

## TRANSLATION TRANSLATION

Proceedings of the  
**Society of Architectural Historians,  
Australia and New Zealand**  
Vol. 31

edited by Christoph Schnoor  
(Auckland, New Zealand SAHANZ and Unitec ePress;  
and Gold Coast, Queensland: SAHANZ, 2014).

The bibliographic citation for this paper is:

**David Beynon, Brandon Gardiner, Ursula de Jong, Mirjana Lozanovska, Flavia Marcello, "An Issues Paper: The Roots/Routes of Australian Architecture: Elements of an Alternative Architectural History," in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 31, Translation*, edited by Christoph Schnoor (Auckland, New Zealand: SAHANZ and Unitec ePress; and Gold Coast, Queensland: SAHANZ, 2014), 639-658.**

*Published in*

*Auckland, New Zealand: SAHANZ and Unitec ePress [ISBN - 978-1-927214-12-1];  
and Gold Coast, Australia: SAHANZ [ISBN - 978-0-9876055-1-1]*

*All efforts have been undertaken to ensure that authors have secured appropriate permissions to reproduce the images illustrating individual contributions. Interested parties may contact the editor.*

*This work is licensed under a  
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.*



David Beynon, Brandon Gardiner, Ursula de Jong,  
Mirjana Lozanovska, and Flavia Marcello, *Deakin University, Geelong*

### An Issues paper: The Roots/Routes of Australian Architecture: Elements of an Alternative Architectural History

The dynamism and mobility of architects in their approach to architectural design practice provides a context that emphasises that architecture, like culture, is not static or rooted in place, but is intricately configured through the dual processes of locality and mobility - both physical and theoretical. The production of architecture in Australia, as in other immigrant-rich societies, provides a case for reinforcing the theory that architectural mobility and travel are integral to the architecture of place.

This issues paper sets out to re-examine the contribution of geo-cultural influences upon Australia's architectural lineage and considers a diverse range of themes across an equally broad timeframe; British colonial transpositions; the dissemination of Modernism in Australia; the latent contribution of mid-twentieth century European émigré architects; and the secreted history of Australia's Asian architecture. Common to all, however, is the notion of architectural translation as a process of influences transmitted, transposed or adapted to other contexts. It uses Australia as the focus from which to consider how global criticism, ideas and theories have travelled and continue to travel transversely across time and place, from the late-eighteenth century well into the twenty-first. This paper investigates translations through narratives, processes, networks and traces of architectural manifestations and begins to draw lines of influence.

## An Island Home

“Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.”<sup>2</sup>

For a nation as geographically isolated as Australia, associations between translation, travel and migration are inevitable and sensitively ingrained in the national psyche given the broader genealogical context. In this respect, Australian architecture has always been generated through some form of derivation and translation. This issues paper begins an exploration into the driving forces, flows and exchanges behind these acts of translation.

Goad and Willis have stated that there are few comprehensive overviews of Australian architecture and that Freeland’s *Architecture in Australia* - the most recent - was written 40 years ago.<sup>3</sup> In that sense it is possible to argue that very few subjects about Australian architecture have been examined within a historiographical overview. Is this important and how does it affect the understanding of Australian architecture? For example, there exists a vast and comprehensive body of knowledge on modernism in Australian architecture through research on building typology. This has uncovered architects who are otherwise little known. Equally there is a rich body of research on the architecture of the colonial period, including work from postcolonial theoretical perspectives. More recently there is growing research in architecture related to indigenous traditions and communities. Goad’s informative publication, *New Directions in Australian Architecture*, captures our most contemporary period.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps for this reason of a lack of a comprehensive historical overview, the *Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture* is expected to fulfil a role that exceeds its agenda. The *Encyclopaedia* is a comprehensive and inclusive volume and an invaluable resource as well as delight for scholars, students and architects. In addition to its stated structure and emphasis on architects and architectural firms, it includes more discursive sections that raise key issues of Australian architecture. These are not intended to be conclusive or theoretical but a threshold for further discussion and debate, acting as a source for multiplicities, networks and exchanges that together can give readers the tools for a new point of view.

To date, significant traces have been acknowledged in Australia’s colonial conditioning and “selective trajectory”<sup>5</sup> of historiographical architectural culture: British voyages to Australia, travels of the ‘Grand Tour’, migration back to the UK specifically to become ‘properly’ educated and the later dissemination of Modernity in Australia. In this sense, the Australian architectural model has somewhat (uncritically) mirrored the strong social and cultural links with Britain, not only as a

---

2 Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1991), 17.

3 “Rationale and Structure,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture*, ed. Philip Goad and Julie Willis (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Hereafter referred to as *EAA*.

4 Philip Goad and Patrick Bingham-Hall, ed., *New Directions in Australian Architecture* (Balmain NSW: Pesaro Publishing, 2001).

5 Philip Goad and Julie Willis, “The bigger picture; reframing Australian architectural history,” *Fabrications* 18:1 (June 2008), 12.

motherland or extension of Empire but as a normative reference. This has been further reinforced by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) mirroring the attitudes of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), particularly in relation to the recognition of architectural degrees.

Within this broad exploration, it is acknowledged here that Indigenous architecture has perhaps undergone the most profound of translations. Recent decades have demonstrated considerable effort in the historiographical and practical reconciliation of Australia's indigenous architectural heritage.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the role of architects having emigrated from non-British societies, importing alternative educational backgrounds, approaches and cultural milieus has not been sufficiently explored as a collective phenomenon. These traces began in the 19th century and include significant waves of post WWII European emigration and an on-going exchange with Asia. Through translating this and some of the aforementioned pathways into a mapping exercise, this paper begins to represent visually the 'lines of influence' as a geo-cultural set of journeys and mobilities.

