." See Enrique Florescano, "In Search of the New World Classical," in *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past,* ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 83. George Kubler also discusses Clavijero in *Esthetic Recognition of Ancient Amerindian Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 7.

[20] Antonio Del Río, *Description of the Ruins of an Ancient City Discovered near Palenque in the Kingdom of Guatemala in Spanish America* (London: Henry Berthoud, 1822), 3, quoted in R. Tripp Evans, *Romancing the Maya*: *Mexican Antiquity in the American Imagination 1820-1915* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 20.

[21] Del Río, *Description of the Ruins,* quoted in Peter Briggs, ed., *The Maya Image in the Western World* (Albuquerque: Regents of the University of New Mexico, 1986), exhibition catalogue, 13. The translated text also includes an article authored by Dr. Felix Cabrera that went as far as to suggest mythical ancestry at Mount Olympus. Evans, *Romancing the Maya*, 34. See also Pal Keleman, *Battlefield of the Gods: Aspects of Mexican History, Art and Exploration* (London: Unwin Brothers, 1937), 167.

[22] Victor Wolfgang von Hagen, *Search for the Maya: The Story of Stephens & Catherwood* (Westmead, U.K.: Saxon House, 1973), 37.

[23] See Frédéric de Waldeck, *Voyage pittoresque et archéologique dan la province d'Yucatan (Amérique Centrale), pendant les années 1834 et 1836* (Paris: Bellizard Dufour et Co; Londres, J. et W. Boone, Bossages Barthes et Lowell, 1838).

[24] Two texts provide more or less complete accounts of Stephens and Catherwood's travels and biographies: von Hagen's *Search for the Maya* and Koch's *John Lloyd Stephens*.

[25] These regions described by these two terms have changed considerably over time. The "Orient" historically describes a larger region than the Levantine regions, most likely owing to the term's derivation from French (rather than Latin), for which one can assume it would be associated with the reaches of the French Empire rather than those of Europe more broadly. Generally speaking, the two terms have been used somewhat inconsistently to describe what we now identify as parts of the Middle East, North Africa, and occasionally Eastern Eurasia.

[26] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. I, 50.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Frederick Catherwood, *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (London: Frederick Catherwood, 1844), 1.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., 8-9.
[32] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America,* vol. I, 53.
[33] Ibid., 103.
[34] Ibid., 166.
[35] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. I, 189. Stephens's comparisons extend also to the region's inhabitants. Later in the journey, he observes that the "fine-looking race" of the Northern Yucatán "had noble Roman faces." *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. II, 24.
[36] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America,* vol. I, 151.
[37] Ibid., 152.
[38] Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 12.
[39] In contrast to the indigenous ruins, Stephens derisively observes the colonial "ruins" of the "illiterate and ignorant [Spanish] adventurers." He paints the Spanish as enfeebled has-beens, finding, for example, the "colossal grandeur and costliness" of a Catholic church in Guatemala to be "evidence of a retrograding and expiring people." *Incidents of Travel in Central America,* vol. I, 79. Writing of another church, Stephens observes "rearing aloft in the air the crown of that once proud power which wrested the greatest part of America from its rightful owners, ruled it for three centuries with a rod of iron, and now has not within it a foot of land or a subject to boast of." Ibid., 169.
[40] Catherwood, *Views of Ancient Monuments,* 4.
[41] Ibid.*,* 5.
[42] Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 94.
[43] See Kubler, *Esthetic Recognition,* 6.
[44] Explorers would replicate these ideas. For example, Louis Antoine de Bougainville remarked scornfully about his encounter with the indigenous populations of the Americas in Tierra del Fuego, which in many ways "reproduc[es] the discourse of his time relative to American degeneracy—what after Edward Said one might be tempted to call eighteenth-century 'Americanism,' if the signified of that particular signifier had not already been fixed." Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 95.
[45] Immanuel Kant, *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie* (Berlin: Akademische Ausgabe, 1913), 388-389, quoted in Kubler, *Esthetic Recognition,* 7-8. In the same section of the text, Kubler also quotes G. W. F. Hegel's corresponding remarks that the American Indians "wither[ed] wherever Europe came near." See *Vorlesungen über Philosophie der Geschichte,* ed. Lasson (1820; Leipzig: 1920), 189-191.
[46] Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists,* 23.
[47] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 142.
[48] Joel R. Poinsett*, Discourse on the Objects and Importance of the National Institutions for the Promotion of Science Established at Washington, 1840, Delivered at the First Anniversary* (Washington: P. Force, 1841), quoted in Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists,* 27.
[49] Kenneth Coutts-Smith, "Some General Observations on the Problem of Cultural Colonialism," in *The Myth of Primitivism: Perspectives on Art*, ed. Susan Hiller (London: Routledge, 1991), 23.
[50] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America,* vol. 1, 115.
[51] Ibid., 98.
[52] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 227.
[53] Kubler notes an important publication of the same year by Franz Theodor Kugler, titled *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte.* Though Kugler did not explore Latin America himself, his writing, parallel to the work of Stephens and Catherwood, rejected diffusionist models and "began a new age of humanistic study." See *Esthetic Recognition*, 3.

[54] The observations of this section owe much to R. Tripp Evans's thorough analysis of antiquarian documentation in *Romancing the Maya*.
[55] Ibid., 20.
[56] Briggs, *The Maya Image in the Western World*, 11.
[57] Koch, *John Lloyd Stephens,* 21.
[58] See Evans, *Romancing the Maya,* 66.
[59] Even the titles of the titles of these illustrations—"General View of . . ."—are suggestive of panoramic depiction, which were consistently titled "View of [insert location of scene]."
[60] See *Lexicon der Kunst,* 4 vols. (Leipzig: Suhrkamp, 1975); entry for "Ideale Landschaft," quoted in Stephen Oettermann, *The Panorama, History of a Mass Medium* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 26. "Heroic landscapes," meanwhile, were ideal landscapes that included also mythological figures and/or classical architecture.
[61] Many early panoramas, oddly enough, pictured the town in which they appeared, scenes known to the viewer which could provide familiar comparison. Examples of this included, for example, Robert Barker's exhibition of *View of Edinburgh and the Surrounding Country from the Calton Hill* (1789-1790). Other types of landscapes were soon to follow—picturing principally urban views of places like London, sometimes more picturesque and "natural" scenes (not without known architectural landmarks or overtly recognizable land formations), and finally, depictions of famous scenes of war like the Battles of Paris or Waterloo, also typically known to the nineteenth-century viewer.
[62] This was a type of sight at some variance with Norman Bryson's observation of the centric ray's (the line of sight between the viewer and vanishing point) "return of the gaze upon itself" in the "Albertian space" of a painting. *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze,* eds. Stephen Heath and Colin MacCabe (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 106. See also Bryson, quoted in Denise Blake Oleksijczuk, *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 122.
[63] It will come as no surprise that Jeremy Bentham's panopticon concept for the modern prison was developed the same year as the first known attempts at a panorama by Robert Barker. Ibid., 40-41.
[64] Roland Barthes, "La Cathédrale des Romans," *Bulletin de la guilde du livre* (March 1957), quoted in Comment, *The Painted Panorama*, 142.
[65] Oettermann, *The Panorama,* 7.
[66] Oleksijczuk, *The First Panoramas*, 3.
[67] See Ralph Hyde, *Panoramania! The Art and Entertainment of the 'All-Embracing' View* (London: Trefoil Publications and Barbican Art Gallery, 1988), exhibition catalogue, 74.
[68] See Comment, *The Painted Panorama*, 79.
[69] William Gilpin, *Essays, On Picturesque Beauty, Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, On Picturesque Travel and On Sketching Landscape: To Which is Added a Poem, On Landscape Painting* (London: Printed for R. Blamire, in the Strand, 1792), 49-50. See also Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 125.
[70] Kenneth John Myers, "On the Cultural Construction of Landscape Experience: Contact to 1830," in *American Iconology*, ed. David Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 74, quoted in Jennifer L. Roberts "Landscapes of Indifference: Robert Smithson and John Lloyd Stephens in Yucatán," *The Art Bulletin* 82, no. 3 (September 2000): 549.
[71] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. I, 70. Italics mine.
[72] *Cenotes* are subterranean wells.
[73] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. I, 225.
[74] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. II, 65.
[75] Ibid., 95. In fact, Stephens was apt to note scenes of picturesque comportment precisely when presented with a view of human activity, and typically, that of women engaged in domestic tasks.
[76] See William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws* (Philadelphia: James & Johnson, 1791).
[77] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. I, 242.
[78] Ibid., 213.
[79] Ibid., 130.

[80] Catherwood, *Views of Ancient Monuments,* 24.
[81] Ibid.*,* 7.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Various scholars remark on the formal links between panoramic depiction, the Hudson River School, and European romantic landscape painting. See Hyde, *Panoramania!,* 29 and John Gage, "Turner and the Picturesque," *Burlington Magazine* 107, no. 743 (February 1965): 75-81. See also Wolfgang Born, "The Panoramic Landscape as an American Art Form," *Art in America,* no. 36 (January 1948): 3-10.
[84] The five novels included in this set were published between 1823 and the date of the second Stephens and Catherwood expedition, in 1841.
[85] See Oettermann, *The Panorama,* 113.
[86] "The Course of Empire: The Consummation of Empire," Luce Center Museum Collections, New-York Historical Society, accessed March 21, 2018, http://www.nyhistory.org/exhibit/course-empire-consummation-empire-0.
[87] Ibid.
[88] The full title of Piranesi's exhaustive recordings of the Roman antiquities is *Le Antichità Romane del' tempo della prima Repubblica e dei primi imperatori* (Roman Antiquities of the Time of the First Republic and the First Emperors).
[89] A seedling pan-Americanist sentiment coupled with burgeoning U.S. commercial culture also fostered fascination with previously unknown landscapes. See James Oles, *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914-1917* (Washington, D.C.: Yale University Art Gallery, with Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), exhibition catalogue, 145.
[90] Curtis Hinsley describes that, in the case of the nineteenth-century United States, "No significant distinction lies between agencies of politics, business, and science in exotic regions, for they are complementarily and coherently engaged in a single, multifaceted project of metropolitan expansion, discovery/recovery, and consumption; that it is proper for state-sponsored agents to aid in this process; and that removal (collecting) of pre-Columbian material culture—originals or replicas—like other samples of resources from the colonial periphery, is a legitimate, and perhaps obligatory act, both for their preservation and for the cultural edification of metropolitan audiences." Moreover, he explains, "Pre-Columbian collections functioned as symbolic capital . . . for the legitimation of a grounded national culture." See "In Search of the New World Classical," in *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 110, 112.
[91] Henri Baudet, *Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images of Non-European Man* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), 55, quoted in Porter, *Haunted Journeys,* 13, footnote 16.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Stephens recounted: "Our housekeeping and household were again broken up. . . . As we passed along the edge of the milpa, half hidden among the cornstalks was the stately figure of Chaipa Chi. She seemed to be regarding us with a mournful gaze. Alas! Poor Chaipa Chi, the white man's friend! never again will she make tortillas for the Ingleses in Uxmal!" See *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan,* vol. I, 200.
[94] R. Tripp Evans notes (citing Victor von Hagen's biography of Stephens) that a doorjamb from Kabah was gifted to a friend of Stephens, John Church Cruger, "for use as a garden folly." Maya archaeologist Sylvanus G. Morley acquired the carved jamb from Cruger's descendants in 1918 for the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. See Evans, *Romancing the Maya,* 171, footnote 99.
[95] Still, the individuals who made engravings for Stephens's books used the daguerreotypes as aids for reproducing Catherwood's original artwork. McEwen, *Stephens & Catherwood Revisited,* n.p.
[96] Oettermann, *The Panorama,* 47. See also footnote 2 in the introduction.
[97] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America,* vol. I, 311.
[98] Ibid.
[99] See Sutton, *Among the Maya Ruins,* 186-193.
[100] See Guy Poitras, *The Ordeal of Hegemony: The United States and Latin America* (San Francisco, CA: Westview Press, 1990) and Don M. Coerver, "Mexico: Conflicting Self-Interests," in *United States-Latin American Relations, 1850-1903: Establishing a Relationship* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1999). After the 1848 victory and Gadsden Purchase in 1853, the U.S. was readying itself to take more land. Discussions of U.S. expansion took place at an 1856 international meeting of Latin American

countries held in Santiago, Chile. Fearing invasion, Mexico signed treaties with the U.S. in 1859. The Treaty of Transit and Commerce would allow for three transit routes across the Isthmus of Tehuantapec, from the Rio Grande to Mazatlan, and from the Arizona-Sonora border to Guaymas.

[101] Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America,* vol. I, 413-414.

[102] Ibid., 419.

[103] See Oettermann, *The Panorama,* 320.

[104] An example of this is the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, the predecessor of the 1862 Homesteading Act, which was a federal means of encouraging settlement in the newly minted Southwestern United States.

[105] David J. Weber writes: "Centuries of Spanish misgovernment, these early writers believed, had enervated all of Spain's New World colonies. When these Anglo writers sought the cause of Spanish misrule, they found it in the defective character of Spaniards themselves. From their English forebears and other non-Spanish Europeans, Anglo Americans had inherited the view that Spaniards were unusually cruel, avaricious, treacherous, fanatical, superstitious, cowardly, corrupt, decadent, indolent, and authoritarian-a unique complex of pejoratives that historians from Spain came to call the Black Legend, *la leyenda negra*." See "The Spanish Legacy in North America and the Historical Imagination," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (February 1992): 6-7.

[106] William E. Lenz writes at length of this phenomenon in *Ruins, Revolution, and Manifest Destiny: John Lloyd Stephens Creates the Maya* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013).

[107] See Evans, *Romancing the Maya.*

[108] In the 1860s, for example, U.S. antiquarians Augustus and Alice Le Plongeon began a drawn-out series of excavations and research in an attempt to forge ties between ancient Egypt and Mesoamerica, a project that would eventually result in far-fetched claims to reinforce an idea of U.S. continental origin for the freemasons. Over twelve years of excavation and documentation, the Le Plongeons conceptualized an entirely fabricated history surrounding what they imaginatively titled "The Kingdom of Moo" and its supposedly Atlantean origin. Its authors conflated their personal history and assumed genealogical ties to their subject of study amidst already radical claims of origin. See R. Tripp Evans, "Bordering on the Magnificent: Augustus and Alice Le Plongeon in the Kingdom of Moo," in *Romancing the Maya,* 126-152.

[109] The U.S. perception of a grand Mesoamerican antiquity in contrast to the degraded remains of the mound builders, for example, granted terrible affirmation to the horrors of events like U.S. President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1830.

[110] John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: Smith, Elder, 1849), quoted in Richard Guy Wilson, "Architecture and the Reinterpretation of the Past in the American Renaissance," in *American Architectural History: A Contemporary Reader,* ed. Keith L. Eggener (New York: Routledge, 2004), 233.

[111] See Seamus Deane, "Introduction," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1990), 8.

[112] Hinsley, "In Search of the New World Classical," 106-107. "Hemispheric Americanism," Hinsley continues in the same passage, "embraced the multiple geographical and demographic subunits of the western hemisphere in a single image-purpose."

[113] Edward Said, "Yeats and Decolonization," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1990), 79. Italics mine.

[114] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies,* trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 109.

[115] Duncan Faherty, *Remodeling the Nation: The Architecture of American Identity*, 1776-1858 (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, with the University Press of New England, 2007), 4.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

Indigenous Modernism: Frank Lloyd Wright and Mayan Revivalism

The discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power.

- Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 1994

Published in the January 20, 1920 issue of *The Dial,* an article titled, "The Art of the American Indian," written by a U.S. art historian, Walter Pach, encouraged "a new acquaintance with the sculpture and the architecture of ancient Mexico—the greatest art which has yet been produced in the Western Hemisphere."[1] Pach continued: "We [Americans] are considering a different race from that which peoples America today. None the less, we may feel humble enough if we set anything our sculptors have done beside those great heads and figures of the Mayas—art which may be ranked with that of the Egyptians, the Hindus and the Chinese."[2] An advocate of modernist art and architecture and a friend of the famed Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera, Pach was a prolific critic whose views nevertheless reflected those common of the era—continuing perceptions of the nation's contemporary indigenous populations as diminished and culturally-mute bystanders as compared to the hallowed stock of ancient America. Pach's celebration of Mesoamerican antiquity at the expense of the modern American indigene of the early twentieth century was sustained, in part, by the continued dominance of U.S. cultural institutions in the Western Hemisphere at the *fin de siècle*, evidenced by Smithsonian Institution curator Otis Mason's assurance upon returning from the 1889 Paris Exposition that "all that Europe will ever know of [indigenous America] will be what we tell her."[3]

The nineteenth-century United States had seen, beginning in the 1840s, the introduction of Maya antiquity as a kind of "New World classical," but the aesthetic merit of indigenous American ruins was still subject to a changing taxonomic system from "grotesque" ethnographic specimens to artistic and architectural masterpieces.[4] Nourished by the marriage of science to ethnocentric attitudes inscribed in the professionalization of archaeology, a number of U.S. government-commissioned and institutionally-sponsored expeditions to Latin America trailed the iconic expeditions of John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood. The Carnegie Institution opened its doors in 1902, and a decade later sponsored a proposal from a soon-to-be prominent archaeologist, Sylvanus Griswold Morley, to conduct excavations in Mexico.[5] The prestigious Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, established in 1866, expanded its buildings in 1888—the same year as the founding of the National Geographic Society—and again in 1913. Collecting activity and institutional sponsorship of continued exploration escalated in tandem with the increasing democratization of photography and development of portable casting methods. Such technologies enabled the re-creation and exhibition of distant ruins for fairs like the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, thereby allowing U.S. audiences to view Mesoamerican ruins far removed from their original context and in varying scales and suggestive scenarios. The American ruin gaze had become "at-large."

By the turn of the century, U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America shifted from provincial isolationism to a rough and ready internationalism fueled by the labors of citizen-diplomats such as Stephens. A token of this impetus was the Pan-American Union, which had its first meeting in 1889. Pan-Americanism entailed a combination of economic, social, political, and *cultural* imperatives to unite the various nation-states of the Americas under a factitiously coherent hemispheric entity. Initiated by Secretary of State James G. Blaine, the union advocated for the U.S. as "natural protector" of Latin America, an extension of the Monroe

Doctrine politics of previous administrations. A short time later, the dawning of the first World War altogether removed European competition from Central America.

During these early decades of the twentieth century, indigenous American architecture was divorced from its controlling purpose as vestigial remnants of an ancient past and transmogrified into other forms of American cultural production. The unstable foundations of Maya antiquity as an architectural identity that was quintessentially "American" found a correlate in the emergent modernist architecture of figures like Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright observed a dearth of American architecture "all fresh *from our own soil*."[6] He consistently touted the need for an organic, "indigenous"[7] American modern architecture, extolling "indigenous growth" as "the essential province of all true art and culture."[8] Having left the firm of Adler and Sullivan on good terms, Wright established his own practice in Chicago, where he conceived the nascent formations of his trademark organic architecture. Between 1909 and 1910, Wright spent almost a year in Europe to evade controversy surrounding his extramarital affair with Mamah (Martha) Borthwick Cheney. He thereafter returned to the Midwest, armed with new resolve to continue his architectural practice. In the midst of World War I, however, after a terrible tragedy and fire at his freshly built residence and studio, Taliesin (1911), Wright moved west, undertaking several mid-career projects in greater Los Angeles simultaneous with new commissions overseas in Japan.

Wright holds a key position in the development of narratives about American modern architecture at the turn of the century and well into the twentieth. However, during what the architectural historian, Anthony Alofsin, conspicuously refers to as the "Lost Years,"[9] the mid-career works form what appears on all accounts to be an exceptional episode in his architectural practice. Intent on breaking away from his rivals, he turned his back on the tenets of the International Style embraced by his nemesis, Philip Johnson—a style that privileged sleek surfaces and an absence of ornamentation—and instead adopted aesthetics poached from a

strange admixture of ancient American influences. Wright's massive, concrete Hollyhock House in Barnsdall Park (1917-1921)[10] and ornamented block system projects characterized by the Alice Millard House (1923) (otherwise known as "La Miniatura"), John Storer House (1923), Charles Ennis House (1923-1924) (formerly the Ennis-Brown House), and Samuel Freeman House (1923-1924) were to become iconic examples of what, some years later, was codified as "Mayan Revivalism."[11] However, Wright denied not only precedents to his "textile block"[12] system of cast concrete components that came to define his innovations with the Mayan Revival style, but also any formal architectural affinities between his designs and their ancient counterparts in Mexico and the American Southwest. He claimed instead: "There never was an exterior influence upon my work either foreign or native, other than that of *lieber meister* [Louis Sullivan], Denkmar Adler, John Roebling, Whitman and Emerson, and the great poets worldwide. My work is original not only in fact but in spiritual fiber . . . as far as the Incas, the Mayans, even the Japanese—all to me were splendid confirmation."[13]

This chapter explores the context of American architecture's rehabilitation of Mesoamerican architectural aesthetics—tenuously grouped by the catch-all, Mayan Revivalism—with a focus on the bearing of Wright's mid-career experiments. Though writings on Wright are among the most prolific in the shelves of any architecture library, there seems to be the least consensus about this particular period of his career. It has been written off as the aftermath of personal crisis, as a subsidiary offshoot of Wright's *japonaiserie*, as the architect's stumbling block en route to his later innovations with concrete, and as a product of Wright's brief flirtation with the ideals of the Vienna Secession. Indeed these assertions contain some truth, but they reduce the complexity of this particular moment in architecture and of Wright's spellbinding mid-career works. Settled as he is into a canonical configuration of pastoral American modernism comprised of his self-proclaimed tenets of organic architecture[14] and affiliations with the Prairie School as Louis Sullivan's protégé, Wright's engagement of ancient

American aesthetics merits complication far beyond the canonical historicization of this episode as part of the flat, provincial Wright of Phaidon Press.

Re-examining the genealogy of Maya ruins as they were replicated and transposed in the U.S. during the early twentieth century highlights the ambiguity surrounding these projects and sheds light on Wright's melding of the latest in industrial materials—concrete—with ancient aesthetics to produce a consummately modern American architecture that typified the growing national landscape romance. Architectural revivals of any flavor exemplify digestions of "style"—that elusive component of immaterial cultural capital—into a second order.[15] Thus the aesthetic potential of Mesoamerican ruins first visualized for U.S. audiences in Catherwood's illustrations would be integrated by Wright into an American architectural style and regional modern expression of the California landscape.

The proponents of Mayan Revivalism exhibited a variety of impulses that characterized the promiscuous modernity of the first decades of the twentieth century, from the indigenous modern experiments staked out by Wright (and in which he masked the politics of his works to the frustration of its historians) to the exoticizing impulses exemplified in the rash of Mayan theaters built in the late 1920s, and finally, the American skyscraper and the work of Robert Stacy-Judd, the most vocal and ardent practitioner of Mayan Revival architecture.

World's Fair Mesoamerica

Tracing influences on Wright's Mayan Revival projects is a perplexing task because of his disavowal of any direct "exotic" influences on his work. Catherwood's illustrations and Stephens's influential texts were still widely available and quite popular during Wright's early career, as was the French transplant Désiré Charnay's striking photography from the late 1850s, published in *Cités et Ruines Américaines* in 1863.[16] Wright was notoriously silent on the issue, however, and speculation does not suffice. The Mexican architect, Juan O'Gorman,

claimed that Wright was “a frequent visitor to our archaeological sites,”[17] but archival documentation does not support the proposed timeline for any visits prior to or during execution of the experimental mid-career projects. Rather, it seems that the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair and 1915 Panama-California International Exposition are likely sources of contact in spite of Wright’s casual admonishment of such events in his autobiography.

Some years earlier than Wright’s initial forays with indigenous aesthetics, the first plaster replicas of Maya ruins were displayed in the World’s Columbian Exposition at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair. The fair’s plan was arranged in such a way to indicate the superiority of Maya antiquity over the “semi-civilized” exhibits of native North American dwellings and separate altogether from the other, more “exotic” features of the Midway zone. They did not, however, supersede the fair’s civilizational zenith—the White City. The fair’s organizers thereby established a neat progression in layout from exhibits of the most “primitive” and peripheral cultures, located at the outskirts of the fair, to the spatially centralized White City. With its neoclassical structures, the fair’s centerpiece was emblematic of U.S. achievement and suggestive of the ways that Anglo-America was positioned as culturally and technologically superior to other civilizations.[18]

Wright was professionally involved with the fair as an apprentice for Sullivan and Adler, who designed the Transportation Building. Wright wrote at various points of the 1893 fair, but never with praise and only in passing, observing the exposition as a place “where a mischief was done to architectural America from which it has never recovered, by the introduction of ‘the classic,’ so called, in the Fair buildings, as the ‘Ideal’.”[19] Nevertheless, the fair represented a benchmark event in American history that revived the architectural climate among Wright and his peers. It moreover drew out a pathos of the age—the intermingling of the ancient and modern.

Still, these speculations alone hardly explain the extent of Wright's rather sudden and intense engagement with indigenous motifs in the California experiments. A more likely event—and one, like the Chicago fair, in which a great deal of Wright's contemporaries was implicated—was the Maya exhibit at the 1915 Panama-California International Exposition. Wright attended the fair with industrial designer Alfonso Iannelli, with whom the architect had collaborated on sculptural elements for the Midway Gardens pavilion (1914) in Chicago. At the 1915 fair, the newly completed Panama Canal was commemorated, like the White City, as the symbolic center of Anglo-American prowess (this time hailed as a satellite achievement in Middle America), while the artistic and architectural works of the ancient Maya—a civilization still popularly described at the time as mysteriously vanished—were situated as innovators in a hemispheric lineage of technological development. Edgar L. Hewett, organizer of the fair's exhibits, described the California Building's contents as "especially fitting"[20] for the exposition, noting its inclusion of "the memorials of the race that ran its course in America before the continent was seen by Europeans."[21] The West had been won and the United States was busy staking out a regional cultural identity in the Pacific reaches of its empire.

The 1915 exposition included a range of archaeological, artistic, and altogether more imaginative displays: sculptures cast from the monuments at Palenque; replicas of eight monoliths excavated at Quiriguá, in Guatemala, by the School of American Archaeology in 1910 and 1911; sculptural reliefs "portraying scenes of Maya life" by Jean Beman Smith; and a number of architectural models that represented, in the words of William Henry Holmes, the "highest achievements of aboriginal America—the work of the Maya race."[22] Completed by Santa Fe's Carlos Vierra, six large murals approximating the panoramic perspectives of Catherwood's "General View" plates depicted the Maya cities of Copan, Uxmal, Quiriguá, Palenque, Chichen Itza, and Tikal.[23] Consistent with Vierra's murals, Holmes declared the Maya the "Greeks of the New World,"[24] and Smith's bas-reliefs—resembling classical Greek

sculpture—were oddly praised as "purely Maya."[25] From an architecture and planning perspective, though the plan of the 1915 fair retained the Beaux-Arts axiality of the 1893 Chicago Fair, the cultural motivations reflected new concerns. The U.S. celebration of Maya achievements partially justified (while simultaneously distracting attention from) the U.S. institutional, commercial, economic, *and* military presence in Central America in the decades preceding the construction of the Panama Canal.

Between the 1915 fair's architecture (Hispanic revival, by and large) and much of its content (indigenous American civilizations with a noted emphasis on the Maya), the fair had its bases covered and its pageant of American (and American by proxy) civilizations complete. Wright was more likely to have drawn inspiration from the content of the fair's exhibits rather than its architecture, but he nevertheless maintained a pointed similarity in attitude to the fair's organizers; Bertram Goodhue, the consulting architect for the Exposition, remade the architectural plans to reflect what he prophesized to be a new California vernacular.[26] Wright too sought generate a truly American architecture, but he scorned the fair's "tawdry Spanish Medievalism,"[27] extending his dislike also to Goodhue's curated variety of loosely Churriguresque and Mission revival styles, which Wright deemed "Mexico-Spanish."[28]

As might be suggested by showcasing in the world's fairs, both Mayan and Hispanic revivals more broadly fell quite low on the architectural totem pole; much of it has been forgotten or flattened into the blurred eclecticism of the American Southwest. The buildings of Wright's "lost years," in contrast, continue to glimmer and wink, incongruous modern ruins, across a century of time. It would seem, however, that Wright's arguably high American modernist California experiments are more exceptional in *this* regard than they are discontinuous with his practice.

Reviving the Maya Ruin and the Hollyhock House

Architecture loosely grouped under the "Mayan Revival" classification ranges from eclecticism-gone-wild in the vein of the Mayan theaters of the late 1920s and early 1930s to Wright's combination of "elemental"[29] ornament and pyramidal massing in the service of an architecture Wright saw as "organic" to its site. There is little consensus among architectural historians regarding the attributes of the Mayan Revival style because of its diverse instantiations in not only institutional buildings, but also industry, commerce, ecclesiastical spaces, and residences such as Wright's "holiday adventure in Romanza,"[30] as he deemed the Hollyhock House in Los Angeles.[31]

Mayan Revival architecture includes a broad sampling of loosely referenced Toltec, Zapotec, Aztec, Maya, Amerindian, and other non-Western iconography, decoration, and structural forms during a time period when many "exotic" styles were used somewhat interchangeably and inconsistently, with some touted more widely than others. Robert Stacy-Judd's Aztec Hotel (1925), for example, was "not of Aztec but of Mayan origin, . . . the former name being used by the owners because it is better known."[32] A *New York Times* article penned in 1927 about the Monrovia hotel notes, "the two outstanding characteristics of Mayan architecture are massiveness of form and profuse richness of decoration," as well as the "ready use" of the style's decorative motifs which "combine a certain quality of quasi-Oriental symbolism with primitive conventions."[33]

Indeed, the larger infolding of Mesoamerican antiquity under the framework of exercises in "primitive conventions" by architectural historians is problematic insofar as the ancient stone ruins of Mexico and Central America are not primitive, but *classical*. Anxieties about modernization had a substantial influence on the nascent category of the archaic—a solution to the cultural conundrum presented by classical American civilizations. In the 1920s, an American "archaic" period was conceived by Herbert J. Spinden as "a fundamental underlying cultural

substratum for all New World high cultures."[34] High art and architecture nevertheless sought out categorical affirmation by occlusion—occlusion, that is, of Spinden's New World classical, "archaic," and its occasional comrade-in-alterity, the "primitive." Yet the same hand that swept away the archaic also grasped and absorbed it into the aesthetic conventions of modernism in the work of figures like Wright.

In Wright's case, such archaic "conventions" were most often passed off as "integral ornament"[35] in the California works—geometric patterns of conventionalized decoration supposedly aligned in principle, not form, to the Maya, Amerindian, Chinese, and other indigenous and non-western sources Wright admired. The same year as the 1915 Exposition in San Diego, planning ensued for what would eventually become a massive building complex for American oil heiress Aline Barnsdall. Settled across a large plot of land at the base of the Hollywood Hills, the complete design was meant to be an avant-garde theater project, including Barnsdall's residence (the Hollyhock House), terraced housing and studios approximating an artist colony, a movie theater, a row of shops, and an experimental theater that would seat 1250 people. A palace-like design for the Hollyhock House led the procession. Though initially conceived with decidedly non-Maya features like pitched rooflines and an unadorned exterior, designs for the residence eventually metamorphosed into the low-slung, yet imposing building we know today—an expression, Wright argued, of Barnsdall's large personality and character as a strong-headed and wealthy patron of the arts.

