

HOPE

Motorcycle

Modern machine

Ancient place.

But where in this place has the rider gone?

Through the tunnel of nature

experiencing TREPIDATION buoyed by the

“Pioneer’s dream”²

riding

to chance upon “symbolic places in the mountains,”³ to find NIRVANA.



“One of the most distinct attitudes of Latin American architects and planners towards urbanism is an undiminished faith in the Ideal Community... there persists something of the pioneer’s dream of a new *Civitas Dei* in the wilderness.” – Sybil Moholy-Nagy, Carlos Raul Villaneuva and *The Architecture of Venezuela*

Not just as a historic and geographic locus but also as the very idea, Latin America has a chimeric presence for those who live within and outside its boundaries. A distinct yet slippery sense of place and identity arises from and informs its landscape and architecture, to be found in symbolic places in the mountains and on the plains, on islands and streams, and along riverbanks, in its architectural settings to hyper-chaotic urban conglomerations. We invite essays that engage and express the theme of Sense of Place, experienced in and through the perspective of Latin America.

The essay should communicate experiential dimensions of a specific place and how it provides an anchor and a springboard for unique experiences and memories. The focus of essay may be a landscape, a building (whether celebrated or anonymous), an urban setting or a mega-city. All essays should reflect connections between place and design in natural or built environment.¹

dwarfed

in the natural environment

Jesus Christ

“an anchor and springboard for unique experiences and memories.”⁴



HOPE

Is this the rider?

The JOURNEY is key to conceiving a SENSE OF PLACE in the Andes.
For a motorcyclist NIRVANA is the JOURNEY.
The Andes are NIRVANA.

Relentless
curve after curve
curve after curve
concentrating, watching out
concentrating, watching out.
This journey is punishing the machine,
what has the machine done to deserve this?
Is this penance?

3000m, 4000m, 4250m, 4500m,
gasping for air in the thin altitude, tyres slithering, squirming, slipping in the scree,
4500m, 4250m, 4000m, 3000m.

2hrs - 50km.

Why does the rider pass this way?
Who navigates him here?
Who narrates?

The Rider has appeared.

Looking, searching,

he of the anglicised West

trying to make sense of this place.

The ruin is the antidote to the dream. He seems to stare horrified toward the past And to recoil, moving backward into the future. So what does he see? Instead of the chain of progress, it is "one single catastrophe which relentlessly piles wreckage upon wreckage, and hurls them before his feet." It is a storm from the Paradise of dreams and past wish-images, which "drives him irresistibly into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. That which we call progress is this storm" (Benjamin, 1972, pp. 697-698).⁵



TREPIDATION

HOPE

Are we there yet?

Where is there?

CHAVIN HUANTUR

A SENSE of achievement, a Euphoria of reaching a place, from which to leave to find another place.

What are the "connections between place and design in natural or built environment"s? ⁶

Was this an ideal community?

Are there lessons here?

What is an ideal community?

The nostalgicised 'old' Andes of Macchu Picchu, or the idealised colonial Cuzco, its streets now paved with the tackiness of tourism, or the modernised *barriadas* of Lima's resettlements built of cane-matted huts?



“With the advent of modernity, time lost its spatial content and space became independent of particular places or regions. ... modernity fosters social relations with absent others ... people can now interact without sharing the same space or time. The social processes of modernity operate ‘on a global scale...cut across national boundaries, ... connecting communities in new-time combinations ... A new universal mass culture arises which affects even the most remote regions of the world. Modern culture is increasingly mediated by electronics. The universal language of this new global mass culture is English. ... a new electronic cultural space has been created which has no precise geographical location. ...symbolic forms ... are exchanged, sold and acquired in highly competitive markets. ... Latin America must abandon its old identity in order to be able fully to enter modernity. ...

‘the task at hand, therefore, is not to discover ways of restoring a crumbling dome to its former glory but to clear the rubble expeditiously as possible.’

... to recognise in the culture expressed by the English industrial revolution the true essence of the modernity which Latin America must acquire. ... an Anglo Saxon essence. ... an Anglo-Saxon kind of modernity. ... whereby the conspicuous consumption in the West would become an object of desire in the ... indefatigable search for modernity based on foreign models. ... (credit card) consumption could deliver the masses. ... ready to conquer the markets of the world.”⁷

MODERNISATION INDICATOR	TREND PERU 1980 - 2000		(8)
BASIC NEEDS			
Life expectancy		Development	
Infant mortality		Development	
LIFE CHOICE			
GDP per capita	Regression		
Adult illiteracy		Development	
Unemployment	Regression		
INEQUITY			
Income equity	Regression		
Gender equity	Regression		
FREEDOM			
Political rights		Development	
Civil liberties		Stasis	
SUSTAINABILITY			
CO ₂ emissions		Stasis	
GDP per CO ₂		Stasis	
		REGRESSION	STASIS
		4	3
			DEVELOPMENT
			4

THIS IS PROGRESS?

Chavin, in ruins, abandoned, a chimera of old Peru.

SO EVER ONWARD

to continue the search

for the IDEAL site for the IDEAL community in the IDEAL wilderness,

for a place to replace a PLACE.



Exact sequence of photographs taken by author on latter part of journey between Huaraz and Chavin de Huantur, Peru, 5 Sept 2002. The author is the navigator, tunnel is the Tunel Kawish.

The rider – was that
a chimera? As briefly
appeared, disappeared.

But with the rider has
gone the motorcycle.

Another chimera?

Has the BMW motorcycle,
germanic symbol of
MODERNITY, been
abandoned as well

in the search

to scramble over the
ruins of an abandoned
community

through a tunnel built by
Other men in the distant
past?

To there perhaps?

Is there the location for
a NEW, a MODERN, an
IDEAL COMMUNITY,

that distant MOUNTAIN?

hope

1/The University of Melbourne, 2005, SENSE OF PLACE Latin America - Essay Competition 2005, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne, <http://enter.abp.unimelb.edu.au/essay2005/essay05.php>, (Accessed 2005, May 11)

2/ Ibid

3/ Ibid

4/ Ibid

5/ King, R., 1996, *Emancipating Space: Geography, Architecture and Urban Design*, The Guilford Press, New York

6/The University of Melbourne, <http://enter.abp.unimelb.edu.au/essay2005/essay05.php>, (Accessed 2005, May 11)

7/Larrain, J., 2000, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America*, Polity Press, USA, words 'sampled' from Chapter 7 *The Neoliberal Stage 1990 Onwards*.

8/Green, R., 2004, (unpublished) 'Assess the Progress of the Developing World', M. Soc. Sc. (Int Dev), RMIT University, Melbourne