### Narrative: From a Penal Colony to a City Worthy of Empire

Constructing the narrative: John Maxwell Freeland's *Architecture in Australia - a history*, published in 1968 (now out of print), was the first attempt to cover "the broad history of architecture as it has evolved in this country from the time of the first canvas tents at Sydney Cove in 1788 to the Sydney Opera House in 1967". Nine of its fourteen chapters deal with the 18th and 19th centuries. The recommended further reading list is brief, thin and reflects the author's interests as it does the state of architectural history in Australia up to the early 1960s. It begins with an outline of the social and architectural background which the first white Australian settlers brought with them from Britain, "goes on to describe the conditions that faced the early architects and builders and discusses the methods adopted to overcome their problems of shortage of tools, materials and skills. Then as the new colonies gradually take root", Freeland "tells not only the what, when and by whom of the architecture of the next century and three-quarters but also, what is equally important but rare in an architectural history, the how and the why"<sup>7</sup>

It is still the only attempt at a national architectural history, and its narrative remains persistent and pervasive, in spite of much research in subsequent years. Freeland's architectural methodology can be traced to Morton Herman, exemplified in his 1954 book *The Early Australian Architects and their Work*,<sup>8</sup> wholly illustrated by Herman's own line drawings and plans of the examples, clearly

---

6 Of note is Paul Memmott, *Gunyah, Goondie and Wurley: Australian Aboriginal Architecture* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2007). Built works include Greg Burgess's *Institute of Koorie Education (2012)*, *Kata-Tjuta Cultural Centre (1995)* and Glenn Murcutt's *House for an Aboriginal Community (1992)*.

7 John Maxwell Freeland, *Architecture in Australia - a history* (Melbourne/Canberra/Sydney: F W Cheshire, 1968). Excerpts from publisher's descriptions from the first edition flyleaf.

8 Morton Herman, *The Early Australian Architects and their Work* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1954).

presenting a “white Modernist” aesthetic and approach to his subject.<sup>9</sup> Howard Tanner’s edited book *Architects of Australia* was published in 1981– this collection of largely biographical essays filled a gap in more detailed research of specific individual architects (the majority 19th century).<sup>10</sup> It did not set out to challenge Freeland’s construct, rather to complement it. Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds’ *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture* took a taxonomic approach, explaining, describing, and classifying buildings according to style indicators.<sup>11</sup> The essays are too few to contextualise the work in any depth or offer the reader a way of understanding or approaching a coherent architectural history. Further it encourages looking at the details rather than at the whole, presenting a fragmented, disparate view of architecture, let alone Australian architecture. In 2008, Goad and Willis urged reengagement with the bigger picture, in order to explore reframing Australian architectural history.<sup>12</sup> They subsequently embarked on researching and editing the *Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture* (2012).<sup>13</sup> The introductory essay positions the project and covers the breadth of the Encyclopaedia’s contents. To gauge the beginnings of architecture in Australia however, one must read the individual entries on the States and Territories, augmented by periods such as Colonial, Gothic, Renaissance Revival etc. as well as those on specific architects. The State entries acknowledge Australia’s Aboriginal heritage before examining European, generally British, precedents evident in the earliest building attempts (the uneasy conflation and/or slipping between European and British is addressed later in this paper).

To move towards a broader narrative: Miles Lewis has suggested that in the colonial period, “most buildings had to be modified if they were to survive at all in the new conditions”.<sup>14</sup> Thus, in Australia “the mud and brick quickly became acclimatised”.<sup>15</sup> Likewise bark buildings became an unequivocally local response to the presence of suitable barking trees. Yet the early Australian buildings held an echo of a cultivated background, reflecting the simple cottages of rural workers in villages in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. It was not long before more serious attempts were made to create the impression of a substantial and ‘civilized’ presence. From disastrous efforts to raise structures of poorly made brick, the settlement at Sydney Cove grew haltingly. Military, convict and free settlers alike aspired to the familiar, ‘high style’ architecture that symbolised a culture left behind. It soon became apparent that British institutions, taste and culture were to be imposed on the ‘new’ continent: the colony in New South Wales (NSW) was not viewed as an independent, nor

---

9 Joan Kerr, “Why architects should not write architectural history,” in *Shifting Views*, ed. Andrew Leach, Antony Moulis and Nicole Sully (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2008), 30–31.

10 Howard Tanner, ed., *Architects of Australia* (Melbourne/New York: Macmillan, 1981).

11 Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture* (North Ryde, NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1989).

12 Goad and Willis, “The bigger picture.”

13 Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*.

14 Miles Lewis, *Victorian Primitive* (Melbourne: Greenhouse Publications, 1977), 1.

15 Miles Lewis, *Victorian Primitive*, 1.

even potentially independent settlement. It was simply another outpost, an extension of the long arm of the British Empire.

The British model for settlement was not unlike the Roman *modus operandi*, where architecture “was a civilising mission and a sure means of establishing visibility.”<sup>16</sup> Governor Lachlan Macquarie arrived in the colony of NSW in 1810, ready to implant British ‘taste and order’. Notable is Macquarie’s training in British administrated India. Macquarie had the opportunity to appropriate first hand lessons learned through a regional experience and further them in colonial Australia. As patrons of architecture, Macquarie and his wife Elizabeth’s relationship with the convict architect Francis Greenway proved a fruitful one. In six short years Greenway not only translated their vision, but erected some of Australia’s finest colonial Georgian buildings.<sup>17</sup> While Macquarie’s hand may not be directly evident in the architecture or urban planning itself, he must be recognized for his geo-political acumen in his use of architecture to fabricate unity, identity and authority in a fledgling colonial settlement. Macquarie clearly believed that great building projects instilled political credence in himself as well as the British Empire. To what degree Macquarie’s success resulted from his travels and formative Indian origins needs further investigation. The exhibition and book, *India, China, Australia: Trade and Society 1788-1850* by Broadbent et al. reveals a lively exchange in trade, furnishings, decorative arts, etc.<sup>18</sup> Further research needs to be undertaken to ascertain the full influences in architecture and building. Clive Lucas has suggested that Australia’s colonial architecture, in NSW and Tasmania in particular, is first and foremost provincial architecture and only second colonial architecture - having roots in the heritage of the greater British Empire, and linking into the routes of the old East India Company. Stylistically such examples as the old Rum Hospital in Macquarie Street, Sydney, should therefore be considered to be British Colonial.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Alex Bremner argues that “the object of colonisation was the reproduction of the image and likeness of England.”<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to Sydney’s humble beginnings, the 1850s saw Melbourne change from an ambitious colonial outpost<sup>21</sup> to a prospering provincial city. Two major events in 1851 sped this process along: Victoria separated from NSW and significant gold deposits were unearthed in Victoria. Gold attracted people of all nationalities and many walks of life - including British Victorian migrant architects