The Hollyhock House has smooth, white, exterior surfaces—a description that might easily slip into characterization of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye (1929-1931) or Mies van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat (1928-1930), erected a decade or so after the Barnsdall House was completed. This is, however, where any similarity ends. Resting atop a kind of stereobate—the solid mass of masonry that typically serves as a classical building's visible base—a grand, U-shaped, single-storey schema surrounds a central courtyard from which guests could enjoy the

enclosure's dual function as an open air theater. The building's primary axis follows the sun's path across two pools cardinally flanking the eastern and western edges of the house. From a simple, hieratic pediment-like molding and a patterned crown of identical, geometricized finial sculptures of Barnsdall's favorite flower (from which the residence derives its name), slightly canted walls ascend steeply to a flat rooftop.[36] This created a "hood-like attic"[37] that Wright scholars and architectural historians like Dimitri Tselos and Vincent Scully have identified as neo-Mayan.[38]

The east-facing wing—indeed the most frequently photographed part of the Hollyhock House's façade—is punctuated on the exterior by large, symmetrical windows outlined by a simple, post and lintel-type frame with sculpted columns, like parentheses, on either side. The effect is a grandiose frontality that diverts attention from the characteristically diminutive Wrightian main entrance, but the residence's tunnel-like entry is not so diminutive after all; each door of pre-cast concrete weighs over three hundred pounds, and the entryway has more in common with that of a Maya burial chamber than with other Wright residences.

Wright was notorious for his insistence on creative control over the total design of not only the commissioned building projects and their surrounding acreage, but also architectural interiors, including furniture and art. A striking feature of the Hollyhock House is a stylized, pictographic relief above Wright's signature domestic architectural centerpiece—the hearth. The relief's highly abstracted forms skirt discernibility, but Wright's son, Lloyd, suggested that the mantelpiece depicts Barnsdall herself as an enthroned "Indian princess . . . looking out over her desert mesas,"[39] surrounded by the four primordial elements of earth, air, fire, and water.

Indeed, Barnsdall was a force of nature, and an intimate friend of Wright's over the years despite mutual frustrations that quickly emerged to haunt the project. Wright described the unconventional heiress as a "parlour Bolshevik"[40] and left-leaning activist "whose ideas were 'proletariat'."[41] Barnsdall's expansive vision for the thirty-six acres of Olive Hill that would

become Barnsdall Park gave Wright's visionary architectural ardor a run for its money. A noted, yet incongruous Bohemian and an outspoken feminist, she also supported the democratization of theater and the arts. She shared with Wright an ambition to produce a "self-sufficient, creative community"[42] supplemented by commercial activity on the property's northern edge.

A kind of American Parthenon in bearing, the monolithic Hollyhock House is a testament to Wright's first clear expression of a regionalist, "indigenous" architectural expression of the California landscape, followed closely by his commissions for the Ennis, Millard, Storer, and Freeman Houses. Wright's Los Angeles projects seem to have been the only works of the Mayan Revival classification to have elbowed their way into the canon as "high" modern American architecture. But why? First, we must briefly revisit revival architecture at a national level among Wright's generation.

The State of the Architecture

The layman's Mayan Revival historian, Marjorie Ingle, and others suggest Paul P. Cret and Albert Kelsey's Pan-U.S. Union Building (1908-1910) was the first discernible attempt at Mesoamerican revival. Characteristic of the unmemorable mish-mash typifying early twentieth century American eclecticism, the Pan-U.S. building is a provincial architectural cousin of the small collection of "Mayan"-themed theaters, clubs, restaurants, and hotels erected across the U.S. in the 1920s.[43] It demonstrates the kind of "unfaithful" materialism of most revivals—chiefly the use of other materials to approximate the look of stone or the inessential application, post-construction, of superficial decoration—trends that backed the criminalization of ornament among the founding fathers of modernist architecture.[44] Structurally, the building was classical revival built with white Georgian marble. It was finished, however, with a number of decorative treatments poached from many of the union's twenty-one member countries, including elements with pre-Hispanic flourishes.

More generally, architectural revivals of the early twentieth century had a confused reception from the get go. In 1922, for example, the Chicago Tribune Competition "call[ed] for a new national formal language"[45] in architecture. The results of the competition evidenced the lingering Beaux-Arts emphasis on revival in high-rise architecture of the time; a neo-Gothic entry by American architects John Mead Howells and Raymond Hood was chosen over "uncompromisingly modernist"[46] European entries by figures such as Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer. In other ways, however, the shadow of Europe across the United States grew yet longer, and neoclassical styles were the name of the game in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Architectural critics of the period conflated the integration of Italian Renaissance (neoclassical) *styles* with the blossoming cosmopolitanism of the American city, the genteel tradition, and the continuing search for national identity. Writing in *Architectural Record* in 1906, Harry Desmond and Herbert Croly proclaimed: "Of all modern peoples, we [Americans] are most completely the children of the Renaissance; and it would be fatal for us to deny our patronage."[47] Greek Revival, the most consistently utilized architectural style for U.S. government and other institutional buildings, is a rather unnatural (yet ubiquitous) style for a nation as geographically remote from the stylistic origins of classical architecture as the United States. One needs to look no further than Robert Mills' U.S. Treasury Department (1836-1842) in Washington, D.C. (reproduced *ad infinitum* on the back of the U.S. ten-dollar bill) or, a century later, the Smithsonian Institution's National Gallery of Art (1936) for leading examples of this phenomenon. Neoclassicism's formal qualities are well ingrained in the collective psyche: imposing frontality, symmetrical design, and, of course, classically-derived colonnades. The ionic revival of the National Gallery, with its scroll-like capitals and bare pediments of pink Tennessee marble, is no exception to the tropes of the American architectural "renaissance."[48]

What was viewed as a remnant of British influence during the nineteenth century—classical revival's arguable heyday—had become a style of particularly "American" qualities by

the onset of the twentieth century. It was, however, exhausted, having dried up centuries earlier with the ebbing of the Renaissance period. Writing of the "ponderous anachronism" of the national capitol, Wright ridiculed and deeply criticized the U.S. attachment to what was essentially a revival of a revival in neoclassical architecture. He lamented that "our [American] native grando-mania took that [Italian Renaissance] form . . . . It might have taken any other form, but it happened to take the dome."[49] Wright observed the American "betrayal" in reviving the "old order"—it was "immoral," he argued, "because of the hyper-artificiality called the Renaissance, or 'rebirth' of the ancient order. Eventually this rebirth came to us in virulent form and is seen everywhere in our great cities as current eclecticisms."[50] The problem plaguing U.S. revival architecture persisted. The New World was not the Old World. There was neither a Parthenon nor a Roman Forum in the Americas, yet the structure consecrating Plymouth Rock is distinctly classical. Wright even made the assertion that "we [Americans] are the modern Romans."[51] But where, then, was our Colosseum? Our aqueducts? Our Pantheon?

The Stockpot of Organic Architecture

Wright instead endowed American architecture with the necessity to abandon "the usual dull and vulgar imitations of the old styles, false and imitative."[52] His professed distaste for copies and European imports was not, however, confined to classical styles. A utopian expression of "universalist" modernist architecture purportedly purified of any reference to the past was catching hold of Western Europe, and the International Style had a following in the United States. As early as 1905, Wright noted the growing popularity of the style with great displeasure, observing the proliferation of "bad copies, in bad techniques, of bad originals."[53] Le Corbusian modernism—against which both Wright and revivalist enterprises more generally were situated—sought to gather the principles of high architecture under a single banner

characterized by formal features like the expulsion of ornament and an emphasis on balance over visual symmetry.

Seeing his own work apart from the "objectionably 'ornamental'" quality of revival architecture, Wright posited that the Corbusian "machine for living in" was still safer than any "festering mass of ancient styles."[54] Imitations were poorly suited to American soil, Wright argued, because they were not "organic" to their environment. In the catalogue preface to the 1910 catalogue, *The Sovereignty of the Individual: In the Cause of Architecture,* Wright declared: "Degenerate Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, the styles of the Louis: none were developed from within. There is little or nothing organic in their nature."[55] Wright considered medieval era architecture superior and Renaissance period revival architecture imitative and thus degenerate. This perceived inferiority had much to do with Wright's conception of Renaissance styles as superficial, whereas his descriptions of Gothic architecture—a style admired by two of Wright's great influences, the French architect, Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc,[56] and the Romantic era novelist, Victor Hugo—were considerably more positive, characterizing the Gothic as "organic," "natural," and "developed from within."[57]

The entangling of artistic, spiritual, and organic values central to the Victorian Era rehabilitation of the Gothic by figures like Viollet-le-Duc and Hugo was paralleled (in the U.S.) by the brand of nature favored by the Hudson River School and Transcendentalists. The wilderness ethos of the nineteenth-century United States detailed in the previous chapter would also coincide with the proto-ideals of Pragmatism in the first decades of the twentieth century, a brand of spiritualism that carried over also into Wrightian organicism. William James, partial heir to the Transcendentalist legacy, authored *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* in 1902. In it, the spirit of Transcendentalism translates as a form of secular religion—a sublimation of religious feeling into nature, and one into which Wright tumbled along with his "indigenous" architecture.

To a great degree, Wright's attitudes were out-of-time. Philip Johnson would make caustic reference to Wright as the "greatest architect of the nineteenth century."[58] However, in league with other modernist architects, he foregrounded the machine and entertained conceptions of utopian architecture; but the values he attributed to his practice of organic architecture were those of the Romantic period. Passages of Wright's work emulate the romantic posturing of the previous century, like that of Emerson's 1841 essay, "Art." Emerson stated: "He [the artist] should know that the landscape has beauty for his eye . . . and he will come to value the expression of nature, and not nature itself, and so exalt in his copy, the features that please him."[59] For Emerson and Wright both (as it had been for the picturesque gaze), landscape was *for* the artist. Emerson praised the creative personality as uniquely capable of making "universally intelligible" the forms in nature through "reference . . . to an aboriginal Power."[60] The sentiment presaged both the tone of Wright's lofty prose and his sometimes nebulous references to archaic sources. "There must be a natural house," Wright announced, "not natural as caves and log-cabins were natural, but native in spirit and the making, having itself all that architecture had meant whenever it was alive in times past."[61]

A major influence on Emerson's writings about art was sculptor and critic Horatio Greenough, with whom Emerson published a number of exchanges in the 1840s journal, *The Dial.* In many ways, Greenough foretold both Sullivan's famed dictum of "form follows function" *and* Wrightian organicism in the same letter to Emerson from December of 1851: "Here is my theory of structure. A scientific arrangement of spaces and *forms* to *functions* and to site—An emphasis of features proportioned to their gradated importance in function—Colours [sic] and ornament to be decided and arranged and varied by strictly *organic* laws—having a distinct reason for each decision—the entire and immediate banishment of all make-shift and make believe [sic]."[62] We find in this passage several striking similarities to Wright's dogmatic approach to an "organic integrity"[63] in his architectural ornamentation—the familiar coupling of

"form" and "function" and suggested use of "strictly *organic* laws" to dictate form. The passage also reveals Greenough's obvious scorn for "all make-shift and make believe," a precursor to Wright's purported distaste for revivalist kitsch. Even Wright's corollary formulation of organicism evident in the "faithfulness" of his materials to locale—for example, his addition of decomposed granite and sand from the building sites into the concrete mixture for his textile block constructions—emulates Greenough's emphasis on site as a third term to form and function.

In line with Transcendentalist thinking, Wright saw his work as *of* nature rather than imitative of it, and most often in prophetic terms that appealed to a liberal sensibility of the natural world: "It is self-evident that neither architect who imitates nor architecture imitative can be free,—the one is a slave, the other forever in bondage. It is as evident that free architecture must develop from within,—an integral, or as we now say in architecture, an 'organic' affair."[64] The scriptural language of Wright's abundant writings and occasionally rabid defense of his practice were not only evidence of a kind of self-conscious mythologizing. They were also bound up in Wright's identity as the son of a Unitarian preacher.[65] Romantic idealism by proxy of Unitarianism became a significant conduit Wright's unsurprising emphasis on "unity" of design and landscape in his trademark organic architecture of the early years. Very unlike the popular (contemporary) view of "raw" nature that emerged some decades later with the modern environmentalist movement of the 1960s, the concept of the "natural" inherent in Wrightian organicism enabled the architect's emphasis on God intelligible in the universality of primary forms.[66] Indeed it was an exercise in Gothic sentiment, reappraised and rescued from the pejorative treatment of previous centuries during the revivals of the nineteenth. As this observation may suggest, many of the ideas invested in the American landscape myth were not themselves homegrown.

Wright's designs were meant to be coextensive with and organic to their setting, surroundings that by Wright's prerequisites were rural and remote, or otherwise large enough tracts of land to suggest "natural" surroundings. The Anglo-American landscape myth that formed the context of Wright's anti-urban demands was so pervasive that it had taken root at a federal level. A year before construction initiated for the Barnsdall Commission, President Woodrow Wilson's signature on the 1916 "Organic Act" ushered the U.S. National Park Service into being, a means to "promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations . . . which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the *natural and historic objects* . . . by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."[67] For the first time, the federal government was the self-designated steward of landscapes with both "natural" and "historic" significance. More importantly, the act was a significant leap in domesticating the American West and in the ongoing naturalization of the nation's landscape romance. Wright was among the champions of the National Park System, writing in his autobiography: "Thanks to provisions of Government, great natural and National Parks are becoming everywhere available."[68] At the same time that the U.S. government cast an increasingly watchful eye over the American landscape, Wright was at work building it.

Crime and Ornament, and the Textile Block

After 1910 or so, Wright's engagement of indigenous aesthetics solidified in the abstract forms of his mid-career experiments. In his autobiography, Wright described the "primitive character" of Maya forms as having "the purest kinship to elemental nature."[69] In step with many others of his generation, the architect conflated the indigene with nature. Sometimes this took a literal shape. Completed in 1916 and one of the frequently cited precursors to Wrightian Mayan Revivalism, the Bogk House's sculpted stone lintels on its street-facing façade are one such

example of Wright's free use of Mesoamerican and Amerindian motifs to generate decorative abstraction as an approximation of "indigenous" forms. Frontal and bilaterally symmetrical, four winged humanoid figures form a geometrized, elevated frieze-like band across the building's Roman brick exterior. Wright's brightly colored preliminary plans for the figures depict hieratic, bare-torsoed and more identifiably (human) male figures adorned with elaborate, albeit geometrized clothing, jewelry, and headdresses—features that disappear somewhat in the more conventionalized format of the colorless, cast concrete ornament.

To the twentieth-century architect, "conventionalization" was a means of adapting (and most often abstracting) a form found in nature to meet the formal and material concerns of an object.[70] This formed a sharp contrast to the imitative, incredibly ornate surface applications of most architectural revivals. However, the materially-bound simplification of the Bogk House's winged figures compromises somewhat Wright's imaginative, polychromatic figures of the early drawings, leaving us to wonder at the ostensibly *accidental* nature of Wright's increasing uptake with decorative abstraction in cast concrete. It was indeed differential applications of ornament among the practitioners of Mayan Revivalism that came to typify not only the style but its capricious interpolation between high and low architecture.

The high modern International Style was situated within the post-WWI ethos, a kind of tabula rasa in which architects like Le Corbusier conceived of towering, self-contained buildings free of decoration. Such buildings were punctuated only by a few "vestiges of the past . . . harmoniously framed by trees and forests"[71]—the only allowance for any visible details of the past. Mayan Revivalism, on the other hand, touted decoration as one its defining features: Stacy-Judd's "all-over" approach in designing the Aztec Hotel; Francisco Cornejo's ornate, sculpted façade for the Los Angeles Mayan Theater (1927); and the conventionalized, "integral ornament"[72] of residences like the Millard House that contained what Wright asserted were

"qualities that make *essential architecture* as distinguished from any mere act of building whatsoever."[73]

Wright's typical self-congratulation regarding the mid-career projects began with a fantasy of the natural and regional rooted in landscape. Wright refers to the Hollyhock House as a "new [building] type in California, a land of romance."[74] To these views he married his utopian optimism about industrial materials like the concrete block, "the cheapest (and ugliest) thing in the building world."[75] Wright asked, "why not see what could be done with that gutter-rat?"[76] Wright's designs for La Miniatura, as well as the Storer, Ennis, and Freeman residences demonstrate a key trend distinguishing Wright's Mayan Revival projects—the use of a relatively new material in accordance with Wright's regard for the "machine" as the "normal tool of civilization."[77] In lieu of the carefully hewn stone and stucco that ancient Mesoamericans had used to build their monumental religious, political, and cultural centers, Wright innovated what he claimed to be an altogether new Machine Age marriage of a "new" building material, concrete, with the age-old technology of casting, effecting the textile block, or "knit-block"[78] construction method. In Wright's textured California residences, sixteen-inch square units were individually hand-cast in 3.5-inch thick aluminum molds, creating uninterrupted surface patterning and perforations made up of identical, hollow, cast concrete blocks held together with steel supports.

The textile block method was quite time consuming. Such a painstaking process stands in odd contradistinction to Wright's advocacy of the machine for its potential to liberate the artist and laborer. Nevertheless, the Millard House in Pasadena was the first of Wright's several attempts to create a new American typology in concrete block. Designed for the bookseller, Alice Millard, on a site selected by Wright, the house rests in a heavily wooded ravine of the Arroyo Seco region of Los Angeles. Its overall structure emulates the blocks that make it up—simple, rectilinear forms as modest in structure as it is in material. Still, the combination of

imprinted and plain blocks creates a rich patterning and seamless interweaving of interior and exterior surfaces, punctuated in places by almost medieval wooden doors. At first glance, the drawings of the house approximate nineteenth-century Mesoamerican ruinscapes insofar as its structure peeks forth from the dense, creeping greenery that hugs and overtakes it from all sides, almost as though the building was excavated from the ravine.

In contrast, the Ennis House ascends defiantly from its Hollywood hillside like a rock or cliff face in posture and a sprawling modern Maya temple in form. Colossal in size—over 6,000 square feet—to meet the demands of Wright's commissioner, the retailer Charles Ennis, the citadel of a residence steps oblong up the hill from which it seems to have seismically ruptured and grown. Large and in charge, the building is formidable. No entry is visible from the street. Its façade steps back in overlapping ziggurat shapes, bastioned from the downward slope, with a very slight, almost imperceptible canting of walls toward a flat-topped roofline. A gate with spiraling and conventionalized vegetal deco designs tucks into the elevated end of the property. The gate serves as threshold to a wide, flat, outdoor expanse that brings to mind the engineered mountaintop plateau of the Mitla ruins outside of Oaxaca City. The area includes a large driveway and a lengthy series of patios. In places, the interior is somewhat dark—almost tomb-like—with a floor plan that spreads and descends the length of the building. The building's blocky, terrestrial massing is not Wright's intermittently tacky conglomeration of shapes and conventionalized ornament in his other "exotic" works. The Ennis House instead looks on, presciently, toward a future of architecture in the concrete essence of Brutalism and neo-Brutalist postmodernity. It gives us a glance at the complexity of the copy in its supposed detachment from mimesis.

In the case of both the Barnsdall commission and the textile block residences, Wright's Machine Age conventionalization of ornament created patterned abstractions derived, he claimed, from the "nature of materials." This became a guiding principle of not only the Los

Angeles projects, but also many of the celebrated works of his career. Still, observations of Wright's forays in decoration ranged from dismissive comments about the mid-career experiments' rather obvious exoticism to noticeably caustic criticism of the works' ornamental fantasies under the assumption that the decorative and the modern were irreconcilable.[79] Theo van Doesberg criticized what he characterized as Wright's reliance on "rustic, decorative building," remarking too (in regards to the California experiments) on Wright's having "fallen into the most barbaric decorativism . . . and archaism with no significance whatsoever for the elementaristic architecture of our time."[80]As much as Wright himself scorned eclectic ornament as "hopelessly vulgar,"[81] the textile block residences exemplify the tension between structure and surface that defines, in many cases, the somewhat arbitrary hierarchies of modernism and kitsch. His Mayan Revival projects remain monumental, transcendent testaments to his experimentation with indigenous forms in the creation of a regional modern architecture.

Golden State Regionalism and *Japonaiserie*

Shortly before the close of the nineteenth century, German theorist Richard Streiter advocated for "regionalism," a non-universalizing iteration of modernism cognizant of the local milieu and architectural customs. The most obvious and devout expressions of regionalist tendencies, however, took place across the Atlantic, particularly in the Western United States. Regionalism came to typify American modernism, with Wright as one of its clearest advocates.[82] Wright's prairie designs were his first stab at a regionalist architecture of the suburban and rural Midwest. The Robie House (1909-1910) at the University of Chicago typifies the stately horizontality of Wright's contributions to the Prairie School. Low rooflines with sizable, cantilevered overhangs cap long, low levels of brick terracing that emulate the broad, treeless expanses of the American Midwest.

While Sullivan's legacy is permanently etched into the American skyscraper, Wright expressed disdain for the rash of urbanism affiliated with the modernist moment in architecture. He chose instead to advocate for low-lying, principally residential commissions on preferably large acreage. He was also partial to clients who proffered him the freedom to command the artistry of the project and integrate the landscape (formally *and* sometimes literally) of the site into the architecture itself.[83] Wright sought to bring to life a universally intelligible American architecture qua a "regionalist" modality of design; in effect, the "Hollyhock House was to be a natural house in the changed circumstances and naturally built; native to the region of California as the house in the Middle West had been native to the middle West."[84] His projects in greater Los Angeles were also the architect's rejoinder to a Southern Californian architectural landscape that principally favored Hispanic revival. Wright sought to compete with and ultimately overcome the regionally popular Mission and Spanish styles of the American Southwest.

There had grown an idea among the American public and architects alike that Hispanic revival—in the American Southwest, at least—was the "truest" form for the landscape, and Wright's trusted employees proved no exception to the sentimentalizing advocates of the "Mexico-Spanish" architecture Wright despised. Brought on to rescue the Barnsdall project by completing the plans Wright had neglected while in Japan, R.M. Schindler wrote to his fellow architect and friend, Richard Neutra, in late 1920, shortly after his arrival in California: "When I speak of American architecture I must say at once that really there is none. There are a few beginnings but architecture has never been wedded to America . . . The only buildings which testify to the deep feeling for [the] soil on which they stand are the sunbaked adobe buildings of the first immigrants and their successors—Spanish and Mexican—in the southwestern part of the country."[85] Wright, meanwhile, proposed his Greater Los Angeles projects as a type of cure-

all for the ubiquity of California architecture he perceived to be “ill with pseudo-Romantic in terms of neo-Spanish.”[86]

Wright’s invocation of what was later deemed Mayan Revivalism proved to waver between the confused eclecticism of other revivals and something approximating a turn to high modernism in his practice—an exception to the “shallow sea of cheap expedients”[87] and “desert of shallow effects” in what the architect saw as Hollywood’s make-believe architectural landscape. Wright certainly did “assimilate” various stylistic references, though not entirely successfully in the eyes of the American public during the 1910s and 1920s.

Less than a year after Schindler’s letter to Neutra, with the Barnsdall project finally completed, the press was somewhat bewildered in their efforts to classify the Hollyhock House. A reporter for the *Hollywood Citizen News* typified the architecture as “Egyptian” at first glance, then “Aztec! . . . closer to the truth,”[88] he asserted, “when your eyes equate it with the charm of the courts and the patios and the bowers, and the gardens and the siesta spots and the flat roof lines. But you [the viewer] are still wrong.”[89] Instead, he encouraged visitors to “think of a good size pueblo on one of New Mexico’s mesas or low clean bluffs seen in some parts of the foothills of the Sierras.”[90] Wright’s son, Lloyd, described his father’s work in similarly suggestive terms as a “mesa silhouette characterized and developed by the Pueblo Indians,” and on several other occasions emphasized the paramount influence of Amerindian architecture on his father’s designs.[91] The “style” observed cavorts from the Sierras, to Central Mexico, to Egypt, but *all* the aforementioned articles integrate references to regional landscape features of the Southwestern United States—“low clean bluffs,” “foothills,” and “mesa[s].” Landscape and architecture had become one in the shapeshifting figure of the indigene.

Even several years later there was still no popular consensus in the press about this strange new architectural style manifest in the Barnsdall project designed by Wright but overseen and erected under Schindler and Wright’s son, Lloyd, after tensions rose to a breaking

point between commissioner and architect. Opinions ranged from a *Los Angeles Times* article claiming the architecture's similarity to a Venetian Renaissance villa to those classifying the style as "semi-Oriental."[92] With the aid of Lloyd Wright and Schindler, Wright had indeed taken on the bulk of the architectural experiments in California concurrently with several commissions in Japan. These projects included the Imperial Hotel (1915), noted by scholars to be Wright's "first faintly Mayan"[93] building and ensuing (specious) claims that the design was originally intended for a Mexican commission. Wright, in fact, made four voyages to Japan between 1918 and 1922, spending less than twelve months in the U.S. during this time.[94] Like the pyramidal and decorative qualities of his Ennis and Storer houses loosely emulate aspects of their Mesoamerican counterparts, scholars have suggested that the flat detailing and broad, cantilevered planes of, for example, the Midway Gardens (1914) project have possible links to Japanese domestic architecture.

Viewed side by side, Midway Gardens and Wright's Imperial Hotel—though thousands of miles apart and in completely different countries—have a striking correspondence. Since demolished, the two massive complexes featured symmetrical, dramatic façades and heavily decorated surfaces and sculpture. Horizontally spread around a central court, both had playful, somewhat complex arrangements of shapes and cantilevered balconies, while principal distinctions include material and rooflines. Midway Gardens was erected in brick and concrete block with cast concrete ornament, while the Imperial Hotel's decoration and much of its structure were carried out with local volcanic rock.[95] The Imperial Hotel's interior decorative tooling and ornamented cornices are abstracted and vaguely "Mayan," but the structures themselves have a Japanese profile in sharp contrast to the flat roofscape and long, jutting, and varied overhangs of Midway Gardens. Midway Gardens, moreover, contained additional freestanding sculptural elements by Alfonso Iannelli—geometricized female figures with a markedly Japanese hairstyle gathered in the characteristic bouffant and bun of a geisha. An

avid collector of Japanese woodblock prints, Wright insisted that the clean aesthetic of this admired art form was a model fit, like the architecture of the Maya, for emulation. Both the similarities *and* differences between these two works speak to Wright's general investment in and synthesis of indigenous traditions from a variety of sources.

Anthony Alofsin made significant headway in debunking the mythic confusion surrounding Wright's mid-career experiments, arguing that many of the aesthetics deemed "Mayan" and "Japanese" in Wright's archetypal American style are shared not only with one another but with other ancient sources. Alofsin traced Wright's invocation of indigenous forms to 1910, when the architect visited Vienna. The Secessionists prescribed to the view that "universal" forms were to be found in ancient and folk sources, and indeed, Wright seems to have come away from his travels in Europe with a sincere attachment to the ideals of the Vienna Secession. There are formal similarities between the supposedly Mesoamerican frets of his Mayoid projects and archaic sources of Celtic, Oriental, *and* Amerindian origin.[96] Thus Wright was perhaps not as "faithful" to regionally-focused conventionalized ornament as it would seem, or at the very least he utilized Maya forms interchangeably with other models to invoke his own brand of universally intelligible American architecture.

An "Indigenous" Architecture

However unclear were the aesthetic sources of his Mayan Revival projects, Wright's repeated insistence on an "indigenous" architecture as the antidote to European inheritance was, above all, tied to his preeminent emphasis on architecture as an expression of organic concerns and on *land* in his invocation of indigenous aesthetics. In discussing the Hollyhock House, Wright wrote (unlike his usual evasion of historical reference) that he wanted to revive an architectural culture "which Cortez and Columbus murdered" and an "archetypal image of permanence 'made one with the . . . land'."[97] Wright sought to create the prodigal modern son to

the hemisphere's first great builders, hence the architect's description of La Miniatura as "First-Born of California,"[98] architecture that "belonged to the ground on which it stood."[99]

Of his San Marcos in the Desert (1929) resort project, Wright also argued that "the feeling of the whole building in all its parts now designedly belongs to the terrain. This is what I mean by indigenous architecture."[100] The resort was planned as yet another construction of Wright's textile block system. In contrast to the spare, square forms of the California *romanzas,* drawings of the dining room feature an interior of almost science fictional bearing—kaleidoscopic surfaces with prism-like indentations. The resort, however, was never realized. In January of 1929, Wright had designed and erected Ocatilla Camp, experimental shelters to house himself and his team as they made preparations for the extravagant resort. When the encampment burned several months later, the South Mountain project would not go on.

Indigenous aesthetics identified as neo-Mayan in his California works had migrated not only outside of the Golden State, but also appeared in Wright's work outside of the American Southwest. The same year as the 1915 exposition and initial planning for the Hollyhock House, Wright created the designs for the blocky A.D. German Warehouse (1917-1921) in Wisconsin, with its frieze-like, patterned geometric cornices. Erected in brick with sets of three narrow, slotted windows on the building's street-facing exterior walls, the principal building's boxy, rectangular design and cast concrete decoration loosely approximate the form and proportions of the Temple of the Three Lintels at Chichen Itza.[101] Indigenous aesthetics also emerged prior to 1915 in the plans for the Kehl Dance Academy (1912), the reinforced concrete pyramid of Wright's Unity Temple (1905-1908), and Midway Gardens (all designed and/or completed in the Midwest).[102]

We can thus view Wright's solicitation of indigenous forms in the California projects within the conditions of radical continuity with his oeuvre. It becomes apparent that Wright's "Mayan" revivals were neither the typical architectural revival nor regionally-focused in the

American Southwest, "grow[n] up out of the desert by way of desert materials."[103] As such, it is clear that the style offered up something more along the lines of an indigenous *American* modernism culled from indigenous styles than a regional California or even broadly Southwestern U.S. expression. We can perceive in the Los Angeles works a few clear expressions of the antithetical operations of Wright's larger practice rather than a marginal episode in his career. The Mayan Revival projects, in their many shapes, are thus a kind of externalization of Wrightian organicism and of his self-proclaimed "indigenous" architecture—an idea-in-form.

The Machine

Wright's self-professed distaste for both the eclecticism and hybridization in American revival architecture approximated sentiments set forth by Viollet-le-Duc, who argued that to each nation, or "center of civilization," belongs "a genius of its own which must not be disregarded; and it is because during the last three centuries we have too often failed to appreciate our own genius, that our arts . . . have become hybrid."[104] Wright, in turn, simultaneously celebrated indigenous American sources as inspiration while rejecting them as unsuitable to the climate of twentieth century technologies: "Had I not loved and comprehended pre-Columbian architecture as the primitive basis of world-architecture, I could not now build with the understanding of all architecture. Only with that understanding could I have shaped my buildings as they are. Yet, of all ancient buildings, wherever they may stand or whatever their time, is there one of them suitable to stand here and now in the midst of our time, our America, our machine-age technique? Not one."[105] In the same measure that Wright declared to "love" and "comprehend" Mesoamerican antiquity, he disowned it, finding it "[un]suitable" for "our [Machine Age] America." What *would* be suitable? Of La Miniatura, Wright asserted a new status for a new building material: "Here ornament would become a legitimate feature of

construction. Decoration asserts the whole to be greater than any part and succeeds to the degree that it helps make this good . . . . A pity were the United States to have only one arrow to its bow, or neglect indigenous riches at any point."[106]

Wright's monumental, pyramidal forms and decorative motifs were meant to showcase "integral" California architecture effected through the newest in concrete construction technologies. Wright further proposed that "the humble concrete-block building give[s] . . . architects another simple means to establish an indigenous tradition instead of aping styles."[107] The architect conceived of his forms and decoration as an organic affair consistent with his choice of an industrial material, evidence of his "gradually deepening conviction that in the machine lies the only future of art and craft."[108] Inexpensive, solid, and new, concrete fit the bill for some of the post-1905, more forward-thinking and socially attuned projects, many of them unbuilt.