---

16 Spiro Kostof, *A History Of Architecture: Settings and Rituals*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 192.

17 See Howard Tanner, “Francis Greenway: 1777-1837,” in *Architects of Australia*, ed. Howard Tanner (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1981); Malcolm Henry Ellis, *Francis Greenway: His Life and Times* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1978); Joseph Fowles, Sydney in 1848, facsimile, foreword by Morton Herman, (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1962); James Broadbent and Joy Hughes, *Francis Greenway Architect*, (Glebe NSW: Historic Houses Trust New South Wales, 1997).

18 James Broadbent, Suzanne Rickard and Margaret Steven, *India, China, Australia: Trade and Society 1788-1850* (Sydney: Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 2003); for Victoria, see also Paul McGregor, “Lowe Kong Meng and Chinese Engagement in the International Trade of Colonial Victoria,” *The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, no. 11 (2012); and the final section in this paper.

19 Clive Lucas, in *EAA*, ed. Goad and Willis, 162-63.

20 Alex Bremner, *Imperial Gothic. Religious Architecture and High Anglican Culture in the British Empire c1840 - 1870*, publ. for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 4.

21 Ann Galbally, *Redmond Barry: An Anglo-Irish Australian* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1995).

(fig.1) Kerr, Knight, Reed and Terry. As a consequence Melbourne's perception of itself changed radically. This newfound confidence was reflected in public, civic and ecclesiastical buildings that took on a new permanence and dignity. By their function and architectural styles, these buildings expressed the need to perpetuate western civilisation and its traditions in a 'new' land.



Fig. 1. Sample of Australia's Victorian architects (1840-70), exemplifying a largely linear transmission

Melbourne was arguably the greatest nineteenth century city in the world, even though the cultural institutions and their architectural expressions were clearly derivative.<sup>22</sup> The 'Queen City of the South' became a worthy representative of the British Empire. While Australia as a separate, unique identity did not exist in the psyche of Britain, certainly not in the eighteenth century, and not yet in the mid-nineteenth century, the heart of the Empire benefited enormously, both economically and intellectually, from its colonies in the Antipodes.

While the Georgian and Victorian architectures speak volumes of the cultural mind-set of the colonials, and the architectural legacy of Britain, other threads must be explored in parallel. In Australia three conditions presented themselves: the opportunity to build, the necessity to adapt, and the freedom to experiment. Australian architects read voraciously (periodicals and books) and travelled (interstate, across the Tasman and back 'home'). Architects came from Scotland, Germany, Canada and the US (e.g. J. A. B. Koch and J. H. Hunt), bringing "their own variations of architectural knowledge to Australia."<sup>23</sup> Settlers began to respond to the land and the climate, drawing on a new geo-cultural relationship evolved from place. For example, William Wardell finds the southern light plays havoc with stained glass in his Gothic Revival cathedrals in Melbourne (1858) and Sydney (1865); architects and sculptors are inspired by the native flora and fauna, which are interwoven into the architectural details, such as at A. J. MacDonal's (former) South Yarra Post Office (1982); local materials - stone and timbers - find expression through architectural design. In Melbourne bluestone and in Sydney sandstone materially affect perceptions. The boom years of the 1880s, which see Melbourne as the third wealthiest city in the world, are followed by a severe recession in the 1890s.<sup>24</sup> The Gothic Revival (with its emphasis on moralism, truthfulness and honest expression) gives over to Arts and Crafts towards the end of the 19th century, and allows Art Nouveau to flourish (c1890 - c1910)

22 Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (Harmondsworth: Penguin - Pelican Book, 1968); Miles Lewis, *Melbourne: the City's History and Development*, (Melbourne: City of Melbourne, 2nd ed: 1996).

23 Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, xxix; refer also to Miles Lewis, "The French Connection: the Secret History of French Influence in Australian Architecture," *Journal of Australian Colonial History* vol. 8 (2006): 91-116.

24 Freeland, chapter 9; "Marking Place: An Outline History of Australian Architecture," in *EAA*, ed. Goad and Willis, xxix.

in the work of the harbingers of modernism: Haddon, Jones, Annear and Dods.<sup>25</sup> Subtle changes in response to place and environment occur; thoughts from elsewhere are filtered; ideas evolve; and impositions are influenced by multiple exchanges.

## Process: Depression to World War II

While nineteenth century processes were largely about narratives of identity seen through the lens of colonialism and empire, the twentieth was defined more through diverse flows of influence that brought modernity, modernism and the moderne to Australia which saw its further evolution and social distinction in the post-war period.<sup>26</sup> A new set of influxes harking from Continental Europe and the United States, brought Australia's architects out from under the aegis of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Arts and Crafts, Beaux Arts Education systems and short spells of Colonial revivalism to come to terms with and, in some cases, fully embrace Modernism. After WWI, lines of influence shifted from theoretical writings to the direct experience of modern work that overseas travel offered. This was sparked on one level by fresh reports from returning WWI soldiers (some of whom, like Cobden Parkes, were architects). The real driver, though, was the development of shipping technology.

Movement of both people and goods between Australia and the rest of the world now saw a marked increase - more people travelled, faster, more comfortably and on a wider range of purpose-built passenger liners (with appropriately modern interiors)<sup>27</sup> and this meant modern furniture, furnishings and architectural journals were more speedily received and disseminated. Shipping routes, principally through the Suez Canal, were such that stops in Asia from Colombo or Mumbai were also incorporated either on the way out or along the return journey.<sup>28</sup> This facilitated a two-way flow of influence that was further fuelled by the economic effects of the Depression. During this period, as much as twenty percent of Australia's architecture profession was working in London and a number of Australian architects completed their degrees at the Architectural Association in London.<sup>29</sup> This, in turn, brought about major shifts in the mode of architectural education. Architects

---

25 Freeland, chapters 9 and 10; Harriet Edquist in EAA, ed. Goad and Willis, 43-46; Harriet Edquist, *Pioneers of Modernism: the Arts and Crafts movement in Australia* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Publishing - Miegunyah Press, 2008); Trevor Howells, *Towards the Dawn: Federation Architecture in Australia, 1890 - 1915* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1989).

26 For a discussion of the distinction between Moderne and Modernism in Australia see EAA, ed. Goad and Willis, 462-67.

27 Museum Victoria, "1900s-1920s: An Assisted Journey", <http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/websites-mini/journeys-australia/1900s20s/> & Australian National Maritime Museum, "Passenger ships to Australia: A comparison of vessels and journey times to Australia between 1788 and 1960," accessed 15 May 2014. <http://www.anmm.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=1486#1931>.

28 Museum Victoria, "Routes 1900s-20s," accessed 15 May 2014, <http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/websites-mini/journeys-australia/1900s20s/routes-1900s20s/> & "Routes & Stopovers," <http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/websites-mini/journeys-australia/1940s60s/routes-and-stopovers/>

29 David Saunders, "So I decided to go overseas," [Pt.1], *Architecture Australia* (Feb./March 1977): 22; and EAA, ed. Goad and Willis, 29.

teaching in the Universities and Technical Colleges came back from their own travels to relay their experiences and to strongly encourage students to complete their education with extensive travel.<sup>30</sup>

The 1920s and 30s saw more Australian architects travelling to Europe and the United States: one *fons*, the other *origo* of Modernist practice.<sup>31</sup> On these trips, architects experienced a wide selection of works, both contemporary and from the past. What is more, the materials and contexts of modern works were being experienced in colour and not through the stark medium of black and white photographs. Despite the similarities between them as 'new countries' there was significantly less travel and work undertaken in the United States. An exception is Arthur Stephenson who, after an extensive research trip to the United States (and Europe) studying hospital design, built some of the first examples of modern architecture in Australia.<sup>32</sup>

Australian architects bucked the trend offered by the still conservative Beaux Arts educational model they trained under and actively sought work in offices (often headed by Continental Europeans) that were bringing Modern ideas across the Channel.<sup>33</sup> The presence and influence of Australian architects in these offices indicates that flows of influence were beginning to change direction.



Fig. 2. Sample of Australia's Modernist architects (period 1910-40s). Illustrates greater globalized travel and (significantly) the change of access point to or within Europe that provides contact the British colonies of Asia. Trips abroad were common during this period, with greatest frequency being two-way travel to London (1930s).

Flows of movement tended to be architects from New South Wales and Victoria who had access to scholarships (fig. 2).<sup>34</sup> Australia's architectural travellers, however, did travel on their own funds (Ancher), were sponsored by firms or clients to go on research trips or took out loans (Stephenson). Their locations were as diverse as their modes of travel (Eric Andrew travelled Europe by bicycle) and figure 2 also illustrates a number of trips across the United States, some cross-Tasman traffic

30 David Saunders, "So I decided to go overseas," 23.

31 Philip Goad, "Modernism, Colonialism and the Lesson of Travel: Australian Architects in Europe and Great Britain 1925-1940," in *Other Modernisms. Proceedings of the IXth International Docomomo Conference*, ed. Yildiz Salman, Theodore H. M. Prudon and Katherine Malishewsky (September 25-29, 2006), 141-50.

32 Julie Willis, "Machines for healing," *Architecture Australia*, 91:4 (Jul/Aug 2002): 46-47; also Philip Goad, Rowan Wilken and Julie Willis, *Australian Modern. The Architecture of Stephenson & Turner*, (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2004), 11, 15-18.

33 Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 446; Sydney University's Leslie Wilkinson would 'dazzle' students with his travel sketches and urged travel on a constant basis; see Saunders, "So I decided to go overseas," 23. Raymond McGrath is an exceptional figure in this instance, who soon after moving to London in 1930, set up the Twentieth Century group and was very often the first point of contact for young architects fresh off the boat. Saunders, "So I decided to go overseas," 23-27.

34 "The Board of Architects of New South Wales. Travelling Scholarships," *Architecture* 7 (1937): 152. The NSW scholarship later the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship (that still exists today) and the Victorian was funded by the Robert and Ada Haddon bequest, Saunders, 23.

and Lewis, Stephenson and Overend's trips to Asia. They were often intrepid and added trips 'off the beaten track' to Francis Yerbury's famous tours of Northern European Modernism with students of the Architectural Association (where they often also studied).<sup>35</sup> Yerbury was essentially the 'curator' of this line of influence as the architects on tour were principally exposed to the work of the Dutch and Scandinavian modernists.<sup>36</sup> Interest in German architecture was centred mainly on social housing, Italian modernism was considered a kind of 'Fascist curiosity' and Le Corbusier was almost entirely ignored.<sup>37</sup>

Another line of influence can be traced on the travellers' return to Australia. If they were not teaching students in the university and technical colleges,<sup>38</sup> they were giving talks and lantern lectures either in more public contexts or (more usually) in the rooms of the RAI. Their knowledge and experiences were further disseminated through the photographs, sketches and written reports published in the Institute's journals. A series of articles that practiced a photographic mode of translation was one by Morton Herman whose "Comparisons of Architectural Solutions" showed photographs of telephone boxes and tram stops (a new universal architecture) and discussed how solutions were arrived at in Sydney versus cities like Milan and Augsburg. This brings forth another issue: that of audience. The lectures and reports, although public, were principally for other architects, helping to reinforce and proliferate the well-entrenched Eurocentric ideals encountered by much of the architectural community in all available media.