Indeed, Wright had a rather obvious Arts and Crafts emphasis on integrity of materials, unity of form and function, and use of mundane materials like concrete, but his advocacy of the machine formed a sharp contrast to its naysayers among the chief ideologues of the movement like William Morris and Owen Jones. Wright prophesied a "glorious future" for machine work, praising its emancipatory potential and claiming that "the machine is, in fact, the metamorphosis of ancient art and craft; that we are at last face to face with the machine—the modern Sphinx—whose riddle the artist must solve if he would that art live—for his nature holds the key."[109] Wright's use of new materials and technologies around the time of his mid-career experiments is indicative of the Machine Age's role in Wright's larger invocation of an "indigenous" American modern architecture responsive to regional concerns.

The Other Mayan Revivals

A number of parallel phenomena complicate the reception of Wright's purportedly "American" style. Maya forms and decorative motifs (or at least what were thought to be "Mayan") also surfaced in the early decades of the twentieth century in examples like Mesoamerican revival hotels, "Mayan" and "Aztec" theaters, even in the American skyscraper. Los Angeles's Southwest Museum (1919-1920) featured a somewhat unremarkable "Mayan" tunnel portal designed by the firm Allison and Allison and Margueriet Tew. On the other hand, the Mayan theaters of the early twentieth century were glitzy hyperboles of Mayan Revivalism. Dressed up in a literalization of Wrightian form-*into*-fuction (borne of Sullivanesque form-follows-function), the projected dreams of cinema met fantastic decoration in the early twentieth-century theater—a smorgasbord of eclectic elements plucked from "exotic" civilizations. It stands to reason that the Mayan theaters would join the ranks of Orientalist fantasy in the Chinese and Egyptian theaters of the same era.

It seemed that as the economic pendulum swung from the panic of 1910-1911 to the Great Depression, the distraction offered by exotically-themed architecture coincided with the country's plummet into a steeply worsening economy in the late 1920s. San Antonio's Aztec Theater was erected in 1926, Detroit's Fisher Theater in 1928, and Denver's Mayan Theater was built between 1929 and 1930. In a close second to San Antonio, downtown L.A.'s Mayan Theater, which opened its doors in August of 1927, is somewhat anomalous. Designed by Stiles O. Clements, the building's somewhat neo-Gothic "Mayan" façade was sculpted by Francisco Cornejo. The façade's seven large columns topped by bas-relief busts, and wide-brimmed, hanging portico's lacy, filigree-like screen appear to be proper specimens of a kind of American orientalism. Despite its decidedly medieval windows, however, the window frames' corbeled-arches, lattice effect, and the cartouche tracery of the façade's intricate stylization undoubtedly approximate Mesoamerican antique sources (not to mention that Cornejo was actually

Mexican). In Cornejo's theater we thus witness reification—a surrendered aesthetics wherein subject and object have shifted stations.

Arriving before Wright, Cornejo spent approximately two decades in California with the intention, states a 1927 article in *The Art News* "to familiarize Americans with the Mayan, Aztec, Toltec and other early designs which form the basis of the Mexican industrial arts."[110] He curated several exhibitions of ancient American art, including a 1921 exhibition of ancient American art at the California School of Fine Arts, where he also taught a class in "applied Aztec design."[111] He spoke (during his residence in California), criticizing American architects for "neglect[ing] what we possess on *our* own continent. If we are to be influenced by any form of art," he argued, "why not make use of the wealth of ornamentation and decoration from *our* primitive sources? Maya and Aztec art bears no real resemblance to that of any other ancient nation and is our heritage."[112] The same year work began on the Mayan Theater, Cornejo curated an exhibition outlining the potential for "modern" applications of ancient American art.

A somewhat latent, but prolific figure in the Mayan Revival canon and another expatriate, like Cornejo, who (unlike Wright) championed indigenous design, is British architect and Mayaphile Robert Stacy-Judd. The ornate and richly textured design of the Aztec Hotel is "Mayan" decoration in full throttle—even interior elements down to a gaudy mural titled *The Destruction of Atlantis* were designed by Stacy-Judd as an homage and epic to indigenous America he learned of, in part, by way of Stephens and Catherwood.[113] Interestingly, though Stacy-Judd engaged all manner of native dwelling in his stylized architectural interpretations like his design for the Soboba Hot Springs Resort "Indian Village" (wherein he invokes a mélange of styles that included Shoshoni, Shasta, and Hopi), it was his purported engagement of Maya motifs that he touted as the first "All-American" architecture. Stacy-Judd proves to be a kind of counterpoint to Wright: Stacy-Judd, a transplant from England who adamantly marketed his 1926 Aztec Hotel as the premier in all-American-qua-Mayan architecture versus Wright, the

quintessential American architect and a small-town native who feigned ignorance of the ties between his architecture and indigenous aesthetics.[114] Jesse Lerner observes of the Aztec Hotel a "double appropriation of alterity, paraphrasing, in a single structure, the Mexican and the Native American."[115] As Alofsin points out, Wright was also guilty of this characteristic conglomeration of indigenous forms, but Stacy-Judd *calls* upon them—enacting, in Taussig's words, "the compulsion to *become* the Other"[116] in the regalia of his feathered headdress. In Stacy-Judd's hotel and the loosely Maya forms and decoration of Wright's mid-career projects we can identify architecture expressive of Pan-American idealism, which popularized the idea Amerindian races were "one" and could be cited somewhat interchangeably in the larger and wanton harking back to American antiquity.

Mayan Revival architects were also looking forward. Wright's sketchy science fictional designs for San Marcos in the Desert are perhaps only rivaled by one of Stacy-Judd's striking ecclesiastical projects, the First Baptist Church (1931) in Ventura. The raked stucco building is described in the *LA Times* as "a temple of hybridization" and "pre post-modern affair."[117] With its soaring vertical lines, the building is also a markedly futurist fantasy. A Maya-style archway rises steeply above the church's corner entry. The archway is mimicked by the building's soaring, angular, corner façade, a kind of pyramidal spire repeated in a similarly-styled bank of slotted windows on one of its street-facing sides.

Unlike Wright's spreading, low-slung designs, the verticality of Stacy-Judd's church had an earlier precedent in the Mayan Revival skyscraper. To a large degree, architecture's uptake with pyramidal massing in the American skyscraper was formally unavoidable—an oddly proper expression of a kind of architectural organicism. New York City's Zoning Resolution of 1916 enforced a "ziggurat-plus-tower form"[118] on tall buildings Manhattan, the first zoning and construction law of its kind in the United States aimed to free up the skies of dense urban spaces. In addition to the requirement for a series of setbacks in massing relative to the lot size,

the laws also stifled the possibility of the large cornices of Sullivan's generation. This of course led to an intrinsic, if incidental likeness between the early twentieth-century skyscraper and the structural character of the continent's pre-Hispanic ruins.

By the 1920s, such zoning laws were in place in much of urban America, and the formal affinities did not go unnoticed. In a 1927 article titled "Rebirth of Prehistoric American Art," Edgar Lloyd Hampton, a media aficionado of Stacy-Judd, observed: "In America our supreme achievement—the skyscraper—is built along vertical lines, thus oddly embodying Mayan principles of construction."[119] Indeed, Hampton would go on to make similar claims as Wright and Stacy-Judd, claiming the style to be "eminently appropriate"[120] for institutional and religious buildings and observing the "birth of a new American culture."[121] Both Mayan Revivalism and the larger coextension between art deco and high modernism in the skyscraper appropriated pyramidal techniques in massing. Key works of this variety include, for example, the Daily News Building (1929-1930), designed by John Mead Howells and Raymond Hood, the same duo whose design of nearly a decade earlier won Chicago Tribute Competition of 1922. The Daily News Building was vaunted as "one of New York City's outstanding Art Deco monuments"[122] as well as Hood's first "completely non-eclectic modern building."[123] Even Hood's RCA Building (1933) in Rockefeller Plaza, in which the architect further developed the stepped pyramidal form in accordance with the 1916 laws, was extolled for its "modernistic massing."[124] Modernism had eclipsed indigenous forms by coopting them.

Contemporaneous with the completion of Hood's and Howells's Daily News Building, Wright expressed scorn for the urban in "The Tyranny of the Skyscraper," part of his Princeton lectures of 1930. In his 1932 autobiography, Wright also observed: "There in the greatest metropolis of the U.S.A., in ambitious but fatal variety, is the same deadly monotony. Man-eating skyscrapers were all tall but seeking false feudal monumental mass for 1929 rivetted [sic] steel skeletons."[125] Wright conceived an organic Machine Age for American modernism with

some of its first tributaries in his mid-career exercises of the 1910s and 1920s. But as the nineteenth-century spirit of the natural gave way to the spirit of machine, the *necessity* for the stepped pyramidal skyscraper, soaring into light and expressive of its own awe-inspiring elevation, instantiated another assimilation of indigenous forms.

Modernism, Neo-Imperialism, and Pan-Americanism

Between the mid-nineteenth century and Mayan Revivalism, transmogrifications of Maya ruins in new geographic contexts began to function as mythic entities malleable to the needs of a *modern* empire: for the siting of hemispheric antiquity to rival that of the "Old World," for the achievement of critical distance from the issue of indigenous populations on domestic soil, and even, in the early decades of the twentieth century, spanning the exoticism of the theater to Wright's organic American modernity. In many ways, Wright's invocation of "indigenous" architecture coupled with his claims about a feat of regionalism in the California projects transposed Stephen's claim of American origin as an assurance that cultural legacy of the United States was not beholden to European parentage. In doing so, however, Wrightian organicism—like Stephens's efforts before him to circumscribe an originary American architecture—achieved quite the opposite; it laid bare a national cultural legacy riddled with insecurities. Wright's inheritances from alternately European, non-Western, Amerindian and archaic sources were keystones in the larger invocation of an *American* modern architecture fundamentally tied to the landscape. But Wright's *romanzas* are contradictions—strange loci of the coalescence of California's blossoming regionalism with the modernist drive toward universalism into which his uses of indigenous aesthetics were so often absorbed.

Mayan Revivalism was bound at once to the perception of U.S. cultural inferiority to Europe and problematically united with positioning of the indigene as either vanished or continuous with nature. Like Stephens's claim that the ancient American edifices were "like the

plants and fruits of the soil, indigenous,"[126] Wright too couched his pursuits in biological metaphor, fortified by the strain toward American *equivalence* with a European past, present, and future. The kind of nineteenth-century romantic idealism Wright subscribed to was embalmed in the Anglo-American landscape, ciphered through the indigene, tied up with his self-proclaimed Organicism, caught in the machine, and staring back at the white-walled International Style.

In an essay titled "Modernism and Imperialism," Fredric Jameson charts modernist representation and its politico-aesthetic ramifications. Though he writes principally of literature, the same observations can be mapped onto the afterlife of the U.S. ruin gaze in Mayan Revivalism:

> As artistic content it [the acculturated object] will now henceforth always have something missing about it, but in the sense of a privation that can never be restored or made whole simply by adding back in the missing component: its lack is rather comparable to another dimension, an outside like the other face of a mirror, which it constitutively lacks . . . . This . . . historically original problem in what is itself a new kind of content now constitutes the situation and the problem and the dilemma, the formal contradiction, that modernism seeks to solve; or better still, it is only that new kind of art which reflexively perceives this problem and lives this formal dilemma that can be called modernism in the first place.[127]

Such a dilemma is rather obvious in the face of the defensibly high modern and proto-Brutalist Ennis House. The shifting contexts in which Mesoamerican architectural aesthetics appeared in the U.S. during the 1890s and early decades of the twentieth century are indicative of such political and cultural malleability. They point up the central and often antithetical purposes to which indigenous American aesthetics were put to use in the formation of a modern national cultural identity.

Mayan Revivalism and the proliferation of responses to indigenous revival were part of a larger narrative continuous with the historical unfolding of the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth. In the United States, the Progressive Era gave birth to a brand of modernization that foregrounded technological optimism alongside social Darwinism. These attitudes were part

and parcel of, as Shelly Errington describes, a worldview of the indigene "as part of a timeless 'national heritage' whose living exemplars have disappeared or are in the process of disappearing through 'modernizing'."[128]

Another modernism, however, disturbed the glassy, provincial surface of the mainstream conception of "disappearing" indigenes conjoined to the American Southwest's pervasive Hispanophilia, a nineteenth-century hangover and gradual replacement of the Black Legend. The project of Mexican modernism had begun during the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to 1920, but U.S. consciousness was slow to form and the forerunners of the mural movement would not come to the United States for almost a decade after Wright completed the last of his Mayan Revival projects in California.[129] Growing energies of what became the official *Indigenismo* movement in Mexico during the early 1920s, spearheaded by Manuel Gamio, heralded a shift in the mentality regarding indigenous America. Gamio championed a reevaluation of native art forms and reclamation of Mesoamerican antiquity.[130] Nationalist sentiment was garnered, in part, through the propagation of the visual arts as a means of "cultural evangelization"[131] by figures like Mexican ideologue José Vasconcelos.

In contrast, the arts and architecture of the United States—intermingled as they were with private interest—had created the false perception of a vacuous and apolitical avant-garde headlined by the figurehead "freedom" of total abstraction. However, the realities of U.S. cultural production were fiercely entwined with a government that aided in curbing a veritable indigenous modernity on U.S. soil as much as it suppressed many of Wright's public commissions and more socially-minded projects of his late career, an issue reaching back to 1915.[132] During the interwar period, the U.S. instigated a number of international cultural activities as a strategy to unite Latin American countries with the United States against the rising tide of perceived external threats to the Americas. As part of this, the U.S. championed the "authenticity" of indigenous art and architectural forms, and institutional support for the

exhibition and presentation of the arts of the Americas swept the country. Even Mexican-born Francisco Cornejo would be absorbed into the Works Progress Administration's push to authorize and institutionalize American art in the mid- to late 1930s. Consistent with the nation's political value system, Maya models would continue to flourish—(as ethnographic and archaeological specimens)—during the 1930s, reappearing in the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition and the 1935 California-Pacific International Exposition. The Uxmal Nunnery's northernmost building was replicated for the Chicago fair, while Richard Requa would redesign San Diego's Federal Building (now the Hall of Sports) to emulate the Governor's Palace in Uxmal.[133]

In the 1930s, the Roosevelt administration piggybacked on Herbert Hoover's Good Neighbor Policy from the 1920s—a "new, noninterventionist direction in U.S. foreign policy toward Central and South America."[134] Since the Monroe Doctrine had produced, at junctures, disastrous results under the banner of a protectionist endeavor, the new brand of twentieth century Pan-Americanism in tandem with the Good Neighbor Policy featured a number of U.S. cultural and economic motives entailing the usurpation of indigenous art forms. This was particularly noticeable in the years after the Great Depression. Pan-American sentiment aided in dissolving modernism into U.S. institutional inscription, enabling also a seamless sublimation of any emergent regional avant-gardism in California's architecture and fine arts (and in the U.S. more broadly as Mexican modernism loomed large) under the provincial cover of Hispanophilic sentiment and exoticism.

Consistent with twentieth century Pan-Americanism, "sanctioned" Mexican folk art became the poster child for ersatz progress and hemispheric vigor. In 1939, during the second term of Roosevelt's presidency, Nelson Rockefeller was appointed coordinator of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Rockefeller, in accordance with the government's strategic joint investment in the Good Neighbor Policy and Pan-Americanism, placed a new and

unprecedented emphasis on the Mexican muralists. In doing so, he also secured MoMA's role in perpetuating Pre-Columbian and Mexican folk art and as both indigenous and "authentic."[135]

Indigenismo and Anahuacalli

As a byproduct of these circumstances, Wright still forged a novel (if a largely unremarked upon) path. Though European circles (and Philip Johnson, in step with Le Corbusian modernism) viewed Wright as somewhat of an artifact of nineteenth century, Wright proponents overseas found the Mayan Revival residences and vaguely "Mayan" Imperial Hotel to be the most compelling works of his career.[136] Indeed it could be argued that Wright's greatest feat of "indigenous" architecture was his Imperial Hotel, executed in regional green volcanic rock atop a "floating" foundation that—unlike the fate of its surroundings—withstood the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. His Mayan Revival experiments, however, began their steep ascent into deterioration almost immediately, plagued by material fragility and major oversights regarding the various site conditions of greater Los Angeles. As such, they remain somewhat insufficient regional expressions of Wright's trademark organic modernity.

By the 1930s, Wright's work was gaining increasing traction amongst some of the forerunners of Mexican architectural modernism and the *Indigenismo* movement, including the German-Mexican architect, Max Cetto. Diego Rivera and Juan O'Gorman were drawn to the "ideological potential"[137] of Wright's promulgation of organic architecture. O'Gorman contended that "many of his [Wright's] buildings, definitely influenced by ancient, pre-Hispanic Mexico, are the best examples of American architecture," praising moreover Wright's grasp of "architecture as related to the human being in his geographical and historical content."[138] Wright advocates in Mexico, it seems, were well aware that Wright's mid-career works were a regional modernist force to be reckoned with.

Rivera's attraction to the principles undergirding Wright's work materialized in the 1944 design for the Anahuacalli Museum, a museum to house Rivera's collection of ancient American artifacts. The building was completed in 1963 with the assistance, post-mortem, of O'Gorman, Heriberto Pagelson, and Rivera's daughter, Ruth Rivera Marín. In a sense, the Anahuacalli Museum achieved a resolution of the technical failures plaguing Wright's textile block and reinforced concrete pyramids in the Hollywood Hills. Utilizing the local volcanic stone that overwhelms the surrounding terrain to erect his modernist monolith to Mesoamerican antiquity, Rivera successfully effected (in a material organic to site *and* organically suited in execution to the structure) the "indigenous" American modern architecture Wright sought to create with his California *romanzas.* In a striking synthesis of Wright's advocacy of the machine with the potentiality of indigenous forms, Rivera proclaimed: "I have always maintained that art in America, if some day it can be said to have come into being, will be the product of a fusion between the marvelous indigenous art which derives from the immemorial depths of time in the center and south of the continent (Mexico, Central America, Bolivia, and Peru), and that of the industrial worker of the north."[139] The vaguely Puuc-style building, boxy and pyramidal, is properly ancient *and* modern in technique, material, and form. A corbeled archway marks entry into the dimly lit and rock-faced interior. The building's imposing charcoal gray façade is offset by a large central bank of vaguely industrial steel and glass window panes that pour the building's only wealth of natural light onto the crowning exhibition in the museum's top level—Rivera's studies for the (since destroyed) Rockefeller mural.

The attentions of Europe and the Mexican *indigenistos* to the figure of Wright is a testament to the mythic potential of his architectural oeuvre—of modernism folding back on itself, and of Wright's artful evasion of architectural dialogues with his novel yet sometimes poorly executed repackaging of ancient American aesthetics. Beyond the subjects of this chapter, however, exist various mythologies of ruination about which Wright and his

contemporaries constitute only a small subset of source material. Wright, Cornejo, and Stacy-Judd are only a few cogs in the enigmatic genealogy of one particular instantiation of myth intimately tied to conceptions of landscape, modernity, and indigeneity in American consciousness. Architectural myth appears to us as language—not only quite literally in Stacy-Judd's rhetoric *about* architecture as language, but also Wright's assertion that "architecture is the principal writing—the universal writing of humanity."[140]

Reading Indigenous Modernity

Looking back at this language, this writing, and the emergence of art historical and architectural modernity "around 1920,"[141] French theorist Henri Lefebvre wrote of the limits of an understanding of space set apart from its production and complicity in the mechanisms of advanced capitalism and class disparity. Despite architecture's inscription in the metonymy of language (as a visual "text"), Lefebvre questions the efficacy of "readability" in the modern phase of architecture, stating that "'reading' follows production in all cases except those in which space is produced especially in order to be read . . . . The graphic impression of readability is a sort of *trompe-l'oeil* concealing strategic intentions and actions."[142]

Nevertheless, let us pause for a moment to address the increasingly "readable" relationship between architecture and landscape in Wright's designs of the 1920s and 1930s. This perhaps culminated over a decade later than his California projects in one of his most well-known and internationally recognized contributions to American modernity, Fallingwater (1935), in Bear Run, Pennsylvania. The building features a total evacuation of decorative effects resembling those of his mid-career projects. Wright's supreme innovation at Fallingwater—the residence's dramatic, cantilevered terracing elevated over a waterfall—is one of Oedipal bearing in response to the Sullivanesque skyscraper. Walking on water, so to speak, it seems to at once transcend gravity, material, and even the cascading falls on which it is built. It is far from the

rectangular edifice and predictable golden ratio of classical (Greek) antiquity. Instead, like indigenous Mesoamerican architecture, its form both emulates in architectural gesture and appears to grow forth from its environs like the "*cerros hechos a mano*"[143] Stephens and Catherwood observed in the Yucatán almost a century prior. The innovative scheme of reinforced concrete that creates Fallingwater's breathtaking system of graduated patios was, in fact, developed during Wright's slight renovation of the Ennis House for its second owner; thus, the aesthetics *and* techniques used in the Mayan Revival buildings have crept out in unusual and sometimes elusive ways into the later works.

Indeed, Wright's indigenous thematics never really melted away in the architect's late career. Scholarship refers to Wright's inverted (ungarnished) wedding cake design for the Guggenheim (1959) as a "decision to build a 'temple' for the display of non-objective painting"[144]—never mind that the ascending spiral walkway and curved walls seem to defy the purpose of displaying art altogether. The Wright papers include indication of a possible precedent some thirty years earlier—an interested fan's letter referencing Wright's intentions to design an apartment building "in the form of an inverted pyramid" of "glass, copper, and concrete."[145] As what was a matter of course for Wright's (dearth of) mid- to late career public, institutional, and housing projects, the Guggenheim project was halted again and again, this time by New York City's building authorities for various violations.[146] Wright's spiraling design of what was initially a buff-colored building turned the construction laws of 1916 upside down. The same stipulations that had necessitated the New York skyscraper's incorporation of the stepped pyramid-type form became the lynchpin in Wright's eventually snow white, indigenous futurist tour de force—the building's "inverted ziggurat"[147] shape and progressively widening spiral design would project four and a half feet over Fifth Avenue, and Wright had turned the pyramid on its head in a hallmark form of concrete, organic American modern architecture.

In a 1931 lecture at the California Arts Club, titled "The Revolution in Art Today," French critic Elie Faure prescribed a new impetus for American philanthropy. "I cannot understand why Americans who give millions for the restoration of Versailles, do not spend a few millions for the excavation of the . . . temples of Central America," Faure conjectured; she continued: "You have an obligation in that those Aztecs are your real ancestors, for people are related to the land they live in rather than to their racial stocks."[148] A year later, the Mexican painter and fellow muralist to Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, painted *América Tropical: Oprimida y Destrozada por los Imperialismos* [*Tropical America: Oppressed and Destroyed by Imperialism*] (1932) on an exterior wall of the Sons of Italy Hall along the historic Olvera Street in downtown Los Angeles.[149] Made of cement (an ingredient of Wright's textile block *romanzas*) in lieu of traditional plaster, the fresco is a clear pictorial expression of the gravity of its title. An eagle, wings outstretched—enduring symbol of the United States—is the centerpiece of a colorless temple crowned with Maya-style cartouches, the backdrop to a double cross upon which a lifeless indigene hangs limp. Arterial vegetal growths emerge from an emerald background to crowd the pyramid, strangling a blood red stela in the leftmost portion of the mural.[150] It is certainly not the tourist-friendly scene its commissioners most likely imagined for the freshly revamped Olvera Street. Over the next few years, the mural's street-facing portion was whitewashed and finally stuccoed over completely, having offended the sensibilities of an unsettled audience of Olvera Street patrons and visitors. Wright was certainly guilty of primitivizing views. However, it is architectural history that has subdued the indigenous modernity of his mid-career, a metaphorical instantiation of the whitewashing of Olvera Street or the Guggenheim.

Wright's "lost years" are not lost, nor are they so exceptional from his practice. They are, however, conundrums. His "indigenous" *romanzas* extend, web-like and mysterious, into not only the later works of his career, but back in time, before the 1915 exposition, past the Kehl

Academy and the Bogk House to the resoundingly silent sublimation of the New World classical in the intervening years since Stephens and Catherwood brought the Maya ruin, in picture and print, to mainland (U.S.) America. Throwing out the supposed distinctions between decorative and modern, Wright's textile block fortresses marked a turning point toward the famed works of his late career. But they do not so much operate as a pivot point or threshold into his advanced career—a move from *this* to *that*—as they built a foundation for it: American, modern, *indigenous.*

[1] Walter Pach, "The Art of the American Indian (1920)," in *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History,* eds. Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 171-172.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Otis R. Mason, 1889, quoted in Curtis M. Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846-1910* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 110.
[4] James Clifford describes this transition at length in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 227-228.
[5] Over the next eleven years, Morley carried out various expeditions funded by the Carnegie Institution, culminating in his work at Chichen Itza in 1923-1924. An avid contributor to publications like *National Geographic,* Morley conducted archaeological research contemporaneously with Mexico-based espionage activities for the U.S. government during World War I. Franz Boas, in fact, published a protest letter in the December 20, 1919 publication of *The Nation,* but his protest was censured by the American Anthropological Association. See Thomas Carl Patterson, *A Social History of Anthropology in the United States* (New York: Berg, 2001), 53-54 and David H. Price, "Cloak and Trowel," in *Archaeological Ethics*, 2nd ed., eds. Karen D. Vitelli and Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006), 116-124.
[6] Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1945; New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1932), 275.
[7] In place of its typical or expected connotation indicating a relationship with native civilizations (in an arts and culture context, at least), Wright frequently used "indigenous" in his writings as an expression of organicism more in line with the adjective's denotative meaning. I will hereafter enclose "indigenous" in quotations to indicate Wright's intended use of the term.
[8] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 275.
[9] See Anthony Alofsin, *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Lost Years, 1910-1922* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[10] There is little consensus among architectural historians as to the precise date the Barnsdall project was initiated, but Kathryn Smith notes that Wright began design work in 1915. See Kathryn Smith, *Hollyhock House and Olive Hill: Buildings and Projects for Aline Barnsdall* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1992), 20. Similar scholarly confusion exists as well for Wright's other Mayan Revival projects, principally regarding the year projects were initiated.
[11] "Mayan Revivalism" in fact contains a misnomer that stuck. "Mayan" refers only to the language, while "Maya," as both a noun *and* adjective, describes the people and their culture.
[12] Irving Gill (one of Wright's protégées) pioneered textile block as his primary building system as early as 1907. See Abby Moor, *Frank Lloyd Wright at a Glance: California Textile Block* (London: PRC, 2002), 12. The textile block method may have also been adapted from another former studio employee, Walter Burley Griffin. Donald Leslie Johnson, *Frank Lloyd Wright versus America: The 1930s* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990), 65.
[13] Barbara Braun cites an excerpt of this quote from Wright's last book, *A Testament* (New York: 1957), 205. See Braun's chapter, "Frank Lloyd Wright: A Vision of Maya Temples," in *Pre-Columbian Art and the Post-Columbian World* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 138.
[14] Anthony Alofsin summarizes Wright's six principles of organicism outlined in Wright's essay, "In the Cause of Architecture," in "Frank Lloyd Wright and Modernism," in *Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect,* ed. Terence Riley (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), exhibition catalogue, 33: "The First was that simplicity and repose should be the measures of art . . . . Wright's second principle called for as many different styles of houses as there were styles of people . . . . The third principle correlated nature, topography, and architecture . . . . Wright's fourth principle called for taking the colors of the buildings from nature and adapting them to fit harmoniously with the materials of buildings . . . . The fifth principle called for expressing 'the nature of materials.'"
[15] This order, created in mimesis, is not without a historical imperative. Michael Taussig argues in *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 70, that "as the

nature that culture uses to make second nature, mimesis cannot be outside of history, just as history cannot lie outside of the mimetic faculty."

[16] The text, which included an introduction by one of Wright's favorite architectural ideologues, Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, is titled, in full, *Cités et ruines américaines, Mitla, Palenqué, Izamal, Chichen-Itza, Uxmal* (Paris: Gide, 1863).

[17] Juan O'Gorman, quoted in Clive Bamford Smith, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1967), 18.

[18] For a detailed account of Maya ruins at the fair, see R. Tripp. Evans's epilogue in *Romancing the Maya: Mexican Antiquity in the American Imagination 1820-1915* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004), 153-162.

[19] Frank Lloyd Wright, "Louis Henry Sullivan: His Work (1924)," in *The Essential Frank Lloyd Wright: Critical Writings on Architecture,* ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 76.

[20] Edgar L. Hewett, "Ancient America at the Panama-California Exposition," *Art and Archaeology: An Illustrated Magazine* 2, no. 3 (November 1915): 67.

[21] Ibid. He continued, asserting that "the brilliancy of the new race suggested another Orient. The ruins of Central America seemed to entomb another Egypt. . . . The objects of the exhibit of Ancient America is to present a picture of the Golden Age of that race—a chapter of human history that is as worthy of study as are the records of its contemporaries of the Old World."

[22] William Henry Holmes, introduction to Hewett's "Ancient America," 66.

[23] Vierra's panels depicted his ruinous subject matter with the properly picturesque effects: restoration beyond that completed in 1912 within settings of architectural decay and untamed brush. Vierra had come to San Diego directly from working with the Hewett expedition to Quirigia in 1914. Peter Briggs, ed. *The Maya Image in the Western World* (New Mexico: Regents of the University of New Mexico, 1986), exhibition catalogue, 21, 23.

[24] Ibid., 24.

[25] Hewett, "Ancient America," 95.

[26] See Harold Kirker, *Old Forms on a New Land: California Architecture in Perspective* (Niwot, CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1991), 81-82.

[27] David Michael Hertz, *Frank Lloyd Wright: In Word and Form* (New York: G.K. Hall & Co. and Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995), 61. See also Wright, *An Autobiography,* 209.

[28] See Wright, *An Autobiography,* 208-209. Wright notes therein: "the eclectic procession of to and fro in the rag-tag and cast-off of all the ages was never going to stop—so it seemed to me. It was Mexico-Spanish just now. Another fair, in San Diego this time, had set up Mexico-Spanish for another run for another cycle of thirty years."

[29] Wright tied his integral ornament to the concept of "elemental" architecture, stating: "Mayan and Egyptian [cultures] both have more in common where elemental greatness is concerned than other cultures," continuing, "if primitive character is the more ancient, then the Mayan might be the elder. In Maya we see a grand simplicity of concept and form. Probably it is greater elemental architecture than anything remaining on record anywhere else." Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Future of Architecture* (New York: Horizon Press, 1953), 44-45.

[30] See Wright, *An Autobiography,* 202.

[31] Examples, respectively, are: Albert Kelsey and Paul Cret's Pan-U.S. building, Wright's A.D. German Warehouse, Stacy-Judd's Aztec Hotel or the various Mayan theaters and clubs of the early to mid-twentieth century, and Wright's Unity Temple or Stacy-Judd's First Baptist Church.

[32] Edgar Lloyd Hampton, "Rebirth of Prehistoric American Art," *Current History* 25, no. 5 (February 1927): 633.

[33] "Reviving Mayan Architecture," *The New York Times* (January 30, 1927): sec. E8.

[34] Gordon R. Willey, "The Interrelated Rise of the Native Cultures of Middle and South America," in The Anthropological Society of Washington, *New Interpretations of Aboriginal American Culture History, 75th Anniversary Volume* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1972; repr. 1955 edition), 28.