Publications available to Australian architects were largely of British authorship which, until the late 1920s, reinforced attitudes that Modernism was something that "happened on Continent" and should only be considered in terms of its "freakishness."<sup>39</sup> In fact, before the arrival in England of Mendelsohn, Gropius and Breuer, the English Modern movement barely existed.<sup>40</sup> Australian journals that featured 'modern' designs were either based on the glossy magazines of the US (like *Australian Home Beautiful*) or focussed on modernity through its pragmatic and technical aspects

---

35 Grounds, Stephenson, Overend, Norris, Herman and Meldrum (amongst others) all travelled to the US. Of particular interest for their diverse itineraries are A.G Stephenson and Best Overend. In addition to the usual stints in London and Yerbury's tours of Dutch Modernism, Stephenson travelled to Port Moresby & the USSR and Overend spent time in Japan, China & Siberia. Philip Goad, "Best Overend," in *EAA*, ed. Goad and Willis, 521-22; and Julie Willis, "A. G. Stephenson," *EAA*, ed. Goad and Willis, 651-52.

36 The archives of the Architectural Association are, as yet, largely uncatalogued. A preliminary check has revealed financial records detailing an excursion to Switzerland in 1934, a flyer for a trip to Paris in 1937 and an itinerary for a trip to Czechoslovakia in 1936. Many visits to Holland, Sweden, Denmark were documented in detail in the *AA Journal*.

37 See for example: E. Garthside, "The Lessons from Modern German Architecture," *Architecture* 7 (1934): 145; S. G. Hirst, "Swedish and Danish Architecture. Third report by Sydney G. Hirst, Board of Architects' Travelling Scholar," *Architecture* 4 (1936): 90; G. McDonnell, "The Acid Test on Architectural Travel," *Architecture* 4 (1938): 89; and H.Orr, "Travels on the Continent," *Architecture* 1 (1939): 18.

38 Prominent and influential teachers like Stephenson (Swinburne Tech), Lewis & Irwin (Melbourne University), Bill Robertson (Perth Tech) and Leslie Wilkinson (Sydney) were all extensively travelled. See Saunders, "So I decided to go overseas," 23.

39 Donald Leslie Johnson, *Australian Architecture 1901-51. Sources of Modernism* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980), 78-80; and *EAA*, ed. Goad and Willis, 465-66.

40 Saunders, "So I decided to go overseas," 23. It is revealing that the chapters on British Architecture in Kenneth Frampton's *Modern Architecture: a Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985) span the years 1836 to 1924 and 1949 to 1959, thus entirely omitting the 1930s.

(like *Constructional Review*) or were under the control of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (like *Architecture*).<sup>41</sup> The RAI journals had a particular agenda in promoting travel as they funded scholars to travel overseas; a crucial opportunity given the financial restraints of the Depression Era. Imported architectural journals were less available; a review of holdings in Australian libraries in the 1930s reveals that while journals from England and the United States were available in most State and University Libraries, publications like *Architecture d'aujourd'hui* and *Domus* were only available at Sydney University, and German journals, like *Bauwelt*, were conspicuously absent.

Publication was not limited to journals. Seminal modern texts like Le Corbusier's *Vers une Architecture* were available to Australian architects within 10 months of publication, 20th century versions of Pattern Books, research undertaken by the Commonwealth Housing commission and publications by architects (as a result of their extensive travel) allowed for the further evolution of this trend and the adaptation of overseas models began to show a real concern and experimentation with an architecture appropriate to climate.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the significant flow and exchange that occurred through travel, publication and education, there are three more specific lines of influence that this paper raises as issues both in the context of the development of Modernism and in the formation of Australian architecture as a whole. First, the formation of the MARS group; both founders and members were well travelled and exerted their influence of Australian architecture also through their presence on the judging panels of the Sulman award.<sup>43</sup> Second, Sydney and Melbourne held exhibitions on new architecture at the same time as the famous *Weissenhofsiedlung*, thus placing into the dispute the infamous 'time lag' between the modern ideas born in Europe and arriving only much later to Australia.<sup>44</sup> Third, the role of Walter Burley and Marion Mahoney Griffin (and less famous other migrants/émigrés), which is dealt with in the following section.<sup>45</sup>

What matters most in terms of lines of influence was that the experience and the information gathered was, once home, disseminated to others and applied to what was built in Australia. Is it only a case of 'lens' and 'filter', of looking at obvious examples with the classic historian's practice of inferring influence through formal and material resemblance for example, between the town halls at Hilversum and Heidelberg? How useful is this for architectural history? How does this method of identifying historicised architecture give rise to understanding the necessary changes Dudok's idea underwent in order to be legible on the other side of Peck and Kemter's translation? This is

---

41 Johnson, *Australian Architecture 1901-51*, 77-78; Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 35, 37.

42 Goad and Willis, eds., *EAA*, 465; Miles Lewis, "Pattern Books," in *EAA*, 532. Perrot lived and worked in New York before WWI and returned there in the 1920s on an extensive research trip documenting hotel design. John Statham, in *EAA*, ed. Goad and Willis, 537.

43 It is not a coincidence that when the MARS Australia group was set up in 1939, that it was done by Morton Herman and Walter Bunning both of whom spent significant time overseas, Saunders, "So I decided to go overseas,"; Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 462.

44 Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 465. See also Johnson, 90.

45 Johnson assigns a role of primary importance to the presence of the Griffins and the influence exerted on their followers in *Sources of Modernism*, 105-31. See also Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 297-300.

especially relevant since neither architect is known to have travelled and that their contact with "overseas approaches to design was limited to their involvement with the Griffins for the designs of the Capitol Theatre."<sup>46</sup> This is but one example which prompts a broader question: What further lines of influence can be drawn?



Fig. 3. Left: W.M Dudok, Hilversum Town Hall, 1924, built 1928-31, image courtesy of Wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Raadhuis\_in\_Hilversum,\_the\_Netherlands.jpg. Right: Peck and Kemter, Heidelberg Town Hall, 1937, image courtesy of [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Heidelberg\\_Town\\_Hall\\_01a.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Heidelberg_Town_Hall_01a.jpg).

## Networks: Pre and Post War European Émigrés

Charting the routes of émigré architects who settled in Australia either side of WWII shows a dominant origin of continental Europe and a strong influence of a central modernist agenda, education and references (fig.4). In addition to Harry Seidler and Frederick Romberg (continental Europeans) who are nationally recognized and whose work holds a significant place in the history of Australian architecture, the *Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture (EAA)* has more than thirty entries on individual émigré architects. These entries both capture the individual scholar's research efforts and give rise to the question about the collective contribution, role and influence of émigrés on Australian architecture.

By piecing together the detail of the separate entries and the influx of émigré architects in the period between 1930 and 1950, the reader is struck by an impressive potential architectural contribution arriving in Australia, or in Bourdieu's theory, a cultural capital of modernist architecture.<sup>47</sup> Milston had formed a firm Mühlstein & Fürth (part of the Prague avant-garde) with Kafka included in their circle (Townsend). Fooks (Fuchs) had already received a PhD in town planning from the University of Vienna (Edquist). Jelinek studied under functionalist Jaroslav Fragner in Prague, providing evidence of a powerful pioneering modernist idiom and agenda arriving in Australia (Benjamin).<sup>48</sup> Much of the historiography of Australian architecture to date has taken a monographic, discrete biographical approach. There is much less research that develops

46 Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 534.

47 D. Fershtman and A. Nitzan-Shifan, "The politics of historiography: Writing an architectural canon into post-war American national identity," *National Identities* 13:1 (March 2011): 67-88; Harry Margalit and Paola Favaro, "The Local and the Migrant: Limits of Mutual Recognition," in *LIMITS. Proceedings from the 21st Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Harriet Edquist and Hélène Frichot (Melbourne: SAHANZ, 2004), 315-18.

48 See entries in *EAA*, Goad and Willis, eds.: Townsend, 457; Edquist, 258; Margalit, 519; Goad, 661; Hanna, 112; Benjamin, 365; Myers, 13. Oser had been employed by Oswald Haerdtl and Josef Hoffman (Margalit). Hans Poelzig influenced both Strizic (work) and Eva Buhrich (study) (Goad; Hanna). Assisted in their passage to Australia by Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff, the Buhrich's were influenced by the Modern Expressionists and the work of Alfred Roth, tying their work to the 'béton brut' movement (Myers).

a perspective on the role of émigré architects as a collective phenomenon, or their contribution to Australian architecture as a collective.<sup>49</sup> Edquist's and Townsend's works addressing a growing Jewish community points to a lack of discussion about this phenomenon in Australia.<sup>50</sup> This section concerns the role of émigré architects in Australian architectural history, and in particular their impact on modernism and how this was played out in Australia.

What is the definition of 'émigré architect'?<sup>51</sup> Technically 'émigré architect' defines any person who already has an architecture degree prior to migrating to another country. But this definition erodes the theoretical import. Recent histories of émigrés relate to the period on either side of WWII (1930s - 1950s) when professionals, artists and intellectuals left their home countries as a response to totalitarian regimes that were developing first in Germany, Italy, and Spain, and later in the Eastern Bloc.<sup>52</sup> In this sense the discourse of émigrés is exilic. Émigré is not often considered the same as migrant. Yet both émigré and migrant involve a journey of migration and share some of the histories of migrants, including struggles about belonging, displacement, language, re-settlement and agency. The biographies of Taglietti and Smrekar, arriving in the 1960s, can be contextualised by the influx of migrants from southern Europe. In the same section on migration, but in a later paragraph, a note about British émigré architects is made. Blurring the boundaries between émigré, migrant and settler-migrant produces confusion in the discourse on Australian architecture and cultural studies. In what sense can the architects from British origins and those of European origins be discussed together under the rubrics of émigré? British subjects assumed an equal position, and sometimes, superior status, as subjects in Australia, with greater agency and access to institutional infrastructure.

Knowledge of the English language differentiates any British migrant from other migrants who do not have English as their first language, and is synonymous with a capacity for agency and access to a professional network of institutional infrastructure. These two points illustrate the critical ways in which a discourse on British émigré architects cannot be conflated with a discourse on European or other émigré architects, or immigrants per se.<sup>53</sup> In contrast to British architects, very few of the European émigré architects were able to gain employment as architects because their professional

---

49 R. Hawcroft, "Migrant Architects Practicing Modern Architecture in Sydney, 1930-1960," in *Unloved Modern*, 2009.

50 C. Townsend, "Architects, exiles, 'new' Australians," in *Firm(ness) commodity DE-light?: questioning the canons. Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia & New Zealand* (Melbourne: SAHANZ, 1998), 379-87; Harriet Edquist, "The Jewish Contribution: A Missing Chapter," in *45 Storeys. A Retrospective of Works by Melbourne Jewish architects from 1945*, Exhibition catalogue (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, March 1993), 6-11.

51 A close reading of the Goad's entry on "Modernism" with a focus on the section on "Migration" and the role of émigré architects provides a threshold for this discussion, see *EAA*, ed. Goad and Willis, 464-67.