[35] Wright discusses the significance of "*integral ornament* modifying or emphasizing both elements to allow suggestion, proper scope, and appropriate rhythms to enter: these, I offer as component parts not only of the California Romanza but of Romanza." See Wright, *An Autobiography,* 203.
[36] Due to financial limitations, Wright used hollow clay tile and plaster stucco instead of poured concrete for the vast majority of the building (excepting its doors, columns and sills, fireplace mantle, and conventionalized hollyhock motif). See James Steele, *Barnsdall House: Frank Lloyd Wright* (London: Phaidon Press, 1992; repr. 1993), n.p.
[37] Alofsin, *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Lost Years,* 237.
[38] See Dimitri Tselos, "Frank Lloyd Wright and World Architecture," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 28, no. 1 (March 1969): 58-72, and Vincent Scully, *Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: G. Braziller, 1960).
[39] Melanie Simo, *Barnsdall Park: A New Master Plan for Frank Lloyd Wright's California Romanza* (Cambridge, MA: Spacemaker Press, 1997), 24-25.
[40] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 207.
[41] Ibid. Barnsdall is also part and parcel of the ambiguous, inconsistent, and slippery social politics undergirding the gray area between his mid-career practice and some of Wright's most memorable contributions to American modernist architecture.
[42] See Steele, *Barnsdall House,* n.p.
[43] David Gebhard notes Detroit's Fisher Theater (1928), Denver's Mayan Theater (1929-1930), San Antonio's Aztec Theater (1926), the Elks Club in Aurora, Illinois (1926), Aztec Room of the Hotel President in Kansas City, and the Maya Room of the Madrillon Restaurant in Washington, D.C. as outstanding examples. See David Gebhard, *Robert Stacy-Judd: Maya Architecture and the Creation of a New Style* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1993), 72.
[44] Adolf Loos's *Ornament und Verbrechen* [Ornament and Crime] was published in 1910, and includes assertions to the tune of: "The lower the culture, the more apparent the ornament. Ornament is something that must be overcome." Quoted in Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), 9. See also Peter Blake, *Form Follows Fiasco: Why Modern Architecture Hasn't Worked* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1977) 39.
[45] See Margaret Kentgens-Craig, "The Search for Modernity: America, the International Style, and the Bauhaus," in *American Architectural History: A Contemporary Reader,* ed. Keith L. Eggener (New York: Routledge, 2004), 295.
[46] Ibid., 299.
[47] This period, Croly argued, was marked by a "renewed faith in mankind" that "receiv[ed] its most sincere and thorough-going expression in the United States." Quoted in Richard Guy Wilson, "Architecture and the Reinterpretation of the Past in the American Renaissance," in *American Architectural History: A Contemporary Reader,* ed. Keith L. Eggener (New York: Routledge, 2004), 228. Indeed, the operative myth of rebirth carried over also into Mesoamerican revival—a U.S. national architecture argued by Stacy-Judd to be "on the verge of a second Mayan renaissance." See Edgar Lloyd Hampton, "American Architecture First," *Los Angeles Times* (April 14, 1927): J1.
[48] Richard Guy Wilson identifies three phases of the "operative myth of the American [architectural] renaissance," including a prelude from the mid-1870s to 1887, a second phase (high renaissance) from 1887 to 1917, and a late period from 1917 to 1938. See Wilson, "Architecture and the Reinterpretation of the Past," 228.
[49] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 295.
[50] Ibid., 296.
[51] Ibid., 162.
[52] Ibid., 161-162.
[53] Quoted in See Margo Stipe, "Wright and Japan," in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Europe and Beyond,* ed. Anthony Alofsin (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 25.
[54] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 307.
[55] Frank Lloyd Wright, "Preface," in *The Sovereignty of the Individual: In the Cause of Architecture* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1910), 89.
[56] See Wright, *An Autobiography,* 70.

[57] Wright, “Preface,” 89.
[58] William Cronon, “Inconstant Unity: The Passion of Frank Lloyd Wright,” in *Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect,* ed. Terence Riley (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), exhibition catalogue, 10.
[59] Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Art,” in *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 274.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 151.
[62] Horatio Greenough, letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson, published in *The Dial* (December 1851), quoted in David Michael Hertz, *Angels of Reality: Emersonian Unfoldings in Wright, Stevens, and Ives* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 27. Italics mine.
[63] Frank Lloyd Wright, “In the Cause of Architecture (1908),” in *The Essential Frank Lloyd Wright: Critical Writings on Architecture,* ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 36.
[64] See Frank Lloyd Wright, “To the Young Man in Architecture” (1930), part of the Princeton Lectures republished in Wright, *The Future of Architecture,* 209-210.
[65] See Cronon, “Inconstant Unity,” 12. Though seeded in sixteenth century Eastern Europe and formalized in England in the eighteenth century, Unitarianism was popular among the intellectual elite of nineteenth-century America, where it was hailed in U.S. circles as the liberalized offspring of New England Congregationalism. Cronon argues that even the formation of Transcendentalism was rooted in a “technical dispute” among East Coast Unitarians.
[66] The currents of romantic idealism also ran deep in figures like John Ruskin, who contended that “all most lovely forms and thoughts are directly taken from natural objects,” the only means through which the artist could convey the most profound messages. Only the artist or architect of Ruskin’s idealist comportment was capable of discerning “moral as well as material truth” in the distinction between shallow mimicry and learned emulation, “a truth of impression as well as of form—of thought as well as of matter.” Architecture, Ruskin argued, “delights in Abstraction and fears to complete her [nature’s] forms.” An architect was thus capable of using elemental formal expressions of natural principles to convey the highest truths. See John Ruskin, *Modern Painters,* vol. I (1843), quoted in Robert L. Herbert, ed., *The Art Criticism of John Ruskin* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 10-11, and Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: Smith, Elder, 1849), 124.
[67] “History,” National Park Service, accessed December 10, 2017, https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/history.htm. Italics mine.
[68] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 289. In August of 1886, the U.S. cavalry expelled indigenous inhabitants the nation’s first national park, Yellowstone. The number of visitors to Yellowstone National Park rose from around 500 in 1880 to 19,000 by 1910, such that the popular view of the American West by the time of Wright’s call for an “indigenous” architecture was of an empty landscape of vanished indigenes. See Jim Morrison, “How the U.S. Army Saved Our National Parks,” *Smithsonian Magazine* (October 8, 2015), accessed December 10, 2017, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-army-saved-our-national-parks-180956840/.
[69] Wright, *An Autobiography*, 141.
[70] Kent C. Bloomer explains: “In nineteenth and early twentieth-century theories of ornament, the term *conventionalized* indicates a social consensus in which a figure has acquired a shared identity, an acceptance, and thus an intelligibility. . . . It further indicates that a natural figure has been abstracted from its native shape in order to convene with the materiality, form, and inherent expressions of an object.” *The Nature of Ornament: Rhythm and Metamorphosis in Architecture* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), 47.
[71] See Anthony Vidler, “Air War and Architecture,” in *Ruins of Modernity,* eds. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 34.
[72] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 307.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Frank Lloyd Wright, “In the Cause of Architecture: The Third Dimension (1925),” in *The Essential Frank Lloyd Wright: Critical Writings on Architecture,* ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 89.
[75] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 209.

[76] Ibid.
[77] Wright, “In the Cause of Architecture (1908),” 49.
[78] Wright described his process as textile block, “unit-block” or “knit-block” because he saw the process as related to textile work: “Concrete is a plastic material—susceptible to the impress of imagination. I saw a kind of weaving coming out of it.” See Wright, *An Autobiography,* 199, 209.
[79] This issue was also symptomatic of a historical issue soon to underwrite American architectural *and* art history—the criminalization of “kitsch” (into which decorative revivals are so often relegated) by the gatekeepers of U.S. modern art. This aided in establishing the rather Anglo-American perception of the decorative arts—which so often integrate indigenous themes and aesthetics—as secondary to fine art. See Clement Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5 (1939).
[80] Theo van Doesberg, *On European Architecture: Complete Essays from Het Bouwbedrijf 1924-1931* (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1990), 263, quoted in Anthony Alofsin, “Wright, Influence, and the World at Large,” in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Europe and Beyond,* ed. Anthony Alofsin (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 9.
[81] Wright, “In the Cause of Architecture (1908),” 35.
[82] See Harry Francis Malgrave and David Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory: 1968 to the Present* (West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 97-98.
[83] Wright, observing the historical evolution of the city, wrote: “Is the great city the natural triumph of the herd instinct over such sanity as humanity may know? Or is it only a temporal hangover from the infancy of the race, to be outgrown as the performance of humanity grows—modern? . . . . But history records that the civilizations that built the greatest cities invariably died with them. Did the civilizations themselves die *of* them? I think they did.” Wright, *An Autobiography,* 280.
[84] Ibid., 202.
[85] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 232, quoted in Donald Hoffman, *Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hollyhock House: The Illustrated Story of an Architectural Masterpiece* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications Inc., 1992), 39.
[86] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 207.
[87] Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 152.
[88] “New Home for Aline Barnsdall Crowning Olive Hill,” *Hollywood Citizen News* (July 8, 1921), n.p.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, 140, footnote 75. Frank Lloyd Wright’s other son, Eric, claimed his father “always talked about Southwest—not Maya—Indians.” See *My Father Who Is on Earth* (New York: Dover, 1946), 131, quoted in Hoffman, *Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hollyhock House,* 41.
[92] See Hoffman, *Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hollyhock House*, 39.
[93] See Stipe, “Wright and Japan,” 31.
[94] Ibid., 24. Just as the casts of Maya structures at the 1893 Columbian Exposition are assumed to have been Wright’s first encounter with Mesoamerican architectural aesthetics, so have scholars suggested his first exposure to Japanese architecture was at the Ho-o-den feature of fair. See James F. O’Gorman, “The Prairie House,” in *American Architectural History: A Contemporary Reader,* ed. Keith L. Eggener (New York: Routledge, 2004), 271. O’Gorman points out the Foster House in Chicago and Bradley and Hickox Houses in Kankakee, Illinois as early examples of Wright’s integration of Japanese elements.
[95] James Steele, *Los Angeles Architecture: The Contemporary Condition* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993), 29.
[96] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 70-71. See also Cronon, “Inconstant Unity,” 17. Influential texts like Owen Jones’s nineteenth-century handbook, *The Grammar of Ornament,* also contained hundreds of decorative patterns that provided Wright the means to furnish his designs with the “indigenous” patterning he viewed—in line with Jones’s own views on ornament—as being in service to architecture.
[97] See D.H. Lawrence, “America, Listen to Your Own,” *New Republic* (December 15, 1920), quoted in Bryce Conrad, *Refiguring America: A Study of William Carlos Williams' In the American Grain* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 10, endnote 7. Wright foregrounds D.H. Lawrence’s appeal to “take up life where the Red Indian, the Aztec, the Maya, the Incas left it off” in order to “pick up the life-thread where the mysterious Red race let it fall.” Lawrence, quoted also (in part) in Levine, 140-141.

[98] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 14.
[99] Ibid., 15.
[100] Ibid., 277.
[101] Dimitri Tselos, "Exotic Influences in the Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright," *Magazine of Art* 47 (April 1953): 160-184.
[102] The designs for the Kehl Dance Academy in Wisconsin indicate a pyramidal silhouette and richly ornamented façade that shares the same vaguely hieratic comportment and flat roof of the Hollyhock House.
[103] Wright also stated: "The block system [grows] naturally as the Sahuaro grew up." Wright, *An Autobiography,* 271.
[104] Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, quoted in Wilson, "Architecture and the Reinterpretation of the Past," 233.
[105] Frank Lloyd Wright, unsigned and undated letter to Professor Robert J. Goldwater, quoted in Dmitri Tselos, "Frank Lloyd Wright and World Architecture," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 28, no. 1 (March 1969): 72. The letter, notes Tselos, was sent in April 1953, a few days after publication of Tselos's article, "Exotic Influences in the Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright," in *The Magazine of Art,* edited by Goldwater. See also Hoffman, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House,* 39.
[106] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 210.
[107] Ibid.*,* 224.
[108] Frank Lloyd Wright, "The Art and Craft of the Machine (1901)," in *The Essential Frank Lloyd Wright: Critical Writings on Architecture,* ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 23.
[109] Ibid.
[110] "Los Angeles," *The Art News* 22, no. 36 (June 14, 1924): 7.
[111] "San Francisco," *American Art News* 19, no. 37 (June 25, 1921): 5. This article may also refer to a 1921 exhibition of objects from her personal collection at the San Francisco School of Art and Stanford University. See Helen Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations Between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1992)*,* 130.
[112] Francisco Cornejo, quoted in Delpar, *The Enormous Vogue,* 130. Italics mine.
[113] Robert Stacy-Judd, in a letter draft to an unknown person, wrote: "At that time [1923], by a quirk of fate, John L. Stevens [sic] four volumes (published in 1842) covering his amazing explorations in Central America, came into my hands. His story of the jungle-covered ancient Maya ruined cities was an entirely new subject to me, as apparently was the case with everyone else, except a very few archeologists. Fascinated by the beautiful illustrations by Friederich [sic] Catherwood, I conceived the idea of attempting to utilise [sic] the Maya art motifs in a modern hotel design. Knowing nothing of the Maya culture, and being under pressure regarding a time limit for the plans, I hastily chose various decorative forms from Stevens [sic] book's illustrations and endeavoured [sic] to incorporate them into the general hotel structural form. The result was crude, but certainly unusual." Stacy-Judd stated, moreover: "Strangely enough their genius appeals to the modern American mind. They possessed all the attributes, idealism, tremendous energy and inventiveness which characterises [sic] the modern American. And, as I said, they were indigenous to our soil, the first Americans." See page 2 of an unpublished article, "First Mayan Motif Church," Robert Stacy-Judd Papers, circa 1911-circa 1975, box 2, folder 63, Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.
[114] Robert Stacy-Judd, letter to John George Hartwig, May 14, 1941, Robert Stacy-Judd Papers, Correspondence A. 1929-1975, box 1. Stacy-Judd wrote: "For the past twenty years my efforts have been toward establishing an All-American architecture and the allied arts based on ancient Maya motifs. To overcome American opposition (though strangely enough, not European, that continent being in agreement with me) my principal task was to discover evidence of a convincing nature in support of my belief the ancient Mayas were not 'savages and barbarians,' as seems to be the prevailing opinion among most of the recognized authorities."
[115] Jesse Lerner, "A Fevered Dream of Maya: Robert Stacy-Judd," *Cabinet*, no. 4 (Fall 2001): n.p., accessed March 15, 2018, http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/4/lerner.php.
[116] Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity,* xviii.

[117] Josef Woodard, "STRUCTURES: Mayan Revival Is Getting Another Look in Ventura: The disarming Aztec Hotel in Monrovia, built in 1925, is generating the first wave of publicity for the style," *Los Angeles Times* (June 24, 1993), accessed February 20, 2018, http://articles.latimes.com/1993-06-24/news/vl-6561_1_aztec-hotel.
[118] Walter C. Kidney, *The Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America 1880-1930* (New York: George Braziller, 1974), 53, 58. Kidney notes that architects of the more eclectic variety in fact "deviated much farther from the realities of construction to attain preconceived effects, and often cultivated as well a deliberate archaism of materials and worksmanship." See also Jesse Lerner, *The Maya of Modernism: Art, Architecture, and Film* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2011), 86-87.
[119] Hampton, "Rebirth of Prehistoric American Art," 634. Hampton made similar comments about Alfred C. Bossom's skyscrapers in "American Architecture First," sec. 4:1-4:2.
[120] Ibid., sec. 4:2.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Anthony W. Robins, *Daily News Building, 220 East 42nd Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1929-30; architect Raymond Hood*, Landmarks Preservation Commission, July 28, 1981, 21.
[123] Ibid., 7.
[124] Ibid., 6.
[125] Wright, *An Autobiography,* 279.
[126] John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan,* vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1841), 442, quoted in Evans, *Romancing the Maya,* 63.
[127] Fredric Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," in Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, Edward W. Said and Seamus Deane, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1990), 51.
[128] Shelley Errington, "Diego Rivera's Collection: Pre-Columbian Art as a Political and Artistic Legacy," in *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past,* ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 246.
[129] All three, in fact, would complete major mural works in California. Orozco was the first, completing *Prometheus* in 1930, a titanic fresco at Pomona College; Jackson Pollock would proclaim the piece to be "the greatest painting in North America." Rivera painted *Allegory of California* between 1930 and 1931, and Siqueiros was soon to follow with a major commission on Los Angeles's historic Olvera Street. See "Orozco's Prometheus," Pomona College of Art, accessed February 15, 2018, https://www.pomona.edu/museum/collections/jos%C3%A9-clemente-orozcos-prometheus.
[130] Gamio also advocated for liberal agrarian reform, the gradual expulsion of remnants of the Spanish conquest imbedded in indigenous practices of folk Catholicism, and the accelerating pace of modernist development. See David A. Brading, "Manuel Gamio and Official Indigenismo in Mexico," *Bulletin of Latin U.S. Research* 7, no. 1 (1988): 75-89.
[131] James Oles, *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914 – 1947* (Washington, D.C.: Yale University Art Gallery, with Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 19, exhibition catalogue.
[132] By mid-century, Wright biographer Meryle Secrest observes, "Repetitious summaries of the [FBI's] reasons for suspecting Frank Lloyd Wright went back to 1915 . . . . painting him as a notorious lecher, a champion of draft dodgers and now, in his dotage, a communist spokesman." Wright was among the list of supporters for the 1949 Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace, an event claimed to be a "Communist front" by its opponents in the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), an organization created in 1938 to investigate subversive activity and alleged disloyalties of individuals suspected of communist activity. Wright went on to sign a World Peace Appeal in 1950, and by 1951, the list of U.S. citizens claimed to have been "affiliated with from five to ten Communist-front organizations" included Wright's name among the ranks of notable personalities targeted by McCarthyist efforts to quell leftist sentiment. Even Wright's Taliesin Fellowship was not safe from speculation and suspicion, and an anonymous source reported, according to Secrest, "a subversive organization whose teachings were contrary to the American way of life." *Frank Lloyd Wright: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 538-540.
[133] See Lerner, *The Maya of Modernism,* 93.

[134] Holly Barnet-Sanchez, "The Necessity of Pre-Columbian Art in the United States: Appropriations and Transformations of Heritage, 1933-1945," in *Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past,* ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 179, footnote 5.
[135] However, Rockefeller's Art Committee, the OCIAA, had no curators or directors from Latin America, a great irony in light of a proposed exhibition program that included titles such as: "Our Common Culture," "The Art of the Western Hemisphere," "The Art of Our Hemisphere," and "The Culture of Our Hemisphere." Even in California, Mexican modernism was tucked away in 1942 with the exhibition of Rufino Tamayo, Carlos Orozco, Romera, Antonio Ruiz, Dr. Atl, Maria Izquierdo, Jesus Guerrero Galvan, Federico Cantu, and Guillermo Meza. Another exhibition of Mexican art in the city of Los Angeles would not take place again until 1953. Ibid., 179-183.
[136] See Thomas Doremus, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier: The Great Dialogue* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985), 20.
[137] See Keith Eggener, "Towards an Organic Architecture in Mexico," in *Frank Lloyd Wright: Europe and Beyond,* ed. Anthony Alofsin (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 166-178. Eggener quotes O'Gorman stating his view of Wright as "the supreme architect of the century" in Clive Banham Smith's 1967 text, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1967).
[138] Eggener, "Towards an Organic Architecture in Mexico," 176-177.
[139] Diego Rivera, quoted in Harry G. Owen, "Rivera—American Giotto," *The Middlebury College News Letter* 14, no. 4 (June 1, 1940), n.p.
[140] Wright, "The Art and Craft of the Machine," 24.
[141] Henri Lefebvre, "From the Production of Space," *Architecture Theory since 1968,* ed. K. Michael Hayes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 177.
[142] Ibid., 182-183.
[143] John L. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, vol. I (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1843; New York: Dover Publications, 1963), 51. Citations refer to the Dover edition. Stephens refers to Merida's location between two "cerros hechos a mano, *i. e.* hills made by hand, or artificial mounds." See also chapter one.
[144] Secrest, *Frank Lloyd Wright,* 549. Neil Levine also discusses the building at length in his chapter, "The Guggenheim Museum's Logic of Inversion," in *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
[145] Marion Rawle, letter to Frank Lloyd Wright, October 30, 1929, A005D09-10, Frank Lloyd Wright Collection, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.
[146] Secrest, *Frank Lloyd Wright,* 548-551.
[147] The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, "The Frank Lloyd Wright Building," accessed February 17, 2018, https://www.guggenheim.org/the-frank-lloyd-wright-building. The building is not, in fact, "snow white," but an icy hue of gray.
[148] Elie Faure, "The Revolution in Art Today," California Arts Club, 1931, quoted in Margarita Nieto, "Mexican Art and Los Angeles, 1920-1940," in *On the Edge of America: California Modernist Art, 1900-1950*, ed. Paul J. Karlstrom (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 129.
[149] Ibid., 132. Upon his expulsion from Mexico in 1932 for radical political militancy, David Alfaro Siqueiros came to Los Angeles for six months.
[150] See Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity,* xv. The painting follows the principles undergirding the mimetic faculty outlined in Michael Taussig's introductory "A Report to the Academy" in *Mimesis and* Alterity; works such as this engender "the unsettling confrontation of the West with itself as portrayed in the eyes and handiwork of its Others."

CHAPTER 3

Confronting the Ruinscape: Robert Smithson's Mexico Projects

So what is Truth? A mobilized army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms—in short, a sum of human relations, which are first poetically and rhetorically intensified, transmogrified, embellished, and then, after long use, seem absolute, rigid, and canonical.

- Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Falsehood in the Extra-moral Sense," 1873

In 1951, "The Irascible Eighteen"—a herd of abstractionists that included Jackson Pollock, William Baziotes, Mark Rothko, Louise Bourgeois, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Franz Kline, Hans Hofmann, Ad Reinhardt, Adolph Gottlieb, Willem de Kooning, and others—called for the instatement of a "department of American art"[1] at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In the aftermath of World War II and the denouement of European Surrealism, Paris was no longer the ostensible center of the art world. The torch had been passed to New York City, where Abstract Expressionism gained traction in a country desperately seeking national heroes and caught in the throes of Clement Greenberg's formalist criticism.[2] Tailing the Ab-ex painters as mid-century approached, Alfred Barr's 1941 "torpedo" diagram of the collecting activity of the Museum of Modern Art raced through the ether, picking up steam and master works of American and Mexican modernism (famed icons of Mexican muralism Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco) to be housed in the museum's permanent collection.

In the words of art historian Barbara Rose, the American abstract painters were "able to absorb the energy of the indigenous tradition in the context of a high art by making virtues of its characteristics"[3]—namely vigor, abstraction, and abstraction's correlate, purity. The postwar U.S. supercession of Europe as the global locus of artistic production was seemingly (*still*, at mid-century) problematically channeled through the primitivizing tendencies of the modernists, though the looping tendrils and "total" abstraction of *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)* (1950) had all

but swallowed up the totemic paintings of Pollock's early career. And the glaring absence of a department of American art at one of New York City's flagship museums was evidence of a national cultural identity still under construction. It was in this climate that Robert Smithson undertook several projects over the course of a roughly two-week excursion through Southeastern Mexico with his gallerist, Virginia Dwan, and a fellow artist (and wife), Nancy Holt. There, he made ephemeral installations as part of two transnational series across the U.S. and Mexico. He also photographed a sequence of mirror arrangements to accompany a travelogue text published in the September 1969 issue of *Artforum*, titled "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan." Finally, he took several mundane photographs of a run-down hotel near the renowned archaeological site of Palenque, images he later used in his 1972 slide lecture, *Hotel Palenque* (1969-1972).

Art historians Pam Meecham and Julie Sheldon describe the unshakeable myth of the New York avant-garde to which Smithson's generation of artists were heir: "It is part of the legacy of the 1950s and 1960s that the myth of modernism centred [sic] on Paris and then migrated to New York. This myth has persistently mitigated against a recognition of other centers of cultural activity . . . . Mexico and the expansion westwards to places 'unmarked' by European culture played a more important role in artistic production than art history's emphasis on east-coast avant-gardism would suggest."[4] Certainly, Mexico and "unmarked" sites of the American West were sought out by Smithson and many artists of his generation. New York had grown too small. But the triangulation expressed by the above observation—between the domain of the New York avant-garde (and neo-avant-garde of the long 1960s, Smithson included), the American Southwest, and Mexico, all tempered by the shadow of Europe—is consolidated and exposed in works produced during Smithson's trek.

Two dominant versions of the artist have come to the fore over the last five decades of art historical scholarship. One is the "institutionalized and collectible"[5] iteration, which privileges

documentation of the monumentally photogenic *Spiral Jetty* (1970) and Smithson's uncomplicated legacy as a "coffee table book" land artist. Smithson-the-postmodernist, or the "leftists' intellectual Smithson,"[6] is a markedly less coherent version who is not for the scholarly faint of heart. Underwriting *both* versions, are new formations of the American landscape. This chapter reexamines Smithson's invocations (and occlusions) of Maya ruins in his Mexico projects, considering also how his conceptions of the indigene, nature, and landscape complicate the reception of these marginal and baffling works. Smithson's attempts at criticality and his naïve confirmation of the exoticizing, mythicizing tendencies characteristic of his generation cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, the projects express American anxieties of erasure and romance with the Other in the American landscape as well as the centrality of *displacement* and *dislocation* to Smithson's work—attempts to consolidate an anti-Enlightenment *modus operandi* in the initial throes of postmodernity.

In Smithson's prolific writing practice, and in several of his works (carried out both domestically and in Mexico) from the 1960s until his untimely death in 1973, he observed the untenable formations of U.S. modernism. His works and writings also show to what extent he is working within and criticizing a dually aesthetic and ideological problem of landscape located in previous centuries, a problem he still viewed as largely relevant to postwar U.S. art. "Ruination" as a theme of Smithson's Mexico works takes us back to the nineteenth century expedition (and landscape tradition more broadly) and, in less obvious ways, to the concept of organic architecture pioneered by Frank Lloyd Wright. This chapter will thus consider Smithson's critical response, and, conversely, his inadvertent *perpetuation* of themes located in Wright's, Catherwood's (and Stephens's) assimilations, representations, and reformulations of Maya ruins.

Death and Objecthood, or, the Early Years

In the two years preceding Smithson's trek through Mexico, he had become part and parcel of a "new critical drama"[7] around minimalist sculpture, one of the poster children of the American neo-avant-garde. Squaring up on each side of the fence were Smithson and critic Michael Fried, whose *Art and Objecthood* (1967) had sparked a controversy for its deterministic outlook on the development of American sculpture. Art historians cherish the feud between Smithson and Fried; it fits the bill for compulsive avoidance of the intricacies of his projects. It does, however, point us to a prong of the argument I will outline in this chapter. In a scathing 1967 "Letter to the Editor" of *Artforum*, Smithson characterized Fried's argument as "a ready-made parody of the war between Renaissance classicism (modernity) versus Manneristic anti-classicism (theater)."[8] In Smithson's view, the battles playing out in the arena of twentieth century American art were not only inherited—they were centuries old. Just in front of his nose Smithson saw the contradictions of U.S. modernism and American art criticism in terms of their Old World antecedents. The story, however, starts much earlier.

Smithson was an East Coaster through and through. He grew up in suburban Passaic, New Jersey and attended the Art Students League of New York—*alma mater* of Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, Donald Judd, and others—for a brief turn. He was an autodidact and voracious reader of the natural sciences, history, and literature ranging from Wyndham Lewis, T.E. Hulme, Jorge Luis Borges, and Samuel Beckett to the science fiction of H.G. Wells. It was during some of these early forays into classics and Beat literature (largely informed by his employ at the Eighth Street Bookshop) that, to quote Thomas Crow, the "overt Anglo-Catholicism of T.S. Eliot's poetry"[9] took hold in Smithson's early practice. The paintings of his early years consist of a series of thickly impastoed nods to abstract expressionism like *Walls of Dis* (1959) and, informed by Eliot and sorties with figuration, a series of crucifixions and close-ups of the stigmata of spindly-fingered, alien-like saints.

Smithson demonstrated an interest in Christian suffering, and in conceptions of the end of man couched in the physicality of cataclysmic disaster. Though having been raised devoutly Catholic himself, it was predominantly Eliot's grim romanticism of death that preoccupied Smithson. His drawings of the period also disclose this rather biblical infatuation with catastrophe and suffering. Hearing titles like *The City* or *Empire*—both executed in 1960—one might be tempted to first imagine a landscape from Thomas Cole's *Course of Empire.* Smithson's scenes, however, are filled with ominous, tentacle-like spires and nightmarish beasts of strange proportion that writhe across crowded pages. Another early series, *Hitler's Opera* (1960) is more of a surrealist variety than his early paintings, more like Antonin Artaud's tortured scrawls and incantatory spells than anything else we might imagine of the early sixties. There one finds Thomas Crow's mystic misfit. There is the Smithson suppressed by the estate, the underbelly of our leftist intellectual version coming of age in a fantasy of Old World Christianity.

Smithson had a brief love affair with Italy in the summer of 1961. Galeria Lester in Rome hosted his first solo exhibition, showing works from two series inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the New Testament. From Rome he wrote several letters to then-lover Nancy Holt, remarking on "Gothic reverberations"[10] and mystical nonsense: "I fear Romulus + Remus have given up the ghost. The she-wolf is mad. Rome is sinking into the mire."[11] Yet he also expressed mild disdain for visitors "on tour inspecting the rotting remains of a vanished age," noting that the Italian countryside "made [him] yearn for the parched land of Aztec Mexico."[12]

The Wasteland, the Anthropomorphism, the Mirror

Nearly a decade later, in an interview with Dennis Wheeler, Smithson quoted a line of Eliot's celebrated poem, *The Waste Land* (1922)—"I will show you fear in a handful of dust"—in describing his rather complicated (self-conceived) relationship to time.[13] A look at a larger

excerpt of the quoted passage clues us in to a constellation of ideas around the theme of death that Smithson took up in the non-figural works of his later years:

> What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
> Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
> You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
> A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
> And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
> And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
> There is shadow under this red rock,
> (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
> And I will show you something different from either
> Your shadow at morning striding behind you
> Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
> I will show you fear in a handful of dust.[14]

The most obvious carryovers in Smithson's protean forays with different media are, quite simply, rocks—different sorts of "stony rubbish" made an appearance, sometimes ephemerally, in any number of Smithson's works 1960s and early 1970s. Moreover, "wastelands" of various types were an overarching concern in the later land-based projects, albeit positioned against what he saw as the "rinky-dink"[15] conception of wilderness underwriting 1960s environmentalism. He was keenly aware of postwar decay: in the urban and suburban landscapes, in the art world, and in the American public sphere.

To Smithson, the abstract expressionists were hardly transgressive in their abstraction. Smithson observed the lurking "anthropomorphism"[16] in Pollock's oeuvre well before myopic art history put its glasses on.[17] By the sixties, abstraction was something of Eliot's "heap of broken images" in art criticism—a romantic mystification of the "death" of figuration. Fragmentation was key to Smithson's mature practice, and if not of the human figure (which, he professed some years later, made its way out of his artistic production by the mid-sixties) then in land itself. Eliot's bleak, dehydrated, and lifeless landscape exposes the nullity of man's existence in the face of mortality; entropy and death as they manifest in landscape played quintessential roles in Smithson's later works, as would a kind of ahistorical romanticism.

In his early work, a confusion of tendencies entered the scene. His pop pornographic collages like *Untitled (Venus with Lightning Bolts)* (1964) are a perfect wilderness of late 1950s consumer culture, neon pastels, sex, and motorcycles in oddly careful arrangements. His *Untitled (Skull and Bone Ornamenting a Room)* (1962) is a nod to the still life and to ornament and surface. We can also see traces of the biomorphic surrealists. In the early painting, drawing, and collage work, we have the strongest clear indication of Smithson's interest in decay and fragmentation, but the hallowed decay of a temple pyramid or great stone stele is substituted with the ruination of modernism (as would also be the case, several years later, in his Mexico works). After all, he had written to his early patron and gallerist, George Lester, in 1961, "I am a Modern artist dying of Modernism."[18] Smithson was hung up on the mind-body split of the nineteenth century, and on its decay welling up in the ruins of totemism in early Pollock and high Richard Pousette-Dart. Smithson's *Untitled (Skull and Bone)* is all surface and decoration, all excess—abstract-expressionist cartouches made into gilded picture frames that upon closer examination contain a poorly printed negative image of a highly decorated cross vault. His clippings for such collages include examples of architecture and monuments displaced into the space of pop. These early themes and vestigial throwbacks to painting appear throughout the rest of his career and in the Mexico works too.

Smithson moved away from his flirtations with figural paintings and collage work to forays in minimal sculpture. His use of mirrors reflected his concerns with displacement and dislocation.[19] By dispersing the gaze in mirrored surfaces—creating a non-place in the art object that both is and is not—the use of mirrors as a medium makes something of a parallel to Michel Foucault's heterotopian mirror metaphor in "Des Espaces Autres," a 1967 lecture that would not be published in the United States until approximately a decade after Smithson's passing.[20]

His early work includes the themes that haunt the later. The larger roles of ruination and landscape as well as the "non-place" of the mirror figured heavily into the Mexico projects, and

these predated his *Spiral Jetty* and the itinerant, large-scale land-based works by several years. Smithson saw architecture and landscape against the backdrop of everything pulling land itself into allegory and abstraction. He viewed landscape precisely as provocation—the decay of the public sphere, something he saw as inevitable, reflected in the increasingly defunct mysticism engulfing the urban, the "slurbs,"[21] even the "country."[22] To Smithson, nowhere was immune, and every landscape was equal and nothing. Wasteland, in part, was simply available and affordable for artists, and decay an entropic inevitability that showed its face in his work as a preoccupation with death.

Geographies of Displacement

In his emergent land-based practice, Smithson contributed to the American landscape's ongoing mystification even as he sought to resist what he perceived as the "Disneyland"[23] romance of American wilderness idealism he repeatedly condemned in interviews and writings. Indeed, his uses and displacements of site, subject matter, and material would play a pivotal role in drawing back into unison what was, at the time, the self-identified (a)political autonomy of some postwar art with a reinvigoration of the landscape tradition.

Smithson's nonsite works, another type of displacement, were both precursors and oddly central to the Mexico expedition. Nonsites, strictly speaking, are sculptural installations in the gallery space of (most often) mirrors and materials from a site (dirt, gravel, rock), and include also a multi-format collection of maps and drawings with sometimes ambiguous relationships to the actual sites. In Smithson's description, nonsites operate as "dimensional metaphors" in which "one site can represent another site which does not resemble it."[24] In a 1969-1970 set of interviews, he described the nonsite in no less abstruse terms as "point[ing]" to a site without "seeming limits," yet simultaneously "effac[ing]" it[25]—a means, perhaps, of pushing the viewer toward the physicality and locale of a site without purporting to *represent* it in the context of the

gallery. One might add that Smithson also envisioned the nonsites in both archaeological and architectural terms—as instantiations of a "personal archeology"[26] (conforming to his insistence on the need for an "archeology of the art world"[27]) and as "rooms within rooms."[28]

The California landscape and American Southwest more broadly figured prominently into Smithson's Mexico works as he ventured outside the confines of his native New York and New Jersey. The California nonsites were all carried out from mid-1968 to 1969: *California-Nevada (Baker Lava)*; *Double Nonsite, California and Nevada*; *Obsidian Site*; *Sand* and *Gypsum Site*. The "outer part"[29] of *Double Nonsite*, in Smithson's description (and in the sculptural element), contains material from California's Marl Mountains, while its "inner part"[30] is more geographically ambiguous, consisting of material sited in Truman Springs at the California-Nevada border. Smithson attempted to "superimpose"[31] the two sites much in the same way he would go on to superimpose hotel architecture over the nearby, famed archaeological site in *Hotel Palenque*.[32] *Double Nonsite*, in addition to *California-Nevada (Baker Lava)*, foreshadowed both the seriality and fetishization of absence, ambiguity, and misinformation of his later transnational works. His search for materials—geologically-informed, in the case of California, as the titles of the pieces suggest—would be replaced by his, Holt's, and Dwan's quest for ruins in the Mexican landscape.

In his exploration of marginal geographies, Smithson also demonstrated an investment in theories of migration and landmass formation underwriting early Western exploration.[33] One of the manifestations of this interest was *Hypothetical Continent in Shells (Lemuria)* (1969) at Sanibel Island, Florida, the site of a prehistoric land bridge reaching across the Gulf of Mexico to Yucatán. An extant photograph of the work shows a meandering ovoid-shaped collection of shells in white sand. The Sanibel Island piece was closely followed by a second work in the series, *Hypothetical Continent (Icecap of Gondwanaland)*, constructed during his expedition in Mexico. The ephemeral sculpture consisted of limestone rocks gathered into a bean-like

formation (emulating the supposed shape of the continent) and nestled into the dirt. A few months later, in July of 1969, Smithson assembled the third piece of the series, another pile of material—glass, this time—into *Hypothetical Continent (Map of Broken Glass, Atlantis),* in Loveladies, New Jersey.[34] The title's parenthetical inclusion of "Atlantis" speaks for itself—another "lost land" and nod to the fantasies of previous centuries.[35]

The "hypothetical continents" attested to Smithson's interest in theories of geological movement and origin, fictional and otherwise.[36] Together, the pieces traced an arc from the Northeastern United States to Yucatán (through Florida, where, coincidentally, Stephens and Catherwood embarked by ship on their own journeys). His sites, however, were dislocated. Imaginary and prehistoric continents were scrambled: Smithson scrawled down the central axis of an accompanying drawing of the Florida piece that Lemuria is "now supposedly covered by the Indian Ocean;"[37] Gonwanaland, the title of the Yucatán piece, was surmised to have shed Australia, India, Africa, and South America; and Atlantis, the most mythological of the three (theorized by early European explorers as the vanished origins of Mesoamerican civilization), was set in a marginal landscape of New Jersey. Smithson ran together these displaced geographies and geological theory, providing the viewer with a backward glance to the migration hypotheses circulating during the Age of Exploration.

From Origins to "Incidents"

Smithson and company set out on a purported "anti-expedition"[38] to Mexico in April of 1969, effecting a pilgrimage of sorts to the sites of several Mayan ruins and more or less retracing the steps of Stephens and Catherwood. Without too much effort, one can surmise that Smithson's 1969 travel essay, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan," was titled after the 1843 *Incidents of Travel in the Yucatan*.[39] Over his excursion through the *estados* of Yucatán, Campeche, and the Mexico-Guatemala border, sewing a loop in the journey through Chiapas

and Palenque, Smithson arranged and photographed somewhat similar and subsequently dismantled configurations of mirrors. The nine color photographs reproduced in the initial publication of the "Incidents of Mirror-Travel" text are extant in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's permanent collection. They picture, photographed *in situ* in 1969, the ephemeral installations of the *Yucatán Mirror Displacements (1-9)* series.

The photographs show between nine and thirteen mirrors of uniform size, arranged with edges roughly parallel to one another but irregularly spaced. The mirrors were shot at somewhat close range, with one exception—the eighth displacement, featuring a drab, overcast sliver of sky and the edge of what Smithson identified in the text as an "island"[40] of the Usamacinta River. Smithson placed the mirrors in a variety of the region's natural settings: tucked into lush foliage, set into a rocky beach amidst dried seaweed, hung and wedged into roots or branches, and slightly cantilevered or stuck into mounds of sand, mud, and loamy dirt. Uniformly tilted, the mirrors as a group maintain a somewhat parallel configuration from image to image, though the group's angle relative to the camera varies. Mirror corners and edges of several arrangements were partially concealed beneath dirt and vegetal matter. In each photograph, the mirrors reflect no images of ruins, only gray sky or the foliage or branches surrounding their placement. Smithson wrote of the first arrangement: "On this field of ashes . . . twelve mirrors were cantilevered into low mounds of red soil,"[41] and "bits of earth spilled onto the surfaces, thus sabotaging the perfect reflections of the sky."[42]

No evidence of a human counterpart in the landscape appears in the photographs; the mirrors are pictured somewhat alone, a flock of minimal sprites in a lifeless and foreclosed landscape painted by Smithson's circuitous travel essay. The mirrors appear as though covertly preparing to dance off each photograph and make their way in a huddle to the next site in some stop-motion soliloquy. In fact, Smithson occasionally described the mirrors in animate terms—as

"sabatoging . . . the sky," "abolish[ing] the supports,"[43] or "deployed" (of the second displacement) as if they were a troop in combat.

Consistent with Smithson's larger practice by that time in terms of seriality, itinerancy, the theme of displacement, and choice of material—mirrors nestled into or juxtaposed with rock, soil, organic, or mineral matter from each site—*Yucatán Mirror Displacements (1-9)* was also a retort to the landscape traditions discussed in chapter one and instrumentalized by Wright. But there, as in the *Hotel Palenque* lecture, the landscape vista takes a nosedive. The images accompanying the "Incidents of Mirror-Travel" essay subvert the photograph as either (or both) a beautiful or "truth-telling"[44] image. Smithson's expedition was decidedly unspectacular, and the photographs and travel essay, like the nonsites, do not disclose the usual contextual cues. If they tell "truth," it is of a different kind.

The landscape gaze is disrupted in this sense. Not a single photograph captures distinguishable features of an identifiable location, nor even a horizon line, apart from the eighth displacement. Yet this horizon is a disappointing one, dull and unremarkable. Flat mud consumes the foreground, eating up over half the photograph, and an arrangement featuring twelve mirrors seems to have escaped to nowhere—pressed into an embankment from which emerge an uninteresting tree line and bland horizon. This horizon is decidedly *not* the placidly puffed clouds of Poussin nor the dynamic skies of the Hudson River School. It defies comparison with the hazily pleasant background of Catherwood's "General Views," and it is certainly not the aspirational horizon of Manifest Destiny. Given these qualities, as astutely observed by Jennifer L. Roberts, "his [Smithson's] use of mirrors as a medium . . . signals a more systematic attempt to oppose Stephens's visual imperialism and the entire Enlightenment project that authorized it."[45] However, Smithson still enacted a colonizing endeavor of sorts. The quasi-anonymous quality of the specific sites does not undo the predilection for naming and

mapping that haunts Western discourse; rather, his mirrors and text remade the sites as postmodern nonsites, and as Smithson's.

Traveloguing the Ruin Gaze

The travelogue text compiles gobs of meandering consciousness, wayward citation, and quasi-factual information against the grain of travel writing like Stephens's. The subject matter is unconsolidated and negative in the sense that it is not at all apparent what the text's subject matter actually *is*. Apart from his oddly illustrative language about the fallibility of vision—connected most obviously to his mirror arrangements—Smithson ruminated at length on everything from color and light to Pre-Spanish deities and mundane everyday objects: the car mirror, a pack of cigarettes, a local guide. Within each of these categories we find doors elsewhere.

Smithson's mirrors and opaque narrative (if it can be called a narrative) both present partial, if also partially dissimilar, conditions of irresolution—"such mirror surfaces cannot be understood by reason,"[46] wrote Smithson. The gaze indicated in Smithson's prose for "Incidents of Mirror-Travel" is a faulty one, juxtaposed with images of mirrors that reflect un-locatable surroundings. The mirrors' "view" has been scattered or foreclosed before it is even surrendered, and reflective surfaces like mirrors and rivers present, in Smithson's language, "no isolated moment . . . no fixed point, just flickering moments" of "tumid duration," "scrambled reflections," and "indecisive zones."[47] These rather cinematic descriptions accompany mundane arrangements of mirrors that withhold any meaningful contextual cues and indeed scatter sight in the manner Smithson suggests.

Smithson's ruin gaze (as part of a broader gaze at the landscape) in "Incidents of Mirror-Travel" is enacted in negativity. According the Smithson, the mirrors are plagued by "visual extinguishment" and reflections that "retreat . . . from perception."[48] In the most lucid corner of

the text, approaching its conclusion, Smithson wrote of the ninth mirror arrangement:

> There will be those who will say "that's getting close to nature." But what is meant by such "nature" is anything but natural. When the conscious artist perceives "nature" everywhere he starts detecting falsity in the apparent thickets, in the appearance of the real . . . . Contrary to affirmations of nature, art is inclined to semblances and masks, it flourishes on discrepancy. It sustains itself not . . . on creation but decreation, not on nature but denaturalization, etc. . . . Only appearances are fertile; they are gateways to the primordial. Every artist owes his existence to such mirages. The ponderous illusions of solidity, the non-existence of things, is what the artist takes for "materials."[49]

These gateways into "appearances," "mirages," and "illusions" slip into a kind of natural romance in and of themselves, but one in fact steeped in sight and caught up in representation.

Though he consistently chastised landscape clichés, Smithson invoked a rather ahistorical brand of sublime even as he visually forecloses it.[50] The failures of vision in the text and images are attributed to the forces of nature, from "vertiginous foliage"[51] and "deadly greens that devour light"[52] to "viewpoints [that] choked and died on the tepidity of the tropical air."[53] Here is a conception of nature energized and animated—"bits of earth" that "sabotage the perfect reflections of the sky"[54] amidst a jungle that "extinguish[es]" and "spreads." "No boundaries could hold this jungle together,"[55] Smithson remarked. Vision is foreclosed, but the text paints a rather illustrative portrayal of the vigorous struggle between man and environment—between nature and its coming-into-being as the represented landscape.

The (Missing) Indigene

The indigene in Smithson's account is, if anything, a footnote to "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," serving as neither foreground nor background to whatever narrative Smithson cobbled together in his text. Though Smithson and company were essentially on a pilgrimage to the ruins detailed in the 1843 set of *Incidents of Travel* volumes*,* native inhabitants and ruins both are rarely discussed, effectively dislocated from the scenes at hand. Even the concept of origins foregrounded in Stephens's and Catherwood's volumes is displaced—the only endnote of the

text follows an in-text reference to Ignatius Donnelly's *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* (1882). The note contains a rambling explication of Atlantis, proffering the reader references to Plato's *Timaeus, Codex Vaticanus,* and finally, to Smithson's Atlantean "map" of glass in Loveladies, New Jersey. This reference and note accompany the rogue photograph of the eighth arrangement. This horizon—the only horizon of the nine photographs—is failed and obsolete, like Plato-qua-Donnelly's theoretical continent.

Accompanying the seventh mirror displacement near the Yaxchilan ruins on the Guatemala-Mexico border, Smithson mentioned the "frail" abodes of contemporary inhabitants, at unspoken variance with the supposed permanence of stone in the nearby ruins. Smithson remarked: "a Mexican gave the [seventh] displacement a long, imploring gaze."[56] This actor, instead of gazing, "*gave*"[57] his gaze to the displacement. Even the gaze does not belong to the mirror arrangement's onlookers. Smithson's missing indigenes and inactive, disenfranchised, and anonymous third person grant the reader a view accurately described as "commensurate with the broader cultural project of dehistoricizing the ancient Maya."[58] In Smithson's observation, Yaxchilan's inhabitants were "weary,"[59] and echoed Catherwood's frequent depictions of listless and lazing bystanders in selected images of both the *Incidents of Travel* volumes and larger, self-published 1844 folio. But unlike Catherwood's use of stark contrast—between indolent native and grandiose ruin or passive Indian and energized Anglo-explorer—the un-pictured ruins serve the purpose of displacing the scenes, and the only activity of the natives in Smithson's account is "disappoint[ment]" at "the grand nullity of their past achievements."[60]

As an individual for whom William Burrough's *Naked Lunch* "acquainted him with the 'savagery' of Pre-Columbian art,"[61] Smithson was perhaps doomed to fall back on the hodgepodge conceptions of Otherness demonstrated in his text. In "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," Smithson included epigraphic quotations of Claude Levi-Strauss and Eric Thompson, as well as

references to Victor Wolfgang Von Hagen's *World of the Maya* (1960), the research of Philip Drucker and Robert F. Heizer, and Marshall Kay and Edwin M. Colbert's *Stratigraphy and Life History* (1965). The latter is described in a book review as "profusely illustrated" and "a summary of the main events in the evolution of life and of the North American continent."[62] The review claims, however, that "the stratigraphic principles are obscured, and the main historical events tend to be isolated and rather meaningless." Secondly, his exposure to Heizer's work is unsurprising, seeing as famed archaeologist Robert Heizer was the father of Michael Heizer, a fellow artist and good friend of Smithson's. Finally, C.A. Burland's *Gods of Mexico*, cited too in Smithson's travelogue, is reviewed as "superficial, not entirely up-to-date, and studded with minor errors,"[63] and Burland's overview of Pre-Spanish deities "discussed within the framework of Jungian archetypes."[64] Smithson, in consummate Jungian fashion, assigned characters to Dwan and Holt, casting himself as Tezcatlipoca, "demiurge of the 'smoking-mirror."[65] The mirror essay includes an image of an Olmec artifact from South-Central Mexico, and Tezcatlipoca in addition to Holt's and Dwan's respective roles are *Aztec* deities lacking any obvious correlates within Maya mythology (such as, for example, the correspondences between ancient Greek and Roman gods). His reference to Aztec (as opposed to Maya) deities was further displaced through Smithson's inclusion of an imagined dialogue between Chronos, the pre-Socratic god of time, and the Aztec deity, Coatlicue, prefaced by a section epigraph quoting "Nudie," a former G-string manufacturer turned country western stylist to the stars: "You don't have to have cows to be a cowboy."[66]

Smithson was indeed a "cowboy" himself—symptomatic of an entire generation of U.S. artists brought up on not only the Anglo-American landscape myth, but also the byproducts of a broad mystification of Latin America in U.S. circles. Even Smithson's more acceptable references—to Levi-Strauss and Thompson—are decontextualized and steeped in the needs of his own practice; moreover, Smithson's attraction (expressed in various interviews) to Levi-

Strauss's "thermodynamic"[67] assessment of culture—wherein "primitive" societies are "cold" and "advanced" societies are "hot"—misses the mark. The first line of the epigraph—"The characteristic feature of the savage mind is its timelessness" [68]—is the language through which Smithson discussed the landscape as he, Holt, and Dwan moved through it in character, and indicates his perception of the Maya as not a classical and highly advanced civilization, but rather a case of the "primitive" or "savage mind" inexorably estranged from and through Western discourse.

Smithson's was also a primitivism steeped in the mythic apolitics of American abstraction inherited by his generation and bound up in the faulty inscription of the Mexican avant-garde—which had *emphasized* in lieu of dismissing the subject matter of anthropology and archaeology—in U.S. circles.[69] The (U.S.) American canon's half-baked cooptation of Mexican modernism was tied also, by proxy of *Indigenismo*, to poor inscriptions of ancient Mesoamerican art and architecture.[70] Maya archaeology underwent a second renaissance in the 1960s and 1970s, but resistance to the notion of Maya antiquities as aesthetic entities persisted. For example, in 1956, at the age of eighteen, young Smithson was impressed by *Masters of British Painting 1800-1950*[71]*,* which included also romantic landscape paintings by Constable and Turner, the same artists that inspired Catherwood and the landscapes of the Hudson River School painters. A catalogue introduction for the exhibition observes a "surrealist-infused neo-romanticism" in works of the 1930s, referencing also Henry Moore's "druidical worship of prehistoric stone forms."[72] Moore explicitly acknowledged the reclining Mesoamerican Chacmool figure as a vital aesthetic influence in his work,[73] but the insertion of "druidical" by the writer—suggesting Celtic origin—instead connotes a European pedigree of aesthetic influence on "the most important British artist of the twentieth century."[74]

Ruination and the Ahistorical Landscape

In "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," the only direct mentions of the region's ruins (or anywhere else, really) along Smithson's trek are purely locational means of directing his reader to the sites of his mirror arrangements. Yet a reference to "somewhere between Uman and Muna"[75] or to the "outskirts of the ruins of Palenque,"[76] for example, show us a means of displacement beyond that of Smithson's mirror arrangements—even the points of reference are liminal and peripheral. Otherwise, there are trans-linguistic references to naming—a most likely plagiarized portion of a local guide, content from Lhuillier's translated introduction to Palenque, and quoted material from the *Tourist Guide and Directory of Yucatan-Campeche* noting the derivation of "Yucatán," a human error lost in translation between Spaniard and Maya (upon which Stephens also remarks in *Incidents of Travel*).[77]

Any "images" of ruination are artfully buried in the language of this archaeological text, and Smithson delivered the reader to Old World example. Of the fourth mirror displacement, Smithson noted "unnameable tonalities of blue" that "have vanished into the camera" and "rest in the cemetery of the printed page—*Ancora in Arcadia morte*."[78] The latter phrase refers to a rather esoteric linguistic construction from Englishman Thomas Kirk's 1789 engraving of Giovanni Battista Cipriani's *The Shepherds of Arcadia* (1788) after Nicolas Poussin, whose *Et in Arcadia Ego* (1637-1638) popularized the classical scene in the seventeenth century.[79] The engraving of Cipriani's bucolic tableau pictures astonished and imploring onlookers—classically garbed and bare chested women, a child, and some dogs—gathered about an urn atop a large and austere funerary plinth. Three stricken shepherds reel and gesture at an inscription and skull and crossbones carved into the tomb. The translation of the inscribed phrase from Latin to Italian—possibly an artful allusion to the linguistic slippage in the Spaniards' first encounter with the Maya—takes poetic license from classical precedent; Cipriani's rendering replaces "*et*" ("and") with "*ancora"* ("still" or "even"), and "ego" ("I," symbolizing death) with "morte" ("death")—

"even in Arcadia, death." And like Smithson's regard for colors "vanished" into the artist's camera and interred atop "the printed page," we have an in-text window to a classically idyllic *memento mori*—a landscape of fluffy trees, smooth hills, and decorative, yet suggestive, ruined fragments of a cornice and column in foreground. And Smithson asked: "when does a displacement become a misplacement?"[80] Here are our ruins—displaced, misplaced, and interred in language.

In the text, Smithson mentioned in passing a yellow matchbox of "Clasicos-De Lujo-La Central"[81] featuring a tiny reproduction of the iconic *Venus de Milo* (c. second century B.C.) and, on the back, Pieter Bruegel the Elder's Northern Renaissance painting, *The Blind Leading the Blind* (c. 1568)—idealized statuary of the Greek goddess of love juxtaposed opposite a herd of doddering, sightless old men. We are readers enveloped in biblical parable—the blind led by blind, stumbling down the hill of Smithson's bewildering text and unenlightening images. His text also includes description of the attempted (and ultimately futile) removal of a large stele from Yaxchilan by early archaeologists—the displaced stone now "a monument to Sisyphus."[82] Smithson's maneuver displaced indigenous ruination into an American landscape bearing the "classical monument" borne of Europe. The text again diverts us through canonical European ghosts, embedded fragments in a fragmentary travelogue.

At his own admission, Smithson spilled us into romanticized terrain even as he ostensibly refused a Westernized courtship with the ruin as part of the landscape tradition. "Peripheral concerns are romantic,"[83] he remarked in a 1970 interview, only to state, a moment later, that in the Yucatán mirror works, "nine places spill out on to peripheral zones."[84] The last sentence of the travelogue—"Yucatan is *elsewhere*"—shows the reader yet another outside. It connotes a Yucatán effected in a postmodernized ruin gaze—an "elsewhere" paused and recuperated again and again, sifted through the American pan for bits to shore up of the

originary American architectural landscape established in Catherwood's illustrations, recuperated by Mayan Revivalism, and displaced by Smithson—"Yucatan is *elsewhere*."

Hotel-as-Ruin

Near the archaeological site of Palenque, the site of the fifth displacement in "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," Smithson photographed the decrepit and unpeopled hotel where he Dwan, and Holt stayed. The hotel, a ready-made vernacular ruin of a building, would be the star of the show three years later in Smithson's 1972 slide lecture, *Hotel Palenque*. Smithson delivered his lecture to University of Utah architecture students and faculty expecting a talk on the celebrated archaeological site of Palenque, which reached its zenith between 500 and 700 A.D. Smithson did, in fact, speak of the famed destination, employing the rhetoric of the pedagogue or tour guide interspersed with sleights against the art world of the 1960s, rambling travel anecdotes, and quasi-historical remarks about the activities of both ancient Maya and contemporary inhabitants. Instead of showing any slides of the ruins, however, he projected the thirty-one odd and unremarkable images he had taken of the ramshackle Hotel Palenque, which he described at length in his forty-minute lecture.

Positioned against prevailing notions of architectural ruination and the romantic nationalist motives framing the documentation of Stephens and Catherwood, *Hotel Palenque* is yet another kind of displacement than his mirror essay. In satire, he dislocated the slide lecture's pedagogical potential and the characteristic coherence of the ruin gaze. In doing so, Smithson collapsed what an average audience would perceive as the hotel's utter inconsistency with the archaeological site ten kilometers distant. And unlike "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," his sidewinding commentary zeroed in on architectural ruin. The spectacle of ruination, however, was cast in the figure of the hotel.

In *Hotel Palenque,* Smithson artfully superimposed vernacular ruin over nineteenth-century discovery, using deadpan delivery to undermine both the slide lecture's typically illustrative and enlightening function in academia and the frequently redemptive function of ruins in cultural discourse. Indeed, he exploited the subjects of his lecture, drawing out comparisons between the hotel's architecture and, at turns, both the nearby Maya ruin and the work of his contemporaries. However, re-examining the content of his lecture, and various subversions of the figures of the artist, the critic, and the historian allows us to more clearly observe his relationship to the discourses he engages. Ultimately, Smithson used humor and the exegetical potential of the hotel as a means of destabilizing the hierarchies of vision governed by a matrix of authority figures (like the art/architectural historian or archaeologist, among others) over the site, meanwhile sowing in negativity an *American* landscape of this unlikely setting.

The slide lecture's featured (albeit displaced) locale was an unsurprising choice given the wealth of recent discoveries at Palenque that made the archaeological site of particular interest to academic inquiry at mid-century. A decade on the tails of Alberto Ruz Lhuillier's landmark 1948 excavation of the Tomb of Maya king, K'inich Janaab Pakal I, at Palenque, Winifred Pitkin's *Hidden Cities of Middle America* (1959) proclaimed that "the Mayas achieved the peak of the whole [pre-Columbian] culture—higher even than that of Peru,"[85] also seductively noting the bounty of ruins still awaiting discovery. New headway was made in understanding the Maya inscriptions formerly assumed to be mere decoration. In the late 1950s, American art historian Tatiana Proskouriakoff and scholars Heinrich Berlin and Yuriy Knorozov made significant advances in deciphering Maya hieroglyphics.[86] A short time later, in 1962, George Kubler (whose *The Shape of Time* of the same year garnered a great deal of attention, including Smithson's) published an influential text on the art and architecture of the ancient Maya.[87] By the time Smithson and company journeyed to the site, art historian Linda Schele had begun major undertakings in decoding the history of Palenque's royalty. And a year after his

lecture, scholar Merle Greene Robertson, Schele, and others organized the first Mesa Redonda de Palenque in 1973, a meeting for Mayanists to share scholarship and new discoveries about the archaeological site.

Meanwhile, somewhat similar to the photographs for *Yucatán Mirror Displacements (1-9),* Smithson's images undermine the role of the photograph as province of the desiring gaze. The pictorial role of Smithson's slides is complicated not only by the images' failure to invoke tenets of beauty or sublime feeling in the way of the ruin studded, nineteenth-century landscape, but also their failure to represent the purported subject of his lecture—the ruins of Palenque. Of a slide showing the framing device of a window in a roofless chamber, Smithson announced: "You know this window is actually looking out over the things that we went there to see but you won't see any of those temples in this lecture."[88] The shots preclude any clear views of the proximate ruins, effectively withholding the desired historical scenes like those illustrated by Catherwood in the *Incidents of Travel* volumes. Smithson's images displace the yearned-for spectacle in favor of its wasted substitute, the Hotel Palenque. By presenting such unspectacular photographs narrated by the questionable, deadpan anecdotes of the lecture, the viewer gains "access" only to a marginalized vernacular landscape—the ruinous scene of Smithson's temporary lodging.

Hotel Palenque, however, was a somewhat different maneuver than "Incidents of Mirror-Travel." The form of the slide lecture incorporates a third term—Smithson the lecturer—to the typically (supposedly, rather) unmediated relationship between viewing subject and artistic object, making what in Bruno Latour's exposition of the slide lecture are only "quasi-object" and "quasi-subject."[89] Art historian Robert S. Nelson observes that the "ventriloquist act" of the slide lecture "enables the [slide's] picture to speak, to act, to desire."[90] Smithson indeed conferred to his audience a "desiring" gaze, but disrupted the lecture's potential for an aestheticized and enlightening representation insofar as the images of the hotel are banal and nonconforming.

The comic (Smithson in this scenario) was not fully identified with his ostensible role as lecturer. As such, he made fun of himself in his various roles, observing from the outside what would not necessarily translate apart from comedy.[91] His inconsistent, incomplete verbal exposition painted the hotel as a meaningful historical and aesthetic spectacle, detaching the images from the mundane realities of the site. The work was thus both a kind of "displacement from mimesis"[92] (in image) and "mimicry of mimicry"[93] (in performative modality).

Smithson's non-siting of a Mexican hotel remade it in the Western philosophical tradition of the slide lecture, which, like so many of Smithson's interests, took root in the nineteenth century. Coincident with the advent of photographic slide technology in the later 1800s, the modern slide lecture is most commonly affiliated with the snoozy, dim theater of the art history lecture hall. Nevertheless, it was professors of architecture that first championed the use of sizably displayed visual aids in lectures, some displaying the panorama format Catherwood popularized in his lower Manhattan rotunda.[94] The most prominent of early efforts were those of Charles Robert Cockerell, British archaeologist and professor of architecture at the Royal Academy in London. At each of his lectures, Cockerell displayed a fourteen-foot-wide "drop-scene" picturing an imaginative array of the most significant examples of architectural history ranging from the Temple of Luxor to Notre Dame.[95] A smaller version—*The Professor's Dream* (1848)—still exists, a glimpse at the historicizing efforts of a nineteenth-century architectural ideologue. The dense tableau of overlapping, canonical specimens are hedged in at the foreground by a swath of classical and Egyptian ruins and arranged in registers of "Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, and Mediæval and Modern"[96] classification, paling and progressively increasing in scale as they approach the upper registers of the paper (in a manner contrary to the typical depiction of perspectival space).

The Hotel Palenque is the star of Smithson's show, but, like Cockerell's drawing, it is caught in palimpsestic anachronism. The hotel is not just a double of Palenque or a means

through which Smithson paralleled his own protean doubling as artist, traveler, tourist, critic, and lecturer. It also appears and reappears as various specimens from the canons of art and architecture. He reconstituted the hotel's run-down features by explaining, for example, a concrete cavity as medieval "moat" or "snake pit"[97] in the same maneuver that he transposed shoddy construction over the absent Palenque ball court and omitted Temple of the Cross. "This is really the old hotel," Smithson remarked of one view of the hotel overlooking some "pillars"—the usual iconographic cue for allegorical ruination in painterly depiction—that "might be pylons for torches or something of that sort."[98] Smithson observed affinities between architectural features of the run-down hotel and various paradigmatic examples, both modern and historical. An unfinished room in one slide of *Hotel Palenque* has a "Jasper Johnsian simplicity about it"[99] yet a moment later, he likened the "impenetrability" of the same room to the recently discovered burial pit at the Palenque ruins. Smithson's third slide of the lecture was incorrectly inserted in the projector, and he nevertheless followed suit, describing a "spiky, irregular, cantilevered effect coming off the side of the wall" in a way that "suggests Piranesi"—"full of floors that really go nowhere and stairways that just disappear into clouds."[100] He went on to figuratively run his observations into the ground, noting how the Piranesian structure, in lieu of ascending skyward, "sort of just breaks off into the Mexican dirt."[101] Elsewhere at the hotel, the red and black stripes of a "centerless" walkway were, according to Smithson, "much more interesting than most of the paintings being done in New York City right now, showing far more imagination."[102] His lecture's content, however, is not strictly limited to his par-for-the-course remarks on the art world. At times, the hotel poses as itself, but cloaked in the aestheticizing language of the ruin gaze.