52 A post-colonial position argues that émigré, exile, refugee and migrant need to be differentiated, and that émigré is not similar to refugee or exile. Buckley and Hochscherf, "Introduction: From German 'Invasion' to transnationalism: Continental European Émigrés and Visual Culture in Britain, 1933-56," in *Visual Culture in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2012), 158.

53 Sneja Gunew, *Haunted Nations: The colonial dimensions of multiculturalisms* (London: Routledge 2004); Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 1998).

degrees were not recognised.<sup>54</sup> Australian institutions referred to RIBA for the recognition of foreign degrees illustrating that British origins received a key superior reference in Australian practice. Despite gaining degrees from prestigious institutions, Jelinek ended up with other educated but unrecognized figures working on the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Milston, Molnar and Eva Buhrich became architectural draftspeople and Fooks worked as assistant to the head of the Victorian Housing Commission.<sup>55</sup>



Fig. 4. Sample of Australia's European Émigré architects (1930-60s). Concentrated mobility of internal European travel prior to late 1930s emigration is evident.

A second issue is that of parallel histories and contexts in relation to other nations and disciplines. The textuality surrounding accounts of émigré artists and architects (and art historians) is highlighted in the catalogue-book *Exiles and Emigrés: the flight of European artists from Hitler*.<sup>56</sup> This had a dramatic impact on American art and thinking about art that came about by a combination of a “rapid and highly concentrated infusion of avant-garde European art and thought” and “the tumultuous historical situation.”<sup>57</sup> A new historical possibility through “the license for American artists to become émigrés or exiles in their own country” developed as the last full-fledged form of European style avant-garde.<sup>58</sup> While comparison is a complicated process, the question remains: why did such a concentration of many ‘avant-garde’ architects arriving in Australia not have a similar effect on Australian modernism?<sup>59</sup>

The outline on ‘Modernism’ identified as originating in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s in the *EAA* illustrates firstly that modernism entered Australia as an inward flow of new and radical ideas, and secondly, that this was challenging for Australia. Phrases focus on an already “existing architectural culture” and an established “critical filter”, constructing Australia through a framework of cultural

54 The ARBV sought legal advice from the RIBA and was informed that it did not recognise the architectural degrees of European universities, see C. Townsend, 1998.

55 See *EAA*, ed. Goad and Willis: entries Edquist, 258; Margalit, 519; Hanna, 112; Benjamin, 365; Myers, 13. See Harriet Edquist, *Ernest Fooks: Architects, Exhibition catalogue, Jewish Museum of Australia* (Melbourne: School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University, 2001).

56 Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, ed., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969); Stephanie Barron, *Exiles and Emigrés: the flight of European artists from Hitler* (Los Angeles/ New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art/Abrams, 1997). Review by H. Kramer, “The age of émigrés,” *New Criterion*, 15:8 (April 1997), (07340222, accessed January 2014).

57 H. Kramer, “The age of émigrés.”

58 H. Kramer, “The age of émigrés.”

59 Roger Butler, ed., *The Europeans: Émigré artists in Australia 1930-1960*, (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1997); *Art in Australia*, Émigré edition, 30:4 (Winter 1993).

confrontation and divisions within the borders of its geographical island outline.<sup>60</sup> The implication is a perception of a complicated and uneasy fit between European modernism and Australian architecture. Undoubtedly, Europe was also eclectic, with a stronger more embedded critical filter. But what makes Australia so perceivably unique in the reception of modernism, and more precisely for this section of the paper, the acceptance of the architectural culture that émigré architects brought with them?

In the brief text on 'Migration', Goad states that the émigré architects coming from a European context between the 1930s and 1950s "brought with them an already mediated, or at the very least, different form of modernism to Australia."<sup>61</sup> But if modernism is European, and developed in the 1920s and 1930s when the émigré architects were educated, what is it different to? That the British reference is 'inevitable' for Australia is indicative. This brings the issue to the question of the reception of modernism in Britain. In mainstream architectural history, the German émigré, Nikolaus Pevsner, is one of the most influential figures of the reception and production of modernism in Britain. However, his statement "England has indeed profited from the un-Englishness of the immigrants as they have profited from the Englishing they underwent,"<sup>62</sup> published in 1955, was not the dominant sentiment. While academic and public views of the émigré changed from a negative image of an invasion to an appreciation of the positive impact on British visual culture, a new thesis of Britishness has also emerged on the historical horizon. This is most evident in a 2007 publication *Re-forming Britain: Narratives of modernity before reconstruction*, in which Elizabeth Darling argues that Pevsner's thesis that the modern movement was developed by émigré architects is valid, but is only a partial account and shows the methodological bias of Pevsner.<sup>63</sup> Darling goes on to doubt and discount the significance of the contribution by émigré architects.<sup>64</sup>

In Australia, the role of Brian Lewis, returning from his studies and work in England after 1947, and establishing a new curriculum in architectural education in Melbourne, was influential. Lewis invited progressive practitioners, including émigré architects Fritz Janeba (Viennese), Frederick Romberg (German), and Zdenko Strizic (Yugoslav) to teach at the University of Melbourne. However, their role is limited: Janeba returned to Europe and Strizic went on to become Dean at MIT. Lewis's curriculum moved towards building science and the scientific study of architecture that he had learnt in "the

---

60 Philip Goad, "Modernism," in Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 464-67.

61 Philip Goad, "Modernism," in Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 464-67.

62 Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Englishness of English Art* (London: The Architectural Press, 1955), 185; Charlotte Benton, *A Different World: Émigré Architects in Britain, 1928-58* (London: RIBA Heinz Gallery, 1995).

63 Elizabeth Darling, *Re-forming Britain: Narratives of modernity before reconstruction* (London: Routledge, 2007), 1-2. Interestingly, after the first two pages of the introduction, Pevsner is not mentioned again in the book, and Darling also disclaims the role of 'the colonial sons' who in the late 1920s formed a movement that adapted the émigré architects' European modernism.