New York Egypt and the Architectural Landscape

Smithson's approach to the Mexican architectural landscape reflected concerns at home. Describing his nonsites in an interview some years later, Smithson observed of the

cultural landscape of New York: “The city is like Egypt where it is an absolute . . . . Every person is trying to do his little pyramid number right here.”[103] Architectural longevity and artistic legacy alike had grown increasingly elusive in the ballooning speed and scope of postmodernity and postmodern technology, and obsolescence was a progressively ubiquitous trait. The Big Apple, for its part, was already experiencing not only rising inflation and a wage-price spiral amidst an increasingly depopulated urban center. As one of the oldest major cities in the country, it also faced a serious reassessment of historical site designation. In the wake of Postwar construction and on the heels of the Wilderness Act of 1964[104], the Landmarks Preservation Act was put into effect in 1965, soon to be followed by the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, which made the federal government responsible for U.S. historic sites. After months of debate, Smithson’s own neighborhood, Greenwich Village, was made an official historic district in March of 1967.[105]

A few months later, as the big city (and entire country) scrambled to consolidate its architectural heritage, Smithson wandered through the nowhere landscape of his hometown of Passaic, New Jersey, photographing images of various “monuments” of suburban waste and local infrastructure. The results of his hometown day trip materialized in “A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey.” Published as a photo essay in the December 1967 issue of *Artforum*, the text and photographs comprise a guided tour through playfully dubbed “sights” of suburban New Jersey—pipes, a sandbox, a footbridge, and the like.[106] *Hotel Palenque*’s comical inversion of celebrated architectural destination and vernacular construction was not, as it turns out, Smithson’s first exploit in making a spectacle out of the dilapidated or obsolete. And using what would be a fitting, descriptive phrase for the Hotel Palenque five years later, Smithson referred to the “monuments” of his hometown as “ruins in reverse,” which, he explained, were “the opposite of the ‘romantic ruin’ because the buildings don't *fall* into ruin *after* they are built but rather rise into ruin before they are built.”[107]

At the beginning of the essay, Smithson juxtaposed a downtown Passaic that "was no center," but rather "a typical abyss or an ordinary void"[108] against the indulgent pastoral scene in Samuel F.B. Morse's *Allegorical Landscape of New York University* (1835-1836). Smithson's essay includes (quite intentionally) what is best described as a poor photocopy of a newspaper image from a John Canaday article in the *New York Times*, titled "Art: Themes and the Usual Variations" and featuring Morse's landscape. The painting depicts an unrecognizable Washington Square Park bathed in golden light, bafflingly dissimilar from the busy post-Beat hub of the New York University campus it had become by the time Smithson resided in the Village. In its original version, the painting has the allegorical comportment of Catherwood's set of landscape illustrations from his folio of hand-colored prints. The reproduced landscape instantiated in print what Smithson saw dawning in the reality of his urban environs. In contrast to a New York Egypt with its jockeying inhabitants putting out "little pyramid number[s]"[109] right and left, he saucily wondered, "Has Passaic replaced Rome as the eternal city?"[110]

Ron Graziani observes that unlike classical ruins, with which Smithson's post-industrial infrastructure draws its closest aesthetic correspondence, "the monuments at Passaic lacked a history into which the observer could nostalgically project her or himself"[111]—a gesture in the direction of an "urban picturesque."[112] The detritus of Hotel Palenque fulfilled a similar function, and Smithson attempted to dissolve difference and hierarchy between center and periphery in both displacement-qua-superimpositions—the strange, but dull hotel atop Palenque archaeological site or the marginal landscape of suburban New Jersey in lieu of historic Greenwich Village. Architectural waste in both cases was the means through which Smithson de-sublimated difference. Yet much was to come after the U.S. fixed an eye on its architectural legacy in the late sixties.

In 1972, the same year Smithson delivered *Hotel Palenque* at the University of Utah, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held its inaugural

Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, initiating the joint safeguarding and conservation of both manmade heritage and natural wonder, including of course archaeological entities like Palenque (though the site would not be inscribed until 1987). It instantiated in transnational declaration what was already at work in the ethos of the long sixties.[113] And just as Smithson ventured into Passaic simultaneous with the blossoming of national attention to the architectural legacy of U.S., so too would he travel through Mexico at the dawn of international deliberations signaled by the 1972 UNESCO convention.

The institutionalization of cultural property heralded in part by UNESCO World Heritage met with visual foreclosure in *Hotel Palenque*. Smithson observed a hazy vista not so very unlike the "subtle newspaper grey"[114] sky of Morse's allegory. In an image taken in the direction of the Palenque ruins, he resorted to his Mexico projects' routine deferral of vision: "Now here is one of the more interesting windows in the hotel. This looks out, I mean you really can't see it because the natives burn down the tropical foliage so that they can farm the land and the air fills up with incredible clouds of smoke . . . . But in the mist if you look through . . . I mean if you could see actually back there you might remotely be able to pick out a fragment of the Palenque ruins, the temples, the Mayan observatories and other wonders that the pre-Spanish Indians built."[115] Smithson postponed any view of the wonders of ancient America much in the same way his poor reproduction of *Allegorical Landscape* disturbs and obscures the Elysian qualities of Morse's scene or Passaic's "monuments" displace a tour of more desirable tourist destinations like the Empire State Building or Central Park.

Smithson's "view" of the ruins in *Hotel Palenque* is, at best, a distant possibility. For example, a tower in an image halfway through the lecture contains a "square spiral staircase" that "you [the viewer] will, in the future, *maybe* see."[116] Here, the politics of the gaze is the event, while the lecture's effect is suspended desire for the nearby archaeological site. The Arcadian vista or romantic landscape are scenes of fulfillment or awe, or both. Instead, Smithson left the

viewer decidedly bored and unfulfilled with a series of dull photographs of various, disconnected features of the decrepit hotel. In doing so, he dislocated the lucid point of view conveyed in the usual allegorical landscape or architectural rendering, dismembering also the visual pleasure conveyed by Morse's idyllic scene or Catherwood's meticulous drawings. Indeed, picturesque landscapes and the artist's hand in fashioning nature were frequent subjects in Smithson's various interviews and writings.

The Anglo-American Picturesque

The United States, as described in chapter one, made a slightly belated entrance to the aesthetics of the picturesque, which took as its task in both theory and praxis the discernment of a natural setting in the service of the painterly gaze.[117] What for Britain had materialized in the 1700s as the picturesque garden reappeared in the "Anglo-American picturesque"[118] landscape of the nineteenth century. This effected a shift[119]—the betrothal of the American landscape to Thoreau and Emerson, the Hudson River School, and the illustrations of antiquarians and natural historians like Stephens and Catherwood.

In an interview with Paul Toner in 1970, Smithson described the recurrent fantasy of the original garden (of Eden) in the nineteenth century. He saw (albeit simplistically) nineteenth-century conceptions of nature as continuous with the 1960s debates on ecology, making what he perceived to be a comfortable setting for the eternal return of the "Western moral tradition."[120] "There is no going back to Paradise or 19th century landscape," he argued, "which is basically what the conservationist attitude is."[121] He went on, explaining that pre-modern conceptions of the natural world were "changed by the Romantics (who actually were leagued with the devil)."[122] He asserted that "the sentimental idea of the landscape as a 'beauty spot' is directly out of the romantic preoccupation with the landscape. There has always been the war between the formal and anti-formal. It goes back to the natural and unnatural gardening techniques."[123]

The “war” he alludes to is the supplanting of the formally hierarchical gardens of the French monarchy—we might pause to think here of Versailles—by the picturesque English garden. Smithson conceived of both contemporary artistic production and environmentalism alike as symptomatic of the “fear of nature” derived from the “Renaissance ideal [of landscape]” having “fallen apart”[124] with the mind-body split of the nineteenth century. Indeed, scholarly interest in the picturesque was alive and well in the 1960s, and Smithson’s views on parks and gardens, particularly as they surfaced in the interviews and writings of his late career, figured heavily into his views on landscape.[125]

In a late text of his career, “Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape,” Smithson discussed the distinctions between Olmsted’s Central Park, former “urban blight”-turned-urban refuge and the pious, “untouched” wilderness of U.S. National Parks. Smithson attempted to unpack the “manifold of relations”[126] concerning Central Park and the twentieth-century American landscape more broadly, tracing Olmsted’s vision to the writings of British landscape artist William Gilpin and landscape designer Uvedale Price. The latter conceived of the “picturesque” as a category “other than merely beautiful and sublime”[127]—what Smithson read in Olmsted’s park as a “democratic dialectic between the sylvan and the industrial.”[128]

Gilpin’s *Essays on Picturesque Beauty* (1792) states: “*Nature* is whatever he [the artist] *imitates*; whether the object be what is commonly called natural, or artificial.”[129] Early in the text, Gilpin championed “roughness”[130] as a key trait in the making of a picturesque scene, including one featuring architectural specimens: “A piece of Palladian architecture may be elegant in the last degree. The proportion of it’s [sic] parts—the propriety of it’s [sic] ornaments—and the symmetry of the whole, may be highly pleasing. But if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must, use the mallet, instead of the chissel [sic]: we must beat down one half of it, deface

the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short . . . we must turn it into a *rough* ruin."[131]

Likewise for the viewer of *Hotel Palenque,* "you can just see the hammers coming down and taking away the pieces of concrete" of the Piranesian "de-architecturization" in the lecture's fourth slide. Smithson put the picturesque to work in his assessment of the hotel's features. Simultaneously "ripped down" and "built up" for a "satisfying" effect, "you [the viewer] are not deprived of the complete wreckage situation"[132] in this unlikely figure of ruination. Of an escarpment in a later slide, Smithson noted an unidentified "they" who "don't tear everything down all in one fell swoop. It's done slowly with a certain degree of sensitivity and grace so that there is time for the foliage to grow through the broken concrete."[133] Smithson reflected on the hotel's intermingling of organic matter and debris; midway through the lecture, he refers to the "humanized grass" of a garden of trash that signified, to Smithson, "something ageless."[134] This recalls to mind the frequently harmonizing, decorative, and allegorical roles of vegetation in historical ruinscapes and of Gilpin's emphasis on ornamental "effects of time, and the progress of vegetation"[135] in the making of a picturesque setting from landscape "deformity."[136] Explaining Smithson's uncharacteristically optimistic view espoused of both Olmsted and his antecedents, the picturesque was ultimately conceived as a means of integrating the "deformities"[137] wrought by humanity into the catechistic realms of the landscape gaze. And in narrating Olmsted's massive undertaking in Central Park, Smithson in effect produced through observation a decidedly *American* brand of picturesque.

Some years earlier, writing of contemporary Anthony Caro's sculpture in what is arguably a manifesto-like document, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," Smithson referred to the picturesque English garden in somewhat less glowing terms, as "a leftover Arcadia"[138] and "jejune Eden . . . . an elegant notion of industrialism in the woods."[139] In a footnote to the text, he articulates the violence of the garden, couching it in terms of heavens

and hells, classical imagery, and European exemplar: “The sinister in a primitive sense seems to have its origin in what could be called ‘quality gardens’ (Paradise). Dreadful things seem to have happened in those half-forgotten Edens. Why does the Garden of Delights suggest something perverse? Torture gardens. Deer Park. The Grottos of Tiberius. Gardens of Virtue are somehow always ‘lost.’ A degraded paradise is perhaps worse than a degraded hell. America abounds in banal heavens, in vapid ‘happy-hunting grounds,’ and in ‘natural’ hells like Death Valley National Monument or The Devil's Playground.”[140] Smithson’s American landscape, like the Hotel Palenque, contains it all—both mundane paradise and abysmal hell filtered by European example. And, once again, Smithson invoked “origins,” this time of a “primitive” casting as a Garden of Eden apprehensively solicited from the American landscape. He took pains to suggestively render the “natural” inferno of Death Valley with the “lost” Grottos of Tiberius and America’s “vapid ‘happy-hunting grounds’” with Deer Park in England.[141]

Smithson’s land-based works and writings are also interpolated with his sidewinding references to ruination, a return of the early work in the projects of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In his essay on Olmsted, he wrote, “Returning to Yellowstone, which celebrated its centennial last year, we see a combining of Europe’s ‘intoxication with ruins’ with America’s newly discovered ‘natural ruins’ at the origin of the park’s development,”[142] pointing out the castle-like imagery used to describe Yellowstone’s rock formations by one of the park’s early visitors (noting also Ruskin’s refusal to visit America because it “lacked castles”). He described his land artists peers’ “direct *organic* manipulation of the land”[143] in positive terms, while dismissing its critics as “spiritual snob[s],”[144] asserting “when one looks at the Indian cliff dwelling in Mesa Verde, one cannot separate art from nature. And one can’t forget the Indian mounds in Ohio.”[145] Was he aligning his own land-based works with those of earlier civilizations? Or did he perceive, in step with his generation, indigenous civilizations as continuous with nature? Or both? Perhaps it is evidence of the same flavor of ahistorical

American landscape romance Smithson criticized elsewhere in his writings. It is thus clear that we witness in his writings on the picturesque garden, in the mirror essay, and in his lecture for *Hotel Palenque* not only his limitations as an artist, but also layered deferrals and dislocations suggestive of Smithson's intense awareness of the parameters and expectations of landscape representation and the ruin gaze.

Anthropomorphisms, Old World Example, and the Indigene

Myriad allusions to Old World examples pepper the pages of Stephens's and Catherwood's *Incidents of Travel* volumes*,* but this tendency was far from a dying flame among Smithson's generation.[146] He not only reproduced these allusions, but also the instrumentalizing tendencies he critiqued in his various writings. In his 1967 "Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space," he asserted that the temporality invoked by "certain artists" is "an attitude toward art . . . more 'Egyptian' than 'Greek'."[147] Sites like Palenque lack the pillars and columns of classical civilization, yet of the hotel, Smithson quipped: "We're all familiar with pillars actually."[148] And slides featuring, in Smithson's characterization, a "drawbridge" and "moat," suggest the artist's conflation of a kind of Arthurian Era architecture with that of the Hotel Palenque. He consistently fell back on Western (European) paragons and Oriental archetypes.

Smithson's not only measured the hotel with a European yardstick; he also mediated it most obviously and recurrently as the sometimes-anthropomorphized double of the ancient archaeological site nearby. In Smithson's case, and despite his claims to have abandoned anthropomorphic content in his post-1965 work, he frequently pointed to the building's function as an organism. He wrought architecture-as-man as an active agent that "energizes" its visitors and as a vegetative entity that lazes about—"sitting" and "resting."[149] His architectural specimen was also subject to the surgeon's knife; Smithson observed a zigzagging, patched crack in one of the building's exterior walls, likening architect to medic and tower to patient: "You notice the

X-marks going through the crack almost like a stitch, I mean like here was a wound in this brick wall and it was completely sewn up by some architectural surgeon." The scorned anthropomorphisms Smithson observed in the abstractionists are far from absent in the Mexico works.

Smithson also made dry, bored, yet exaggerated projections onto different architectural features of the hotel. For example, he compared the "impenetrability" of a room to the recently discovered burial pit at the Palenque ruins, one of the key attractions of the archaeological site at the time of Smithson's travels. Smithson also noted a "sunken garden"[150] in the hotel's courtyard—an enantiomorph of the "sunken forest"[151] he would observe some years later of Central Park, or perhaps the archaeological chimera of the American landscape he built up in his Mexico works. "Sunken" connotes descent and the morbidity of the subterranean—that *unheimlich* quality of a cathedral's crypt, the frozen civilization of Pompeii, or that yawning sublime that greets one standing on the edge of a cobbled street corner facing the hollow forum of ancient Rome.[152] Smithson's Othered landscape relies on an animated nature comprised of both man's work and organic surrounds. Smithson's pairing of hyperbolic description with ordinary photograph and channeling of "Othering" proclivities into the familiar space of architecture play on the double nature of the uncanny.

Like "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," the only human constituents in the lecture apart from Holt, Dwan, and, of course, Smithson were something like the indigenes of Catherwood's renderings—quasi-inept labor objects or conflated with the setting. "My feeling is that this hotel is built with the same spirit that the Mayans built their temples,"[153] Smithson derisively commented on his accommodations, where the only indigenous "presence" was the smoky traces of agricultural labor obscuring the view from a wall fragment that "calls up all the fears and dreads of the ancient Mayan Aztec culture, human sacrifice, and mass slaughter," running together Aztec and "Mayan" (a literalization of his conflation of the two in the mirror essay),

adjectives that by 1969 were well understood to refer to chronologically overlapping but geographically disparate civilizations. Thus, Smithson continually shifted during the lecture between quasi-fictions about a shapeshifting, people-less hotel and occasional warnings to "be on guard"[154] in Mexico, remarks that accompanied thoroughly unremarkable photographs conspicuously devoid of any people. Smithson's mirror travelogue and lecture convey a double bind; he professed to seek out "a dialectic of nature that includes man"[155] yet neglected the indigene in all but buried or otherwise displaced references. And while Smithson worked at projecting onto the photographs a critical view of the typical visitor to the archaeological site, he revealed his own critical limitations.

Smithson's exclusion of both Maya ruin and human subject in his photographs of mirror-travels and the hotel reenacted the tendency of explorers like Stephens to view the contemporary Yucatecan or Chiapan, for example, as discontinuous with the continent's ancient civilizations. Smithson instead displaced and deferred, pointing the audience to the spiraling tangles and nowheres typically appearing in his writings and practice. In the first slide of the talk, Smithson characteristically ran together building and archaeological site: "Palenque actually used to be called the city of the snake . . . . in a sense, this hotel is built in a kind of intertwining snaking way. It has no center, or you might try to find a center in this place but you really can't . . . it's so de-differentiated, and so the logic of the whole place is just impossible to fathom."[156] For a later slide he remarked: "The whole thing, the whole hotel is just interlacing on interlacing. A kind of great mass of filigree just winding all around itself."[157] Walkways, walls, and the "drawbridge" frequently lead the viewer "nowhere" in Smithson's observations. In these descriptive statements, Smithson effected another kind of "nonsite;" he fetishized the fragmentary and discontinuous nature of the ruin or abyss. In doing so, he truncated and negated mimesis.

Smithson's 1967 essay, "Some Void Thoughts on Museums," seems to have foreshadowed the viewless window and architectural non-places pictured in *Hotel Palenque*: "Anachronisms hang and protrude from every angle. Themes without meaning press on the eye. Multifarious nothings permute into false windows (frames) that open up on a verity of blanks. Stale images cancel one's perceptions and deviate one's motivation . . . Brain drain leads to eye drain."[158] Even the threshold of the door in the lecture's last slide "probably opens on nowhere and closes on nowhere." The rite to exit the place and "return to the University of Utah" (Smithson's last words in the lecture) is contradicted by the closed door in the slide, withholding its threshold. Aside from the decorative edge of a hotel stairway, which Smithson compared in the second-to-last slide with the molding of the entryway to Pakal's Tomb, few other aspects of the hotel were only "like" the ruins at Palenque. The hotel, made to double as the nearby ruin, *was* in fact a ruin in its own right. Thus, the hotel replaces the nearby ruin, and Smithson was the author of its landscape.

In Smithson's critically flippant descriptions, the architectural features of the Hotel Palenque are simultaneously utilitarian and absurd; ancient and ultramodern; static and animate. In *Hotel Palenque,* he engaged the slide lecture to generate a "passage of ruined signifiers"[159] and a collapse of vision and language. The lecture played up the tension between the aestheticization of architectural antiquity— the pastoral-to-sublime romanticism tied up in the ruin gazing of Catherwood's variety—and the conditions of the failed, pedestrian "ruin" typified by the Hotel Palenque to invoke an Anglo-Americanized picturesque. Art historian Lynne Cooke praises Smithson for his eschewal of "escapism in lost eras" by way of his "syncretic, contradictory, and shifting vision" and rejection of the "artificiality of containing myths."[160] A substantial part of this "shifting vision" in the lecture is his shuttling between the various roles and subjects he took up. *Hotel Palenque* does not reveal difference where one expects sameness, but sameness where one expects difference. Did this really dodge escapism or

reject “containing myths?” In his critique of landscape, he not only somewhat problematically homogenized various figures and locales affiliated with the site(s)—after all, nothing is safe from the claws of the New York art scene or the politics of the ruin gaze—but also highlighted the continuities between past and present.

Together, *Hotel Palenque* and “Incidents of Mirror-Travel” not only manifest themselves as failed documents *of* architecture, but also in documents *as* failed architecture—the slide lecture and sidewinding travel narrative produce incoherent and incomplete structures. Instead, the *place* of Smithson’s Mexico projects is a crumbling, broken-down edifice of language and image that denies the viewer access to the sought-after view of ruination. In many ways, the waywardness of Smithson’s lecture and text mirror the very character and legacy of both European and American exploits surrounding Mexico’s Maya heritage, his own included. Smithson’s voice—the voice of the ironic conceptualist, backward historian, know-it-all tourist, or overly imaginative critic—summoned up the past in images of a hotel or assortment of mirrors. However, Smithson’s conflation of absence and presence in the Mexico projects nevertheless surveyed a landscape for American art, an inadvertent restaging of the *terra nullius* fantasy of a wasted landscape awaiting intervention. There, sunless mirror reflections and the uncanny vernacular of a wrecked hotel displace absent or peripheral indigenes and missing ruins.

Organicism and Upside-Down Trees

Frank Lloyd Wright attempted to come to grips with architectural modernism by naturalizing it, throwing light on modernity’s romantic conjuring of the archaic indigene. Set against the backdrop of the Machine Age, he generated a notion of “originary” American architecture on two registers—via the tenets of organic architecture, which positioned the ideal built environment as continuous with the landscape, and through his regionalist “American” architecture. Though Smithson was known to obsess over Wright’s Guggenheim rotunda, one of

Smithson's earliest published essays, "Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space" (1966), contains his only published reference to the architect. Writing of biological tropes in the cultural production of his own generation, Smithson observed that "in architecture, most notably in the theories of Frank Lloyd Wright, the biological metaphor prevails. Wright's idea of 'the organic' had a powerful influence on both architects and artists."[161] The "unconscious faith in 'creative evolution'" located in Wrightian organicism and upon which Smithson sourly remarked, is actually derived, he argued, from the nineteenth century. The far-reaching impact of Darwinism in the late 1800s was mobilized in part through the rationalizing and moralizing potential of biological metaphor.[162] Such faith in evolution also materialized in MoMA director Alfred H. Barr's famous "family tree" of modern art for the 1936 *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition at the MoMA. Barr's chart traces the evolution of an abstract art (notably exclusive of any Latin American influence, diagramming only "Japanese Prints," "Machine Esthetic," "Modern Architecture," "Negro Sculpture," and "Near-Eastern Art" as the presumably external categories influencing dominant, canonical developments). Smithson too relied on organic metaphors—even trees—willy-nilly in his Mexico projects, even if to invert them. His upside-down tree series was just that—materializations of metaphorical rationality tipped on their heads. "Planted"[163] in upstate New York (at a shared site with the fourth and final *Hypothetical Continent*), Captiva Island in Florida, and Yaxchilan, the seventh site in "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," Smithson's resurrections of small, dead trees mimicked the same trajectory as the "hypothetical continents."

In "Quasi-Infinities," Smithson also described the persistence of such "biological metaphors"[164] in modernity, most notably in the work of Pollock and de Kooning, noting that "most notions of time (Progress, Evolution, Avant-garde) are put in terms of biology."[165] Indeed, Paul Mann observes that tales of the avant-garde's genesis and demise tend to "ground themselves in organic metaphors, in a romantic allegory of the life-cycle of the artwork and of cultural phenomena in general. Here the death of the avant-garde is seeded in its birth," he

writes, “nothing could be more natural.”[166] Smithson also commented on “analogies . . . drawn between organic biology and technology.”[167] Without realizing it, Smithson’s critique of the kinship between the biological and technological may as well have pointed a finger directly at Wright’s textile block *romanzas*. And in 1941, five years after Barr’s evolutionary diagramming of abstraction, the tree was replaced with a torpedo graphic picturing Mexican and U.S. art at the forefront of the MoMA’s collecting activity between 1925 and 1950.[168] Mutable attitudes toward Latin America—ancient and modern—were no less present in the twentieth-century marriage of the biological and technological (in addition to its metaphorical mobilizations) than they had been in the previous century.

To some degree, Smithson was guilty of repeating the failures of modernism wrapped up in his anti-organic reveries. As observed by Reinhold Martin: “Smithson, in reversing the terms already formulated by a post-Bauhaus, post-war, systems organicism . . . found himself, too, caught in the web of what we can call an ‘organizational complex.’”[169] In his critique, Martin remarks on the resilience of the “organic.” Smithson’s struggles to fashion organicism’s “Other” in response to the irreconcilable tensions between art and science (not to mention the modernist legacy imparted by figures like Wright and the Abstract Expressionists) were fraught. Martin argues: “Thus the ‘environment’—including architecture—that hovers just outside the work [Smithson’s] . . . harbors an alterity gone underground, undercover.”[170] The inconsistencies of Smithson’s practice, like Wright and Catherwood before him, slink back to the natural and its shifting guises in the landscape tradition, modernity, and finally, postmodernity.

The Pyramid, the Labyrinth, and the Postmodern

Beyond mention of Wright and the thicket of organicism, “Quasi-Infinities” also contains a web of references that explore the juxtaposition of the artificial and the natural as well as the ancient and modern in the work of Smithson’s artistic contemporaries as he traced their work

through modern art and architecture. He opened the text, however, with a few noteworthy remarks restaging a frequently cited architectural allegory—the pyramid and the labyrinth.[171] "The first obstacle shall be a labyrinth,"[172] Smithson wrote, including a figure number referring to a diagram of the Amiens labyrinth. A few lines later, he remarked: "Here, the pages of time are paper thin, even when it comes to a pyramid."[173] Theoretically speaking, the labyrinth evades perception; slippery, authorless, fatherless, it also forecloses transcendence. The pyramid, on the other hand, is the edifice of rationality—conceivable and whole—but "paper thin" in Smithson's complex prose.

In "Quasi-Infinities," Smithson rooted his reader in both European imagery and European theoretical precedent, but the fragile assumption of wholeness embodied by the pyramid nevertheless affords us a view. From pyramidal allegory, whose "center . . . is everywhere and nowhere,"[174] the reader of Smithson's text "*may* see the Tower of Babel, Kepler's universe, and a building by the architect Ledoux."[175] To the right of the text, paper-thin figures—all reproductions—accompany in-text reference: an illustration of a ziggurat-like Tower of Babel, a diagram of Johannes Kepler's model of the universe, and a perspectival drawing depicting a building by the utopian architect of the French monarchy, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, whose neoclassical buildings became symbols of the *Ancien Régime*. The view is toward a familiar and well-rehearsed horizon comprised of three Western European exemplars: Christian parable, scientific rationalism, and utopian architecture. It is clear that even in this early text we have a formation of Smithson's Mexico projects. In an upside-down tree, "hypothetical continent," wayward travel essay, and deadpan lecture, Smithson attempted to displace his reader and viewer from pyramid to labyrinth through projects bound to the shadow of the Old World and the traditions of the ruin gaze that Smithson inadvertently perpetuated in striking out on his own to generate an American picturesque out of marginal, Othered landscapes.

At the precipice of postmodernism, Smithson's confounding of time and consistently strange juxtapositions of ancient and modern references (both visual and textual) conspicuously paralleled the hallmark text of postmodern architecture, *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972).[176] Like Smithson's medley of references to both hotel architecture and ancient site in *Hotel Palenque,* the authors of *Learning from Las Vegas* interpolated between the vernacular built environment of the Las Vegas Strip and the monumental architectural landscape of Europe and remarks concerning the legacy of Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier.[177] Postmodernity's reckoning with modernist ghosts and European forebears makes clear, like Smithson's meanderings, a nativity of American postmodern architecture (still) plagued by a somewhat Oedipal obligation to the Old World.

It stands to reason that Smithson's engagement of architectural themes in his Mexico project—with ruination, more specifically—transpired on the eve of the cascade of postmodern architectural theory that characterized the 1970s. K. Michael Hays's authoritative anthology, *Architecture Theory Since 1968,* suggests what Hays and others, including architectural theorists Bernard Tschumi and Joan Ockman, describe as a theoretical vacuum before 1968.[178] Smithson's own writing and practice, in its dually confounding maze of signifiers and multivocality, paralleled the emergence (and pitfalls) of postmodern architectural discourse—a complex system of theories wherein "the ideological message seems more important than the rational construction of the argument," making architectural theory "therefore akin to mythical speech."[179]

In both artistic and architectural circles, the postmodern era signaled an anti-Enlightenment project. The rejection of modernism was nevertheless fraught with the suggestive, biological language of birth and death used to describe the phases of art and architecture's supposed evolution. In 1977, for example, renowned architectural historian Charles Jencks pronounced that "modern architecture died in St. Louis, Missouri, on July 15,

1972 at 3:32pm."[180] Jencks (and many others in his footsteps) saw the 1972 demolition of the modernist housing project Pruitt-Igoe as the death knell of modernism and, consequently, the dawning of postmodern architecture. This event—commonly referred to as the "Pruitt-Igoe myth"[181]—tenders a variant of the instrumentality of architectural obsolescence. Modernism was historicized in the Pruitt-Igoe myth as despotic and violent, thus warranting destruction—a physical embodiment of the view that what is no longer needed is positioned as "bad" design regardless of extenuating sociopolitical and economic factors. U.S. architectural modernism was no longer up in arms—rather, it was rendered quasi-defunct as its ideological potential waned, and Pruitt-Igoe made into something of Smithson's "ruins in reverse."

The Location of Landscape

Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* details postmodernity's interrogation of the epistemological limits of ethnocentrism affiliated with modernity. He writes: "The very concepts of homogenous national cultures, the consensual or contiguous transmission of historical traditions, or 'organic' ethnic communities—*as the grounds of cultural comparativism*—are in a profound process of redefinition."[182] Yet we must pause again to disrupt postmodernity's potentiality even as we observe its emergence in Smithson's practice. In conversation with Dennis Wheeler, Smithson described his hypothetical continent of Atlantis as the "turning upside down"[183] of the Gonwanaland piece in Yucatán, implying inversion. But he contradicted himself earlier in the same interview: "Those points tend to cover the landmasses so that, in a sense, all this terrain will be homogenized."[184] To extract and deposit himself from the conditions of modernity and into a framework where postmodern pastiche and homogenizing code scrambling supplants the quest for a legitimating master narrative (*a la* nineteenth-century explorer) risks passing from one genre of a colonizing act into another.[185] Smithson's flirtations with an Othered landscape so as to make a puzzle out of it—a puzzle with missing pieces,

moreover—reenacted in subterfuge some of the shortcomings of Stephens and Catherwood and the assimilationist efforts of Wright to revive an originary architectural landscape based on indigenous models. Smithson suggested a fallacious compatibility between cultures, even in negativity.

The same year of the *Hotel Palenque* lecture, in an interview with Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithson pronounced that in his turn away from painting in his early career, he had "developed something that was intrinsically [his] own and rooted to [his] experience in America."[186] In spite of the entropic and multivocal nature of both his writings and practice, Smithson here betrayed his own deep suspicion of the avant-gardist myth of originality. To the postmodernist, an art "intrinsically [one's] own" is an impossibility; forms are received and conditioned, but never essential to the postmodernist. Smithson's suggestion of a "rooted[ness]" to his "experience in America" is certainly true at face value. However, the statement belies his admonishment of organic metaphors. Additionally, by 1972, the scope of his work had traveled (on several occasions) much beyond the bounds of the United States. Smithson never stopped working from (and ultimately, within) the artistic legacy he himself acknowledged on several occasions. Nevertheless, he was one of several arbiters of the new American landscape tradition. Ultimately, 1969 projects and 1972 lecture had very little directly to do with the political and historical particularities of Southeastern Mexico distinct from Smithson's appropriations and displacements of the region. The seriality of his endeavors and his adherence to some unfortunate tropes suggested instead a number of critical casualties on the way to a larger project to do with the changing American landscape of the twentieth century.

Another contradiction looms. Smithson, a tourist himself with only a superficial knowledge of the region, does not undo the disinheritance of the region's ruins allegorized by Catherwood's drawings nor the second order disinheritance qua Wright's positioning of Mesoamerican revival as an architectural expression of the modern California landscape. Nor

did he seek to. Though most likely aware of the inescapability of his own position as a "bad copy" of what came before, Smithson inadvertently dabbled in the blind spots of Wright, Catherwood, and others in unlikely ways, by fictionalizing his lecture and travelogue, exoticizing his subject, and including misinformation. His conflation of Maya and Aztec deities in "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," for example, leaves the viewer with a geographically-specific set of works historically out-of-joint with the cultures native to those regions. As critically attentive were his Mexico attempts in "anti-architecture,"[187] Smithson could not evade the pitfalls of cultural imperialism that had characterized generation after generation of American artist. Apart from formal resemblances of the monumental land-based works of his late career, the earth art of the long sixties is the prodigal son of the white cube, while ancient art was built to gods. Both, nevertheless, are monuments to excess. And Smithson wore the landscape on his sleeve—a commitment steeped not in romantic pastoralism, but rather in a melding of the Anglo-American picturesque and romantic sublime.[188] He stated in an unpublished interview, "I'm interested in that area of terror between man and land,"[189] and his repeated remarks on the lurking horrors and foreboding of the Mexican landscape in *Hotel Palenque* and "Incidents of Travel" suggest as much.

John Beardsley, Director of Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks, claims that the recurrence of the "landscape" in twentieth century American art—among the land artists like Smithson, in particular—cued the return of U.S. fine arts to its nineteenth-century roots. "Earth art," he writes, "can be said to have reinvigorated the landscape tradition in American art. Reaching both forward from and backward over the ellipses of the modern era, earth art has returned the landscape to a position of importance in American art. The covenant has been recalled."[190] By whom, one might ask? Surely, the reinvigoration of the American postwar landscape owed a debt to Smithson, quick figurehead of the land art movement—even for the Mexico projects typically conceived as marginal to his larger, land-based projects. These works

are the nonsiting of the American landscape itself. What was *not* pictured or assembled in his brief series of works from the Mexico trip nevertheless "represent" themselves in negativity—the geographic context of his works thus colonized for a U.S. art audience and inscribed within the postmodernist turn, emptied of content and rendered part of the American cultural legacy.

In *The Time Machine,* a turn-of-the-century H.G. Wells novella (beloved of Smithson), a time traveler embarks on a journey to the distant future. There he discovers that the socio-economic classes of the nineteenth century have developed into distinct humanoid subspecies—the elegant and dull-witted, amnesiac Eloi borne of the leisure class, and the grotesque and light-fearing Morlocks, devolved sub-human laborers whose subterranean machine world sustains the slowly deteriorating, Elysian milieu above. Upon uncovering the future's ghastly secrets—that at nightfall, the Eloi fall prey to the Morlocks as their only food source—the story's Swiftian hero takes leave of this strangely perverted paradise. Escaping toward the end of time, he witnesses the entropic denouement of a life-giving world set against a dimmed and dilated crimson sun—something of Smithson's grim "ride on a knife covered with solar blood"[191] in "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," barreling toward the "leftover horizon"[192] of the Mexican landscape. Wellsian satire regards the decay of progress, and Smithson extended the indigene into the absent ruins of an uncanny landscape rendered continuous and American. *Ancora in Arcadia morte.* Smithson, the postmodern, dystopian futurist, was also stuck in the nineteenth century.

[1] Barbara Rose, *American Art Since 1900* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 177.
[2] This is the premise of Serge Guilbaut's argument in *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
[3] Rose, *American Art,* 181. However, Rose continues, "When the internal contradictions that marked Abstract Expressionism as a style could no longer be held together in a viable synthesis, the demands for an art tied more directly to the moment and to the realities of the American scene could no longer be denied." As a result, Rose notes, American artists of the 1960s were both debilitated and heavily influenced by a heightened historical consciousness.
[4] Pam Meecham and Julie Sheldon, *Modern Art: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 142.
[5] The idea of two Smithsons is borrowed from Caroline A. Jones, who identifies and parses out threads of this dual legacy in "Preconscious/Posthumous Smithson: The Ambiguous Status of Art and Artist in the Postmodern Frame," *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 41 (Spring 2002): 32-33.
[6] Ibid.
[7] See Robert Linsley, "Mirror Travel in the Yucatan: Robert Smithson, Michael Fried, and the New Critical Drama," *Anthropology and Aesthetics,* no. 37 (Spring 2000): 7-30.
[8] Robert Smithson, "Letter to the Editor," in *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 8. Originally published in the October 1967 issue of *Artforum.*
[9] Thomas Crow, "Cosmic Exile: Prophetic Turns in the Life and Art of Robert Smithson," in *Robert Smithson,* eds. Eugenie Tsai and Cornelia Butler (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and University of California Press, 2004), exhibition catalogue, 37.
[10] Robert Smithson, letter to Nancy Holt, 24 July 1961, box 1, folder 15, Series 2: Correspondence, 1959-1987, Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt papers, 1905-1987, Archives of American Art. Citations of the archives will henceforth be abbreviated to Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[11] Robert Smithson, letter to Nancy Holt, 29 July 1961, box 1, folder 15, Series 2: Correspondence, 1959-1987, Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[12] Smithson, letter to Nancy Holt, 24 July 1961, Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[13] It is somewhat unclear in the transcribed text of the interview whether Smithson responds to Wheeler's comment about the relationship between Smithson and time or continues his earlier rambling about the fictional Atlantis, the subject of his *Map of Broken Glass*. Smithson states: "The ineffable aspect of it just breaks down into all these fragments, and yet they're there. It's like any handful of dust or anything. Like Eliot said, "I'll show you fear in a handful of dust." See "Four Conversations between Dennis Wheeler and Robert Smithson (1969-1970)," ed. Eva Schmidt, in *Robert Smithson: Collected Writings,* ed. Jack Flam (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 228. The interview was also published in Robert Smithson, *Robert Smithson Unearthed: Drawings, Collages, Writings*, ed. Eugenie Tsai (New York: Wallach Art Gallery and Columbia University Press, 1991), 93-126. For brevity's sake, I will abbreviate the collected writings edited by Flam as *RS:CW*.
[14] T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land (1922)," in *The Wasteland, Prufrock and Other Poems* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications Inc., 1998), 31-32.
[15] In conversation with Dennis Wheeler about the 1969 nonsites and Mexico projects, Smithson remarked: "We have almost like a kind of rinky-dink idea of nature . . . And they're [his contemporaries] trying to make the jump back to a kind of Romanticism . . . so you just have a kind of picture book sentimental, very trite romanticism." See "Four Conversations," 230.
[16] Robert Smithson, interview by Paul Cummings, "Interview with Robert Smithson for the Archives of American Art / Smithsonian Institution (1972)," July 14 and 19, 1972, in *RS:CW*, 283.
[17] In an unpublished essay, Smithson conveys a kaleidoscopic mélange of modern art hero, suburban critique, and indigenous American custom: "The rituals that Pollock discovered in Hopi religion and Navajo sand painting exist also in the outskirts of New York City. Penitential fires are built on Halloween in the dim regions of the suburbs, burning inside the rotting Jack o' Lantern with glowing hollow eyes,

nose, and mouth. . . . Is this the face of American art? A face that risks Gothic dread on a million crabgrass-ridden lawns." See "The Iconography of Desolation (c. 1962)," in *RS:CW*, 323.
[18] Smithson, letter to Lester, n.d. [1961], quoted in Crow, "Cosmic Exile," 37.
[19] Mirrors were also a means of exploring Smithson's obsession with enantiomorphism, the concept in physical science of two chemical or crystalline forms that are structural mirror images of one another. His sculptures of the mid-1960s use minimalist forms in "vortices" and "strata" as jointly scientific, archaeological, and geological references.
[20] "Des Espaces Autres" was first published by the French journal *Architecture-Mouvement-Continuite* in October of 1984, and translated to English by Jay Miskowiec in 1986. Foucault writes of the mirror: "The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there . . . . The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there." See Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 24.
[21] Robert Smithson, "Entropy and the New Monuments (1966)," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 11; originally published in the June 1966 issue of *Artforum.*
[22] In a 1972 interview and article, Smithson is quoted as saying, "To me, nature has three different aspects: there's the wilderness; there's the country, where man has been; and then there's the urban area." See "Onward and Upward with the Arts," *The New Yorker* (February 5, 1972), box 8, folder 9, Series 8: Printed Material, 1955-1985, Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[23] National Institute of Chicago [School of the Art Institute of Chicago] Robert Smithson, artist, Q & A with audience after showing films, "Swamp (made with Nancy Holt) and "Spiral Jetty," c. 1971, box 2, folder 52, Series 3: Interview Transcripts, 1966-1973, Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[24] Robert Smithson, "A Provisional Theory of Nonsites (1968)" in *RS:CW*, 364. His first exploits in creating nonsites took place almost exactly a year prior to his Mexico travels. See also Neville Wakefield, "Yucatan is Elsewhere, On Robert Smithson's Hotel Palenque," *Parkett*, no. 43 (1995): 133.
[25] Smithson, "Four Conversations," 198.
[26] See "Onward and Upward with the Arts," Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[27] See Kate Linker, "Books: The Writings of Robert Smithson," *Artforum* 18, no. 2 (October 1979): 62.
[28] Smithson, "Fragments of an Interview with P.A. [Patsy] Norvell (1969)," in *RS:CW*, 193. See also Mark Linder, "Sitely Windows: Robert Smithson's Architectural Criticism," *Assemblage*, no. 39 (August 1999): 12.
[29] Smithson, "Four Conversations," 217.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Even Smithson's renowned *Spiral Jetty*, located on the northern shores of the Great Salt Lake, is tied to the legacy of California, and conducts a comparable superimposition of sites. To reach Rozel Point, the jetty's exact location, one must travel through Golden Spike National Historic Site, the site which commemorates the union of the Central Pacific Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad in 1869. Smithson completed *Spiral Jetty* almost exactly coincident with the centennial celebration of the famed site. Jennifer L. Roberts makes a strong historiographic analysis of this piece in her final chapter, "Spiral Jetty/Golden Spike," in *Mirror-Travels: Robert Smithson and History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 114-139.
[33] Speaking of the Yucatán, he remarked: "I mean the very idea of the descent of man, in a sense, could be conceived of as a spiraling in on origins, that's why I'm interested in the tangled thicket." Smithson, "Four Conversations," 227.

[34] *Hypothetical Continent (Map of Broken Glass, Atlantis)* was reconstructed in 1975 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and at Dia: Beacon, in Upstate New York. See Phyllis Tuchman, "In the Footsteps of Robert Smithson," in *Robert Smithson's New Jersey,* eds. Phyllis Tuchman and Gail Stavitsky (Montclair, NJ: Montclair Art Museum, 2014), exhibition catalogue, 29. A fourth a final piece was constructed in Western New York—*Hypothetical Continent in Stone: Cathaysia.*
[35] For early explorers refusing to entertain the possibility of indigenous origins, the Atlantis hypothesis instead comprised a more acceptable solution to the historical "problem" posed by the classical civilizations of the Americas and detailed in chapter one.
[36] Smithson's borrowing record at the New York Public Library is indicative of this interest. It includes such titles as: L. Sprague de Camp, *Lost Continents. The Atlantis Theme in History, Science, and Literature* (Dover, 1970); James Churchward, *The Lost Continent of Mu* (Paperback Library, 1959); Willy Ley, *Another Look at Atlantis* (Ace Books, 1969); James W. Mavor, *Voyage to Atlantis* (Putnam, 1969); and Lewis Spence, *The History of Atlantis* (University Books, 1968). His personal library also included C.W. Ceran, *The First American; a study of North American archaeology* (New York, 1971). See Series 8: Printed Material, 1955-1985, Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[37] Since disproven as geologically unfounded, the "lost" continent of Lemuria was conceived in the nineteenth century.
[38] Smithson adopted the term "anti-expedition" in conversation with Dennis Wheeler about his 1969 projects. He explained: "The first investigations in Yucatan were really brought on by some scientist's curiosity in Atlantis . . . . So ["Incidents of Mirror-Travel in Yucatan"] becomes that kind of reflection on [these expeditions], but it's an anti-expedition." Bracketed text is included in the edited published transcript of the conversation. See "Four Conversations," 230-231.
[39] Smithson's personal library included a copy of the two-volume *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan,* rereleased in the United States in an unabridged 1963 edition by Dover Publications. He also had a copy of Catherwood's fold-out frontispiece and a fold-out map from *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* (1843). See "Casa del Gobernador. Uxmal," and "Labna. South Front of Principal Building," box 5, folders 55 and 56, Series 5: Project Files, circa 1950s-1982, Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[40] Robert Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan (1969)," in *RS:CW*, 129; originally published in the September 1969 issue of *Artforum.*
[41] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 120.
[42] Ibid., 121.
[43] Ibid., 123.
[44] Susan Sontag elaborates on this "struggle" between beauty and "truth-telling" in the photographic image in *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1977), 86.
[45] Jennifer L. Roberts, "Landscapes of Indifference: Robert Smithson and John Lloyd Stephens in Yucatán," *The Art Bulletin* 82, no. 3 (September 2000): 553.
[46] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 124.
[47] Ibid., 129. Smithson wrote: "Bits of reflected jungle retreated from one's perception. Each point of focus spilled into cavities of foliage. Glutinous light submerged vision under a wilderness of unassimilated seeing. Scraps of sight accumulated until the eyes were engulfed by scrambled reflections. What was seen reeled off into indecisive zones."
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 131-132.
[50] Smithson's borrowing record at the New York Public Library includes Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* ed. J.T. Boulton (University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).
[51] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 126.
[52] Ibid., 125.
[53] Ibid., 130.
[54] Ibid., 121.
[55] Ibid., 126.
[56] Ibid., 129.
[57] Italics mine.

[58] Roberts, "Landscapes of Indifference," 561. That being said, accurate information about the Maya was still limited and difficult to come by at the time of Smithson's travels; Alberto Ruz Lhuiller's English language guide to Palenque (of which Smithson owned a copy) explained that "in view of the complete lack of historical information on Palenque, archaeology alone has been able to provide us with some account, although still incomplete, of the history of Palenque." See Alberto Ruz, "Palenque," (Mexico, D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Antropologia y Historia, 1971), 6.
[59] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 127. The full sentence reads: "The natives at Yaxchilan are weary because of that long yesterday, that unending calamitous day."
[60] Ibid.
[61] Grace Glueck, "Art: Robert Smithson, Pre-Minimal Paintings," *The New York Times* (February 1, 1985), accessed August 18, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/1985/02/01/arts/art-robert-smithson-pre-minimal-paintings.html?mcubz=0.
[62] David L. Jones, review of *Stratigraphy and Life History*, by Marshall Kay and Edwin M. Colbert, *Science* 148, no. 3669 (April 23, 1965): 488-489.
[63] H.B. Nicholson, review of *Gods of Mexico*, by C.A. Burland, *American Anthropologist* 70, no. 4 (1968): 821.
[64] Ibid., 822.
[65] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 120, 122. Smithson's reference to the mirrors of the Olmecs derives from his interest in the archaeological work of Robert Heizer (father of Smithson's contemporary, Michael Heizer), who wrote of the artifact: "The mirrors were masterpieces. Each had been so perfectly ground that when we rotated it the reflection we caught was never distorted in the least. Yet the hematite was so tough that we could not even scratch it with knives of hard Swedish steel. Such mirrors doubtless served equally well to adorn important personages or to kindle ritual fires." See Smithson's citation of Philip Drucker and Robert F. Heizer "Gifts for the Jaguar God," *National Geographic* (September 1956).
[66] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 126.
[67] See Roberts, "Landscapes of Indifference," 560.
[68] The epigraph continues: "Its object is to grasp the world as both a synchronic and a diachronic totality and the knowledge which it draws therefrom is like that afforded of a room by mirrors fixed on opposite walls, which reflect each other (as well as objects in the intervening space) although without being strictly parallel." Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind,* qtd. in Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 119. Smithson also had copies of *Totemism* (Beacon Press, 1968) and *Tristes Tropiques* (Atheneum, 1967) in his borrowing record at the New York Public Library.
[69] See Guy Brett, "Unofficial Versions," in *The Myth of Primitivism: Perspectives on Art*, ed. Susan Hiller, 113-136 (London: Routledge, 1991) and James Oles, *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914 – 1947* (Washington, D.C.: Yale University Art Gallery, with Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), exhibition catalogue, ix. Though *Los Tres Grandes* had captured the attentions of the New York art world in the 1930s, by the end of the Second World War, Mexican art itself was, in many fine arts circles, actively suppressed. Herbert Read's *Concise History of Modern Painting* (1959) acknowledges the exclusion of Mexican artists from the canon. Little visibility was given over to either the headlining artists of Mexican modernism or the next generation; a 1966 exhibition at Yale University Art Gallery was the only notable exhibition of Latin American art in the U.S. between 1940 and 1980.
[70] Chapter two briefly discusses *Indigenismo,* as well as works by two of the movement's chief progenitors: Diego Rivera's Museo Anahuacalli (1944-1964) and David Alfaro Siqueiros's *América Tropical: Oprimida y Destrozada por los Imperialismos* [*Tropical America: Oppressed and Destroyed by Imperialism*] (1932)—both of which demonstrate aesthetic and thematic ties to indigenous civilizations.
[71] See Tuchman, "In the Footsteps of Robert Smithson," 20.
[72] Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, "Introduction," in *Masters of British Painting 1800-1950* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1956), exhibition catalogue, 11. Smithson's borrowing record at the New York Public Library includes this catalogue. See Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt papers, 1905-1987, box 11, folder 20. Of note here is the hesitation of the exhibition's organizers to identify Moore's deep admiration of *Pre-Columbian* sculpture, specifically the Chacmool unearthed at the Maya archaeological site of Chichen Itza.
[73] Dawn Ades, "Henry Moore and World Sculpture," in *Henry Moore: Sculptural Process and Public Identity* (London: Tate Research Publication, 2015), accessed August 31, 2017,

https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/henry-moore/dawn-ades-henry-moore-and-world-sculpture-r1151458, exhibition catalogue.
[74] Ritchie, "Introduction," 11.
[75] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 120.
[76] Ibid., 126.
[77] Jessie Lerner also begins his first chapter, "The Vegetative Maya," with a description of this historical incident: "In the beginning, there was a misunderstanding. Venturing westward from their Caribbean toehold, Francisco Fernández de Córdoba and his crew of Spanish conquerors first saw the American mainland along the Yucatán coast. 'What do you call this land?' the sailors called out in Spanish to the Maya on the shore. 'We don't understand you; you talk funny,' came the reply in Maya. Taking an erroneous translation of this retort as the answer to their query, the Spanish named the peninsula 'Yucatán.' The first encounter between the West and the Maya was one of mutual befuddlement and of failed communication." See *The Maya of Modernism: Art, Architecture, and* Film (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2011, 15.
[78] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 123.
[79] Two of Kirk's engravings show slightly different titles. I have included here the information from a reprint of the engraving in Henry F. Sewell's private collection, acquired by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts of New York in 1897. See Thomas Kirk, after Giovanni Battista Cipriani, *The Shepherds of Arcadia*, Engraving with stipple and line, 1789, September 12, 2017, http://www.mfa.org/collections/ object/the-shepherds-of-arcadia-272683. The British Museum owns the original engraving, titled *Shepherds in Arcadia.* See Thomas Kirk, after Giovanni Battista Cipriani, *Shepherds in Arcadia,* stipple and etching on paper, 1789, accessed September 12, 2017, http://www.britishmuseum.org/ research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3304559&partId=1.
[80] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 124.
[81] Ibid., 127.
[82] Ibid., 128.
[83] Robert Smithson, interview by Paul Toner, "Interview with Robert Smithson (1970)," eds. Paul Toner and Robert Smithson, in *RS:CW*, 238.
[84] Ibid., 240.
[85] Winifred Pitkin, *Hidden Cities of Middle America; The Archaeological Adventures of a Septuagenarian* (Glasgow: W. MacLellan, 1959), 21.
[86] See David H. Kelley, "A History of the Decipherment of Maya Script," *Anthropological Linguistics* 4, no. 8 (November 1962): 1-48.
[87] See George Kubler, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient America; The Mexican, Maya, and Andean People* (London: Penguin Books, 1962).
[88] The *Hotel Palenque* transcript from the January 24, 1972 lecture at University of Utah is included in Robert Smithson, "Robert Smithson: Hotel Palenque, 1972," *Parkett*, no. 43 (1995), n.p., an insert published in conjunction with Wakefield's "Yucatan is Elsewhere" essay. The insert includes a transcription and photographic reproductions of the slides shown. The original slides and audio are now in the collection of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 31 chromogenic-development slides and audiotape. The transcript will be henceforth cited as Smithson, "Hotel Palenque*,* 1972."
[89] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 88, 89.
[90] Nelson also includes a footnote to this statement, with reference to W. J. T. Mitchell, "What Do Pictures Really Want?" *October*, no. 77 (Summer 1996): 71-82, cited in Robert S. Nelson, "The Slide Lecture, or the Work of Art 'History' in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 3 (Spring 2000): 418-419. Nelson explains: "The slide, although a photograph, creates not the 'perception of having been there,' Roland Barthes's notion of the ontology of a photograph, but a reality that is there, Christian Metz's description of a movie."
[91] Cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek comments at length on the role of the comic in "The Christian-Hegelian Comedy," *Cabinet,* no. 17 (Spring 2005), accessed May 5, 2014, http://www. cabinetmagazine.org/ issues/17/zizek.php. However, Neil Larsen warns us of the potential theoretical failure of the comic: "As a discursive strategy in the service of theory, the language of tragedy and farce can immediately be seen to

suggest the suspension of praxis by positing a *spectator* who views the historical action taking place on stage without taking an active part. In the course of theatrical representation, the spectator must suspend his own activity—otherwise he is in danger of ceasing to remain a spectator, and representation as such breaks down." Neil Larsen, *Modernism and Hegemony: A Materialist Critique of Aesthetic Agencies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 14-15.

[92] Grant Kester in conversation with the author, December 19, 2017. To this effect, Michael Taussig includes an epigraphic quotation of Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss from *A General Theory of Magic*: "In a manner of speaking, it is the *image* of the thing to be displaced that runs along the sympathetic chain." See *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 250. Italics mine.

[93] In describing the "two-layered nature of mimesis" regarding Charles Darwin's encounters with the Fuegians in South America, Taussig observes the prevalence of parody in the "double layer" between sentience and copying. See *Mimesis and Alterity*, 80-81.

[94] By the time Wright undertook his first Mayan Revival project, most major U.S. university art history departments were in possession of both projectors and slides.

[95] For a history of the slide lecture and its function in art history, see Nelson, "The Slide Lecture," 413-444.

[96] See Helena Bonett, "An Introduction to the Paintings, Sculptures, and Works on Paper in the Collection of the Royal Academy of Arts," in *Royal Academy of Arts Collection in Focus* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2012), accessed August 24, 2017, http://www.racollection.org.uk/ asset_arena/textual/NS/RA-COLLECTIONS.pdf, 10. Bonett explains: "When the drawing was exhibited at the Royal Academy's Annual Exhibition in 1849, a note in the catalogue described it as 'A synopsis of the principal architectural monuments of ancient and modern times, drawn to the same scale, in forms and dimensions ascertained from the best authorities, and arranged on four terraces – Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, and Mediæval and Modern; the last of which shews [sic] more particularly the comparative height.'"

[97] Smithson, "Hotel Palenque*,* 1972."

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Smithson, "Four Conversations," 205.

[104] The act demarcated the American wild precisely as *land* "retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation." It furthermore espoused to "protect" and "manage" this land "so as to preserve its natural conditions," defined as "generally appear[ing] to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable" and featuring "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation." From a legal perspective, the act was a pivotal piece of landmark legislation framing wilderness as *landscape* along ideological lines that emphasize the distinctions between man and nature. See Wilderness Act, Public Law 88-577 (16 U.S. C. 1131-1136), 88th Congress, Second Session, September 3, 1964. Smithson's generation thus witnessed the federal institutionalization of the American landscape that had by the time of his land-based projects had resulted in the apportionment of approximately 250 million acres of public land to homesteaders.

[105] See Roberts, *Mirror-Travels,* 63-67.

[106] See Smithson, "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey (1967)," in *RS:CW*, 68-74; originally published as "The Monuments of Passaic," in the December 1967 issue of *Artforum*.

[107] Ibid., 72.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Smithson, "Four Conversations," 205.

[110] Smithson, "A Tour of the Monuments," 74.

[111] Graziani, "Robert Smithson's Picturable Situation," 431.

[112] Ibid., 432.

[113] After World War II, the modern conservation movement made significant global headway: the establishment of ICOM (International Council on Museums) in 1946, ICCROM (International Centre for

the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) in 1956, and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) in 1965, all of which were monumentally important to the internationalization of the cultural heritage movement.
[114] Smithson, "A Tour of the Monuments," 69.
[115] Smithson, "Hotel Palenque*,* 1972."
[116] Ibid. Italics mine.
[117] Chapter one provides the reader with an introduction to the "picturesque" landscape.
[118] See Timothy D. Martin, "Robert Smithson and the Anglo-American Picturesque," in *Anglo-American Exchange in Postwar Sculpture, 1945-1975,* ed. Rebecca Peabody (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 164-174. Martin notes that in England, the picturesque garden functioned as a partial means of domesticating parliamentary democracy by according it the status of natural law.
[119] This is also addressed in chapter one.
[120] Smithson and Toner, "Interview with Robert Smithson," 236.
[121] Ibid., 237.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., 237-238.
[124] Ibid.
[125] One needs to look no further than American Walter John Hipple's *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory* (1957), Carl Paul Barbier's *William Gilpin: His Drawings, Teachings, and Theory of the Picturesque* (1963), and *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View*, written by Christopher Hussey in 1967.
[126] Smithson, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape," in *RS:CW,* 160.
[127] Ibid., 159.
[128] Ibid., 162. American land art had come of age coincident with environmental activism, and by 1972, a few of Smithson's projects had been cancelled owing to the outrage of local conservationists. In other words, he had a clear stake in remaking the landscape for earth artists like himself.
[129] See William Gilpin, *Essays, On Picturesque Beauty, Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, On Picturesque Travel and On Sketching Landscape: To Which is Added a Poem, On Landscape Painting* (London: Printed for R. Blamire, in the Strand, 1792), 27.
[130] Ibid., 6.
[131] Ibid., 7-8.
[132] Smithson, "Hotel Palenque*,* 1972."
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape, Picturesque* (London: printed for J. Mawman, 22, Poultry, 1810), 195, quoted in Smithson, "Frederick Law Olmsted," 159.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Robert Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects (1968)," in *RS:CW*, 104.
[139] Ibid., 105.
[140] Ibid., 113, note 1. The "ruinscape" of Hotel Palenque too is subject to such histrionic description—"there is something about Mexico," Smithson describes over a slide of a wrecked and disused dance hall "an overall hidden concealed violence about the landscape itself." Its structure rife with "convolution and terror," Smithson announces also an "unconscious, dangerous violence that is really lurking in every patch of earth."
[141] So too does he mark out a relationship of inheritance between Western Europe, the U.S., and Mexico; of the Hotel Palenque's vacant dance hall, he slips in: "you can see the Spanish moss that was imported from the Southern part of the United States and is now gracefully hanging from these ropes." Smithson, "Hotel Palenque, 1972."
[142] Smithson, "Frederick Law Olmsted," 167.
[143] Ibid., 163.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., 164.

[146] Winifred Pitkin's text (referenced in "Incidents of Mirror-Travel) notes a likeness between the regions of Maya civilization and those of classical civilization: "These [Maya] city-states were more like the city-states of Greece, Athens, Sparta and Corinth . . . than anything we know today." He went on to claim Maya sculpture and architecture to be "superior to the Egyptian and Assyrian." See Pitkin, *Hidden Cities of Middle America*, 24-25.
[147] Robert Smithson, "Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space (1966)," in *RS:CW*, 35; first published in the November 1966 issue of *Arts Magazine.*
[148] Smithson, "Hotel Palenque*,* 1972."
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Smithson, "Frederick Law Olmstead," 168.
[152] These are both places Smithson visited. In letters to Nancy Holt from Italy, he expressed scorn for the tourist attractions of ancient Rome—"the rotting remains of a vanished age"—but had postcards and clippings of Hadrian's Tomb and the "Tomb of the King of Numidia." He did convey enjoyment of the subterranean portions of the early Christian churches, writing to Holt in the same letter from July 24, 1961: "The dark Roman churches appeal to me because much of the art can not be defiled by vulgar liberal eyes . . . . Each church is like a jungle and a desert . . . the glow from the 17th century candles on the faces of the saints hidden in secret shrines evoke the invisible worlds of dreams within dreams." His personal papers include a postcard book of Mount Vesuvius. See box 5, folder 58, Series 5: Project Files, circa 1950s-1982, Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[153] Smithson, "Hotel Palenque*,* 1972."
[154] Ibid.
[155] Robert Smithson, interview by Gianni Pettena, "Conversation in Salt Lake City (1972)," January 25, 1972, in *RS:CW,* 297.
[156] Smithson, "Hotel Palenque*,* 1972."
[157] Ibid.
[158] Robert Smithson, "Some Void Thoughts on Museums (1967)," in *RS:CW*, 58.
[159] Wakefield, "Yucatan is Elsewhere," 135.
[160] See Lynne Cooke, "The Resurgence of the Night-Mind: Primitivist Revivals in Recent Art," in *The Myth of Primitivism: Perspectives on Art*, ed. Susan Hiller (London: Routledge, 1991), 141. She also remarks on the centrality of Nabokov's observation that the "the future is but the obsolete in reverse" to Smithson's undertakings with landscape. I have taken the liberty of correcting Cook's quotation of Nabokov, in which she uses the word "past" in lieu of "obsolete." See Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov, "Lance," in *Nabokov's Dozen: A Collection of Thirteen Stories* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958), 202. Smithson references this Nabokov quote many times; for example, see Smithson and Cummings, "Interview with Robert Smithson," 294, and Smithson, "Entropy and the New Monuments," 11.
[161] He continued: "This in turn produced a nostalgia for the rural or rustic community or the pastoral setting, and as a result brought into aesthetics an anti-urban attitude. Wright's view of the city as a 'cancer' or 'a social disease' persists today in the minds of some of the most 'formal' artists and critics." Smithson, "Quasi-Infinities," 35.
[162] The "tree" is one such example, rehearsed in Wright's own organizational characterization of his oeuvre. This is based on Aristotle's classical scheme: "the flower/tree is to nature as the building is to man; from which it follows that the *tree is a building.*" See David Michael Hertz, *Angels of Reality: Emersonian Unfoldings in Wright, Stevens, and Ives* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 206.
[163] Smithson uses this verb in his travelogue text. See Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 129.
[164] Smithson, "Quasi-Infinities," 35.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Paul Mann, *The Theory-Death of the Avant-Garde* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 37.
[167] Smithson, "Quasi-Infinities," 34.
[168] This reflects the MoMA's integration of the three major figures of Mexican Muralism as part of the face of American modern art.
[169] Reinhold Martin, "Organicism's Other," *Grey Room*, no. 4 (Summer 2001): 47.

[170] Ibid., 49.
[171] The allegorical relationship of the pyramid and labyrinth are what Dennis Hollier identifies as the "war between cupola and substance." Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of George Bataille*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 65.
[172] Smithson, "Quasi-Infinities," 34.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Smithson's archives include an earlier and essay-length version of the text co-authored by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown accompanied by a note from "Howard [presumably Junker]" reading: "This was in the March Architectural Forum. You should do a piece for them." See photocopy of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, "Learning from Las Vegas," box 1, folder 53, Series 2: Correspondence, 1959-1987, Smithson/Holt papers, AAA.
[177] Ibid.
[178] See Louis Martin, "Against Architecture," *Log,* no. 16 (Spring/Summer 2009): 159.
[179] Ibid., 161.
[180] Charles Jencks, *The New Paradigm in Architecture: The Language of Post-Modernism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977; repr. 2002)*,* 9. See also Stephen Cairns and Jane M. Jacobs, *Buildings Must Die: A Perverse View of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 207.
[181] Katherine G. Bristol problematizes the declarations of Jencks and others as a mystification of the actual economic and political processes at work behind the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe. The project, she argues, was not a failure of modern design as the usual story suggests; rather, it was "shaped by the strategies of ghetto containment and inner city revitalization" that characterized postwar urban planning and public housing. See "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth," *Jae* 44, no. 3 (May 1991): 163-171.
[182] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 5.
[183] Smithson, "Four Conversations," 228.
[184] Ibid., 218.
[185] Seamus Deane discusses this quality of the postmodern at some length in his "Introduction," in Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, Edward W. Said and Seamus Deane, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1990), 19.
[186] Smithson and Cummings, "Interview with Robert Smithson," 284.
[187] Roberts, "Landscapes of Indifference," 553.
[188] He stated in an unpublished interview, "I'm interested in that area of terror between man and land," and his repeated remarks on the lurking horrors and foreboding of the Mexican landscape in *Hotel Palenque* and "Incidents of Travel" seem to suggest as much. See Smithson and Toner, "Interview with Robert Smithson," 237-238.
[189] Ibid.
[190] John Beardsley, "Earthworks: The Landscape After Modernism," in Harriet S. Bee, Alexandra Bonfante-Warren, C. Allan Brown and Joanna Eckman*,* eds., *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, with Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 116.
[191] Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel," 120.
[192] Ibid., 119.

CONCLUSION

Ruins Reckoned

The innermost structures of the past only reveal themselves to any present in the light produced in the white heat of their relevance now.

- Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*[1]

All three figures—Catherwood, Wright, and Smithson—articulated in differing capacities and media a gaze at the American landscape. The three also rehearsed articulations of mimesis and alterity with regard to Europe and the indigene in the formation of American modernism.[2] Underwriting Smithson's Mexico works were the foundations of Wright's "indigenous" American *romanzas* all along; and Wright's California experiments lie atop the bedrock of Catherwood's southward ruin gaze. The "return" of which I wrote in the introduction is not simply the indigenous Other proxied, in part, through transpositions of the Maya ruin in U.S. contexts. It is also the return of the nineteenth-century following the U.S. pivot from fledgling post-colony to anxious empire. Such returns form a rather central component of the evolution of the American landscape myth—evidence of, to borrow the words of Michael Taussig, "the drunken see-sawing of the civilizing dialectic."[3]

Octavio Paz cites Claude Levi-Strauss's diagramming of the story of Oedipus as an example structure of mythic narrative. In the first column, intimacy and familiarity (the marriage of Oedipus and his mother; Antigone buries her brother) are counterposed against radical estrangement (Oedipus murders his father; Eteocles kills his brother) in column two. Columns three and four are in similar opposition: "destruction of monsters"[4] (Oedipus immolates the sphinx, an act which reproduces in negation the theme of the second column) versus ailment (Oedipus's swollen feet). The United States appears to us as this mythic structure doubled back on itself if we are to view Europe as the "parent" figure and the indigene as its "Other," made

prismatic through a dialectical conception of nature and civilization. First, “ailment” was conceived in the early colonial struggle to establish Anglo civilization in the New World and domesticate its landscape; next, the oppression/extermination of the savage as the vanquishing of the monster; third, the American Revolution and throwing off the yoke of British rule as the “killing of the father” (radical estrangement) versus cultural inheritance from Western Europe and appropriations of indigenous aesthetics (intimacy/familiarity). Looking backwards through the telescope grants us a view.

The mythic qualities of not only the historical structure of the U.S. relationship with Latin America and Europe, but also of the three figures themselves—Catherwood, Wright, and Smithson—are impossible to ignore. They border on the unbelievable. Furthermore, the staggering amount of historicization of their respective practices has aided substantially in building the existing myths. A myth is made so by its retelling and resignification over the processes of these retellings. These qualities make a dissertation on *any* of their work an archaeological endeavor from the get go.

All three experienced, in life, art, death, or a combination of the three, some allegorically-potent version of the descent of Icarus, flying too close to the sun and falling from hubris. Catherwood used his Lower Manhattan rotunda for the joint purposes of displaying panoramic views as well as storing he and Stephens’s collection of Maya antiquities unearthed and transported at great expense back to New York. Among the works housed in the rotunda were also the original drawings from the first and second expeditions. On July 31, 1842, just a few weeks after their second return from Mexico and in the dead of summer, a flame from a nearby gas lamp ignited the uninsured wooden structure, burning it to the ground along with its precious, irreplaceable contents. Catherwood never financially recovered from the fire, and his self-publication of the lithographic folio in 1844 nearly bankrupted him. He died at sea in 1854,

when the steamship *Arctic,* bound for New York from Liverpool, collided with a French vessel and sank, taking with it what little may have existed of his archive after the fateful gaslight fire.

Wright would also meet with fire and tragedy. In 1914, while away on an errand in Chicago, a servant at the freshly constructed Taliesin—the home Wright painstakingly designed to live in with his lover and partner, Mamah Cheney—murdered Cheney and her two children before sending the house up in flames with four of Wright's employees inside. Wright scholars have, at various points, attributed his "exotic" forays in architecture along with his journeying to Japan and California as the outcome of the 1914 tragedy—a trauma-induced recourse to archetypal forms as a means of burying his experience in the primordial mud of the archaic. And though Wright rebuilt the house after the terrible events of 1914, it was destroyed by fire once again in 1925, sparked by faulty wiring. The second fire destroyed much of Wright's personal belongings, including books, correspondence, photographs, and writings.

Wright's actual passing is the most mundane of the three. Many mistresses and wives later, on April 10, 1959, the date of Wright's hospital death of natural causes at the ripe old age of 89, it was almost 90 degrees Fahrenheit in the glaring Phoenix sun. According to a special obituary article in the *New York Times,* Wright's final project was also his last rejection. He proposed a redesign of the Arizona capitol—plans for an "oasis in the desert, its fountains and greenery contrasting with the sand and rocks around it."[5] Little did Wright know that despite his utopian views of low density architecture, the part of his plans for "fountains and greenery"—the ubiquitous water features and Kentucky Bluegrass of everything from the strip mall to the super-sized Arizona McMansion lawn—would come to dominate the monstrous suburban sprawl of Phoenix in the decades to come, ridiculous in its defiance of the severe water shortage that plagues the scorched city.[6]

Of the three, Smithson quite literally went down in flames, suffering an untimely death in a plane crash at the age of thirty-one.[7] He was shooting aerial footage for what would be his

final (and unfinished) work, *Amarillo Ramp,* located in Northern Texas, when the plane malfunctioned. He seems to have foreshadowed his own demise; three years earlier, in 1970, Smithson shot the aerial film footage for *Spiral Jetty,* the antecedent of his final earthwork. The 32-minute film is interspersed with Smithson's narration, quoting the definition of "sunstroke" from *Black's Medical Dictionary* and a line from Samuel Beckett's *The Unnameable* (1953)—"I owe [my] existence to no one, these faint fires are not of those that illuminate or burn. Going nowhere, coming from nowhere." Finally, he quotes John Taine's 1931 novel, *The Time Stream*: "Gazing intently at the gigantic sun we at last decipher the riddle of its unfamiliar aspect. It was not a single flaming star, but millions upon millions of them, all clustering thickly, together like bees in a swarm. Their packed density made up the deceptive appearance of solid impenetrable flame. It was, in fact, a vast spiral nebula of innumerable suns."[8]

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What comes into view is not only the irreverence of the qualifiers "Mayan" and "Maya," but also their susceptibility to repetition and rehabilitation, and the tendency of works of art and architecture to take on mythical attributes in tandem with their makers. What confounds a dissertation such as this is not the Atlantean span of time—nearly 150 years—nor the separate spheres of cultural production: draftsman, architect, and artist; studies of the indigene (as a through-line of the dissertation) and architectural study lend themselves to interdisciplinarity. The dissertation is burdened with the role of nature and the natural in conceptions of indigeneity and organicism in the portraits of each chapter, but even this is manageable.[9] The monsters in the room underwriting the three subjects of the dissertation are the archive (or lack thereof) and technology (and technological failure). While advances in technology, from photographic and printing technologies to architectural/new materials technologies enabled, to a large degree, the respective works of the three (even Smithson, whose catalogue of unusual projects would not be extant were it not for photography), "technology" also hindered them. The nuances of the

technological are also embedded in the works. There are ghosts in this machine, and there are machines in this garden. Finally, the rehabilitation of the works by subsequent artists, architects, and others—indeed the operations of mimesis and alterity, of the copy of the copy—are significant. I anecdotally address these issues and instances in brief below, but they could make up an entirely other body of work.

Catherwood is our archive-less hero, a feat in and of itself. Catherwood's demise and the mysterious loss of his archive frustrated Victor Wolfgang von Hagen, who met success with his biography of Stephens.[10] Von Hagen's own archive at the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley contains dozens of letters and inquiries to this effect. Even my research on Catherwood was plagued by poor time. I arrived at Dumbarton Oaks just in time for the library to imprison in glass its various editions of the *Incidents of Travel* texts for a 2015 exhibition of his work, titled *Stephens & Catherwood Revisited: Maya Ruins and the Passage of Time*. Catherwood's work, however, far outlasted the series of unfortunate events in his lifetime (if the exhibition of the work at one of the foremost U.S. institutions in Pre-Columbian studies does not say enough). The *Incidents of Travel* volumes have been reprinted in dozens of languages and are still commercially available. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, whose collection includes a second printing of *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (1842), observes that the work "remains a landmark of architectural illustration."[11] Indeed it does, but it has made quite a splash in photography circles as well, contrary to the second expedition's hiccups with (and eventual rejection of) photographic technology in 1841.

As described in chapter one, Catherwood consistently used the *camera lucida* as a drawing aid, but found daguerreotype technology unsatisfactory owing to loss of decorative detail in the deep black shadows of the daguerreotype image.[12] The interest in the work by contemporary photographers given the turn of events in the expedition is both remarkable given Catherwood's rejection of the daguerreotype and unsurprising given the legacy of the

Stephens/Catherwood expeditions—they live on as images. The books held by Dumbarton Oaks were shown in conjunction with photographs taken by Jay A. Frogel from the same points of view that Catherwood drew the region's ruins. Using various computer software and scanning technologies, the artist superimposed scans of the engraved drawings over digitized images from slides of his own photography in order to "'illuminate' the engraving[s] from behind and wash [them] with color."[13] These composite images come across as neither illuminated nor washed, but rather *consumed* by Frogel's photographs. The process produced what in effect are the holdout greens and yellows of old, hand-colored postcard photography or the fading, lurid colors of an acid come-down when technicolor starts to move back into its shell from being something other.

Frogel's work has seen some mileage; it was shown at the Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University and the Mexican consulate in New Orleans in addition to its appearance at Dumbarton Oaks during the time I was there researching. Standing in that small gallery in the Rare Book Collection building, I could not help but recall (from the pages of *Camera Lucida*) Roland Barthes looking on, chock full of desire, at the photograph of the Alhambra. I felt that fantasmatic "longing to inhabit"[14] the inside of those glass cases and get at the illustrations of landscapes "chosen by desire."[15] Exhibitions too can turn objects into images. Like Barthes, looking at these photographs I was "*certain* of having been there,"[16] but less so because I had by that time actually visited the *there* of those images and more so because I had "been there" in those photographic images before—Argentinian artist Leandro Katz's decade-long photographic *Catherwood Project* (1985-1995), which receives no acknowledgment in either this exhibition nor Frogel's website.

Katz recreated the points of view and framing of Catherwood's images and displayed them aside the illustrations. He produced also a second set of photographs wherein the artist holds up the corresponding, published Catherwood illustrations inside the photographic frame.

In this second approach, the layers of photography, illustration, even the artist's (actual) hand—lay out demonstratively the elusive "meta" of "having been there" in travel photography. Katz's photographs and display strategy demonstrate a more poignant relationship to time, indeed to image-making, and the work has more to show for it. The more technologically "advanced" of the two projects—Frogel's—is less interesting. Meanwhile, the *Catherwood Project* is housed in museum collections in five countries (the U.S. included), has been included in numerous fine arts exhibitions, and has been reviewed by art world celebrities as prominent as Lucy Lippard.[17] Katz, we might say, is of pivotal significance in the aesthetic reexamination (and reinscription, really) of Catherwood's illustrations.

The nuances of Wright's Mayan Revivalism are a story of modernist contradiction as much as they are a tale of technology's indistinct inscription in the cultural production of the early twentieth century. Half a century later, in September of 1970, David Antin wrote a review of the Art and Technology program at LACMA.[18] He problematized the notion of the technological in American consciousness, tracing it in part to Wright's foregrounding of the machine as, in Wright's words, the "'the forerunner of democracy' and 'the normal tool of civilization.'"[19] Wright remains conceivably the most famous architect in American history, yet from a practical standpoint his attempt to marry the principles of organic architecture with newly available concrete casting technologies in his Mayan Revival projects failed in terms of structural longevity.[20] And today, though Mesoamerican ruins such as Palenque have endured, in some cases, for millennia (and Rivera's Anahuacalli stands proud and monolithic), Wright's buildings—positioned as hallmarks of technological innovation during the early decades of the twentieth century—have fallen into ruin themselves.[21] The concrete, proto-Brutalist Ennis House, still celebrated as one of Wright's most unique and magnificent constructions of not only the Mayan Revival works but of his entire career, has become an insurance and restoration

nightmare, and sits amongst the National Trust for Historic Preservation's eleven most endangered sites.

By mid-century, the residence was already unlivable and in use instead as a film location. Hollywood has since remade the Ennis House time and again. In 1959, the director William Castle cast the Ennis House as the spooky residence in his cult horror film, *House on Haunted Hill.* And though it appears as the anachronistic architecture of the future in Ridley Scott's 1982 sci-fi film, *Blade Runner*, the Ennis House had (by the time of the film's making) been in a state of disrepair for decades. The residence's uses as the mansion in *House on Haunted Hill,* as Deckard's apartment in *Blade Runner,* and in other films conform to the routine imagination of timeless horror or an unknowable, technological future from the aesthetics of an Othered past.[22]

Incidental to the Ennis House's afterlives in American cinema, Smithson, when explaining his friends' preferences for cinema in an interview, "noted that 'the blood and guts' of horror movies provides for their 'organic needs,' while the 'cold steel' of Sci-fi movies provides for their 'inorganic needs.'"[23] We thus return to the promiscuous ruination of allegory in Smithson and to the allegorical potential (and promiscuity) of ruination. George Kubler, who wrote in *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (1962) of "the approaching exhaustion of new discoveries,"[24] characterized the unceasing pursuit of originality pulling at the seams of the twentieth century as "aesthetic fatigue."[25] At the center of Smithson's aesthetic fatigue, we find not the Kublerian "prime"[26] object of the Maya ruin, but the (postmodern) absent center of the whole mythic enterprise of the modernist project, himself included—a science fictional replicant bound in time to reproduce—irreverently, polyvocally, sometimes badly—the forms of the past.

After all, what and where *are* the fragmented, incomplete Yucatán works? The mirror displacements—are they the material of the mirror, ephemerally placed in loamy dirt and

anonymous jungle foliage? The travelogue text? The "act" of placing? Moving? Photographing? Are they photographic documentation?—Smithson's view of photography was always as a tool secondary to the work itself, but the photographs are all that remain extant in the Guggenheim Museum's collection. Is *Hotel Palenque* the performative deadpan lecture? The script? The shitty bootleg film by Alex Hubbard that still floats the internet? The slides?—again, the objects that recline in a dusty box somewhere in the Guggenheim's vaults. What is the *site*? Palenque Town? The Hotel Palenque itself or Smithson's sketchy map of the hotel's floor plan? The absent ruins? A lecture hall at the University of Utah? Smithson critically exploits the ruination of his own practice at the same time that he hides behind it. The nonsite means infinite deferral, and ambiguous, sidewinding artist writing means infinite possibilities for theoretical and critical appropriation of whatever suits the purpose at hand. Lack of coherence has made Smithson's legacy as it stands today and his works in their many forms sought-after commodities.

The Hotel Palenque from Smithson's 1972 slide lecture of the same name still stands. What appears to be the original hotel sign perches atop a corner of the building, adjoined to a duplicate sign offset against a metal frame—"HOTEL HOTEL PALENQUE," it reads. Upon superficial perusal of the premises, the extravagance of the place today seems almost totally at odds with the dingy hotel of 1969 where Smithson and company stayed. Yet the ethereal blue of its luxurious swimming pool is juxtaposed against surprising remnants of the kinds of unidentified detritus and wayward building materials Smithson riffed on in his lecture—they are better tucked away and obstructed from view, but they are still there. And though inquiries about Smithson met with the invariably puzzled and blank stares of hotel staff, the Hotel Palenque has become an unconventional monument to Smithson's endeavor in its own right. Four decades after Smithson and company visited Palenque, artist Jonathan Monk made *Color Reversal Nonsite with Ensuite Bathroom* (2009), a steel sign featuring an "inverted reflection"[27] of the

letters of “Hotel Palenque” as they appear in the original sign in Smithson’s slide image. The work is more a comment on Smithson’s legacy than it is anything “about” the hotel.

Spiral Jetty too both evades and attracts the art tourist gaze. At Golden Spike National Monument, the last clear landmark before the pavement ends and the bumpy ride to the Jetty begins, employees shrug their shoulders and visitors to the monument are, for the most part, completely ignorant of a Spiral Jetty out there on the Great Salt Lake. They perhaps remember Will Smith’s character facing his enemy in a desertscape (replete with giant robotic spiders) at the fictionalized driving of the Golden Spike in the sci-fi western, *Wild Wild West* (1999). But a misfit New Jerseyan—who built an odd jetty several miles on down a confusing set of roads with, god forbid, no cell service—does not seem to interest them.[28] Dia Art Foundation, now responsible for the site, has step-by-step instructions down to the tenth of a mile as a printable brochure available on their website. Still, East Coasters and LA dilettantes alike can’t “find” it and do not apparently know how to read an odometer. It is as if space itself collapses sans-map and in the attachment to cell phone technology. Yet this “you are here” impenetrability, this evasive quality, makes the Jetty ever so much more desirable to the art elite.[29] The *absence* of a technology is apparently just as appealing as its ubiquity.

If the various stagings of Catherwood’s drawings, metamorphosis of Wright’s California *romanzas* in cinema, or invocations of the ghostly architecture of Smithson—“Yucatan *is* elsewhere,”[30] after all—are any indication, it is that the ties with ancient American architecture have been obscured and displaced by an increasingly dizzying set of signifiers in the echo chamber of becoming. What is also excavated in the work discussed in this dissertation is the strange squaring of each enterprise on the horizons of California—the lynchpin of the American landscape—as destiny or muse, or both. Thus we find ourselves leaving the labyrinthine passages of the “Hotel Hotel Palenque” and bidding farewell to our three mythical figures of Catherwood, Wright, and Smithson—spread out across time and each betrothed (in replication)

to their respective historical moments—and outside the door we stand at the University of California, San Diego.

In 1966, contemporaneous with some of Smithson's first experiments with architectural sites and subject matter, Louis Kahn completed the building complex to house the Salk Institute, now a successful, long-time partner of UC San Diego's Division of Biological Sciences. However, the institute is better known as the darling of New Brutalist architecture, frequented for decades by interested tourists on West Coast pilgrimages to see a masterpiece of ultramodern architecture. Headlining the arts section of the *L.A. Times* in 2016 is an article titled, "Louis Kahn's Salk Institute, the building that guesses tomorrow, is aging — very, very gracefully."[31]

Across the street and just down Torrey Pines Road are the derelict buildings of John Muir College, which have aged somewhat less "gracefully" than Kahn's icon of New Brutalism. The once-pristine concrete of Muir College's ostensibly (also) neo-Brutalist buildings is discolored, and cracks have begun to slink through less frequented corners. Just a short walk from Muir College, in linked subterranean concrete courtyards, one can find the Ph.D. offices for the Visual Arts Department's degree in Art History, Theory, and Criticism. The offices, former music practice studios (before the Conrad Prebys Music School saw better days), are cave-like, soundproofed, and eerily silent. It is almost as if we are in the tomb-like passage entering the Hollyhock House. Almost. In the center of each of the two courtyards sit gloomy (also concrete) boxes of dying and wayward plants—seeming outcasts from the manicured landscaping of the more visible parts of campus. Rogue *verdure* fights its way through yawning gaps where the concrete has broken apart. Problems riddle the building—leaking ceilings have destroyed library books in student offices schizophrenically air "conditioned" to frigidity or subject to heating and cooling systems that fail to work altogether. Scented of mildew, half the offices have spotty internet. Down there, it does not feel like California. But what *is* California architecture, after all? The question puzzled Wright just as it puzzled many before and after him. Is it Stacy-Judd's

futurist church in Ventura? Wright's *romanzas*? The Brutalist revival of the Salk Institute? . . . or the mundane reality of a military industrial complex?[32]

One is perhaps reminded of a scene from a piece of 1960s science fiction that Smithson, in fact, was quite taken with. J.G. Ballard's hero of the short story, "The Terminal Beach," upon arriving at an H-bomb test site, wonders, "What sort of people would inhabit this minimal concrete city?"[33] Single occupancy offices, the reward for advanced Ph.D. candidates entering the writing phase of their dissertation, are located under a breezeway between the two courtyards without natural light and adjacent to a noisy electrical room. This place, not even a mile from the prized stud that is the Salk Institute, is the underbelly of New Brutalism. It is the *unheimlich* past and future of one of the architectural styles *de rigeur* of Smithson's generation—the offices themselves something of a "ruin-in-reverse." The ugly vegetation of Mandeville is the antithesis of the greenery of the garden follies of Stephens's and Catherwood's era.[34] The failing concrete—once a trademark material of the Machine Age championed by Wright—is dated, a strangely fitting bedfellow for the department's growing emphasis on science studies, new media, and the (now passed over) "Bauhausian" collaboration between engineering and the visual arts. The myth of progress is as slow to die as the nineteenth century landscape, it seems. One of the few redeeming qualities of this dim spectacle of a building—"graffiti hall," arguably one of the only interesting places on campus apart from the Stuart Collection—has since been whitewashed (or "grey-washed," rather) with dozens of threatening, verbose signs posted up around the building about what constitutes graffiti.

Smithson once photographed the graffitied foundations at a construction site adjacent the Metropolitan Museum of Art for his final piece of published writing in 1973, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape." That graffiti has also been buried, no longer visible to the pedestrian's upward-gazing eyes at, most likely, the colossal classical symmetry of the

Met's facade. Graffiti Hall has met a more depressing fate—buffed out completely before the university spent an exorbitant amount of money washing Mandeville and *all* its surfaces within reach of the student body with drab, institutional grey. The building's dark room, a hold out from when art was all analog—from when people *made* photography in lieu of taking it—has been permanently closed, struck out in favor of super-wired classrooms for the university's expanding student body. The kind of utopia that has begun to take over the department emulates the same failures that plagued the modernists and the neo-avant-garde in their stead. New technologies, old story. The landscape of one of California's premiere research institutions—a short forty-minute drive from a country that the vast majority of the student body will never go to—is also a microcosm of the contradictions underwriting the *same* landscape upon which Wright constructed his buildings, in their own relationship across time to Catherwood's drawings and Smithson's Mexico projects. Will history remember itself?

[1] See Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, 97, as quoted in Peter Bürger, *The Decline of Modernism,* trans. Nicholas Walker (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press and Polity Press, 1992), 29.

[2] John Henry Merryman, "The Nation and the Object," in *Whose Culture? The Promise of Museums and the Debate Over Antiquities,* ed. James Cuno (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 187. Merryman writes: "Today, after more than a century and a half, our minds and emotions still are controlled by Byron and Goethe and Herder, by nineteenth-century Romanticism and nineteenth century nationalism, and in the cultural property dialogue these forces powerfully coincide. Often a nation's representative [we can now make a case for the insertion here of at least an indirect representative in Catherwood, Wright, *and* Smithson] need only claim that an object is part of its 'cultural patrimony' or 'cultural heritage' to make the case for its retention within or return to the national territory."

[3] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 246. In this section of the text, conspicuously titled "Made in the USA," Taussig describes the fraying of us-versus-them in a series of contact with alterity, a "dissolution," he explains, that "reconstellates the play of nature in mythic pasts of contactual truths."

[4] Octavio Paz, *Claude Levi-Strauss: An Introduction*, trans. J.S. Bernstein and Maxine Bernstein (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 30.

[5] See "Frank Lloyd Wright Dies; Famed Architect Was 89," *The New York Times* (April 10, 1959): n.p., accessed September 2, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0608.html?mcubz=0.

[6] A year prior to his death, Wright had also completed a city plan for another desert capital—a Plan for Greater Baghdad (1957-1958)—but with the fall of the Hashemite Monarchy in 1958, the plans were laid to rest.

[7] Lucy R. Lippard likens Smithson's death to the fall of Icarus in *Undermining: A Wild Ride Through Land Use, Politics, and Art in the Changing West* (New York: The New Press, 2014), 85.

[8] John Taine, *The Time Stream* (Providence, RI: Buffalo Book Co., 1946; repr. Gernsback Publishers, 1931), quoted in Chris Taylor, "Troubling Troublemakers," *Art Journal Open* (July 22, 2016), accessed August 20, 2017, http://artjournal.collegeart.org/?p=7379.

[9] As Reinhold Martin observes, however, "The susceptibility of vast regions of modernist discourse to the designation 'organicist' is what renders the term nearly useless or meaningless but also supplies it with the potency of indexing that which is taken to be self-evident." Reinhold Martin, "Organicism's Other," *Grey Room,* no. 4 (Summer 2001): 40.

[10] Stephens's archive also has a glaring hole when it comes to his Maya exploits (a circumstance likely also owed also to the fire), but it is otherwise intact and safely housed in the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

[11] See John L. Stephens, "Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan," Collection Online, Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed March 12, 2018, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/591852.

[12] Still, the individuals who made engravings for Stephens's books used the daguerreotypes as aids for reproducing Catherwood's original artwork. See Colin McEwen, *Stephens & Catherwood Revisited: Maya Ruins and the Passage of Time* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2015), n.p., exhibition catalogue.

[13] Jay A. Frogel, *Maya Ruins and the Passage of Time: The Stephens & Catherwood Project* (Lutherville, MD: World Images, 2015), accessed September 10, 2015, http://www.jayfrogel. com/0finalbrochure_v4-3.pdf.

[14] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981), 40.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] See Lucy R. Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art and Multicultural America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990).

[18] David Antin, *Radical Coherency: Selected Essays on Art and Literature, 1966-2005* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 64.
[19] Ibid. See also Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture (1908)," in *The Essential Frank Lloyd Wright: Critical Writings on Architecture,* ed. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 49.
[20] As described in chapter two, under the auspices of an organic approach to the California landscape, Wright instructed his fabricators to use decomposed granite excavated from the building sites to mix into the concrete. Quite early in the game, this mixture compromised the integrity of the concrete, and combined with two banes of material existence—bright sunshine and air pollution—concrete was proven to be a rather "temporary" material in sharp contrast to the modernist praise of its durability.
[21] The Hollyhock House and larger park project went so horribly awry between expenses, disputes, and subsequently faulty construction that Aline Barnsdall deeded Barnsdall Park to the City of Los Angeles just a few years after completion. La Miniatura, a residence meant to be Alice Millard's humble, quiet respite in a site selected, in fact, by Wright, has been subject to flooding and a leaking roof *since* its completion. The Freeman House, owned by the University of Southern California, is closed to the public and researchers alike because it is no longer structurally sound.
[22] Even the Barnsdall Residence made a Hollywood debut as the "Piranha Temple" in the cult classic film, *Cannibal Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death* (1989).
[23] Martin, "Organicism's Other," 44.
[24] George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 11 quoted in Pamela M. Lee, "'Ultramoderne': Or, How George Kubler Stole the Time in Sixties Art," *Grey Room,* no. 2 (Winter 2001): 55.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Here, I quote Pamela M. Lee's summarization of Kubler's notion of "form-class" that became quite influential in Smithson's ideation of cultural production: "Less an objective 'thing' than a 'problem' that occurred across time, the form-class was represented by a series of artifacts, each of which acted as early, middle, and late versions of the same problem or action. Form-classes were inaugurated by what Kubler called a 'prime object'; their subsequent incarnations might include a copy called a 'replication.' Importantly, he described the form-class as being like a chain of linked solutions, with the chain itself being history." "'Ultramoderne': Or, How George Kubler Stole the Time in Sixties Art," *Grey Room,* no. 2 (Winter 2001): 55.
[27] See Pablo León de la Barra, "Hotel Palenque is Elsewhere: on Jonathan Monk's Hotel Palenque Sign," *Rufino,* no. 3 (Spring/Summer 2011): 181.
[28] Fast forward to 2017. The same year that both the Grand Staircase and Bears Ears National Monument went under the gun, Utah made the Spiral Jetty its "state work of art." Smithson would have loved this contradiction. See Randy Kennedy, "'Spiral Jetty' Is Named an Official State Work of Art by Utah," *The New York Times* (March 13, 2017), accessed March 17, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/13/arts/design/spiral-jetty-is-named-an-official-state-work-of-art-by-utah.html.
[29] There are whole artworks about this very issue. For example, in the late 1990s, Tacita Dean made an audio tape ("shown" at the Tate Museum in 1997 and now part of the MoMA's collection) titled *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* (1998).
[30] Neville Wakefield, "Yucatan is Elsewhere: On Robert Smithson's Hotel Palenque," *Parkett,* no. 43 (1995). Italics mine.
[31] Carolina A. Miranda, "Louis Kahn's Salk Institute, the building that guesses tomorrow, is aging — very, very gracefully," *L.A. Times* (November 22, 2016), accessed August 28, 2017, http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-salk-institute-louis-kahn-20161107-htmlstory.html.
[32] UC San Diego is the site of a former U.S. Army base called Camp Matthews. It closed its doors in 1964.
[33] J.G. Ballard, "The Terminal Beach," in *The Complete Short Stories of J.G. Ballard* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2009; repr. Henry Holt and Company, 1978), 590.
[34] R. Tripp Evans notes (citing Victor von Hagen's biography of Stephens) that a doorjamb from Kabah was gifted to a friend of Stephens, John Church Cruger, "for use as a garden folly." The doorjamb was

one of the few archaeological specimens that was not consumed in the gas fire at Catherwood's panorama, and Maya archaeologist Sylvanus G. Morley acquired the carved jamb from Cruger's descendants in 1918 for the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. See R. Tripp Evans, *Romancing the Maya: Mexican Antiquity in the American Imagination 1820-1915* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004), 171, footnote 99.

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