64 The trajectories of many émigrés was not often a simple transfer to a destination, movement across several countries was more typical, and for many movement beyond Britain to America, Canada, Australia or New Zealand was also likely.

English-based Building Research Station".<sup>65</sup> An exception is Molnar who was offered a lecturing position at the University of Sydney in 1945.<sup>66</sup>

This contrast of the reception of émigré architects between Britain and America is significant for the Australian reception. It is fair to state that a discourse of uniqueness and locality screens Australia's inevitable reference to Britain, and its cultural alliance to a motherland/colonizing figure. There are exceptions and complexities. Many of these can be explained better if agency and access to networks and institutional support is considered, rather than the prism of authorship alone.<sup>67</sup> Many émigrés eventually formed their own practice, encouraged by a connected Jewish community,<sup>68</sup> while others enjoyed recognition from the rare but significant commission; Jelinek's *Round House* (1957) is a Canberra icon.<sup>69</sup> It would be too simple to dismiss this as a result of individual circumstance or attitude. However, the common occurrence of émigré architects, arriving with respectable degrees, design talent, and a keen agenda to work, having to struggle to work as architects is a critical discussion still to be debated.<sup>70</sup> Consideration about whether, and what, changes evolved beyond this generation of 'new Australian architects', makes this all the more pertinent.<sup>71</sup>

## Chopstick Traces: A Secret Australian History in Asian Architecture (Apologies to Greil Marcus)

Australia's architectural engagement with Asia appears at first glance as a disparate and isolated cabinet of architectural curiosities compared to the major arcs of British-filtered European and North American influence. However, in the reorientation of Asian modernity towards its own dynamic history and growth, it is worth considering Australia's own orientation in regards to its region. As the maps in this paper clearly illustrate, the sheer physical distance from Europe to Australia and the intermediate location of Asia suggest the inevitability of political and economic and cultural connections.

---

65 Philip Goad, "Brian Lewis," in Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 405.

66 Philip Goad, "George Molnar," in Goad and Willis, ed., *EAA*, 467.

67 Exceptions emerge with key figures - Boyd's and Grounds' appropriation and development of modernism, and their collaboration with Romberg, gives him the kind of access to institutional infrastructure that other émigré architects do not have. Seidler's narrative is singular in that his agency is developed through his family.

68 The initiative of Krantz and Sheldon in Perth included greeting the recently arrived architects directly at the port as they disembarked. Krantz, himself an émigré architect, took Iwanoff to the office. Conversation with Hanna Lewi, March 2014.

69 Several gave up their architectural careers and pursued a profile through other means: Eva Buhrich eventually became a columnist for the Sydney Morning Herald, Molnar produced more than three thousand cartoons, and Fooks delivered lectures, wrote books, and developed a profile as a painter.

70 Even less fortunate are the histories of demolished works designed by these architects; including Jelinek's *Peregian Beach Roadhouse/Motel* (1961); and later Smrekar's *San Giorgio Restaurant*, Melbourne and Taglietti's Flynn Primary School, Canberra (1972), amongst others.

71 Mirjana Lozanovska, ed., "New Australian Architecture," *Architect* (Melbourne: Journal of the RAI, Victorian Chapter, April 2002).

Australia's position as post-settler colony makes the resultant nation both complicit within, and subject of the imperial and colonial project. It is complicit in being (literally) seen as the progeny of Empire. Nevertheless, following the gold rushes of the mid-nineteenth century, there was significant Asian immigration to colonial Australia. It is well known that Chinese settlements were established in gold mining towns and that Afghans developed inland trade routes in central and southern Australia.<sup>72</sup> Nineteenth-century Chinese temples and Mosques remain as a legacy of this. Trade connections also led to Singaporean timber kit cottages being imported to Victoria. However, these architectural developments are generally considered to be interesting but marginal to the main lines of influence within the development of Australian architecture, either restricted to particular communities on the margins of Australian society or particular contingencies (the Singaporean cottages being imported in response to an acute shortage of housing in the wake of the Victorian gold rushes).

Overtly Asian cultural influences on Australian architects also remained of marginal interest throughout the colonial period and for the first half of the twentieth century. Examples are notable for their curiosity, rather than their import for the nation's architectural future. Ironically, this even applies to the Griffins' design for the proposed *Capitol Building* in Canberra, which if it had been built in the manner that it was depicted in Marion Mahoney Griffin's elevation renderings, would have borne a distinct resemblance to the Ananda Pahto temple at Pagan in Myanmar.<sup>73</sup> At the time, while a few Australian architects visited Japan,<sup>74</sup> the only other Australian architect positing an Asian future was the eccentric William Hardy Wilson, whose merging (as he saw it) of the world's two greatest architectural traditions of Greece and China only found its constructed expression in isolated garden pavilions, notably the Chinese-style teahouse at Eryldene in Sydney (1927).<sup>75</sup>

In northern Australia, Asian connections were more integral to the nature of buildings. The relative similarity of the climate of northern Australia to tropical and sub-tropical Asia (in contrast to the 'temperate' climate of Europe) and colonial connections between Australia, India and Malaya led to the adaptation of such tropical or sub-tropical building types as the Bengali *bangla* pavilion via the East India Company's *bungalow* to its counterparts in the Queensland and Northern Territory bungalow.<sup>76</sup> Developed in the nineteenth century and then formalised by architects such as Karl Langer in the 1930s, the raised floors and light construction of these northern Australian buildings are typologically related to traditional Austronesian dwellings filtered through European

---

72 Afghans included people from Afghanistan, as well as that part of British India that is now Pakistan.

73 Geoffrey John Turnbull, "The Architecture of Newman College" (PhD diss., University of Melbourne, 2004); and email correspondence with author, 2013.

74 For example Best Overend visited Japan in 1937, noted in Philip Goad, "Overend, Best," in *EAA*.

75 William Hardy Wilson, *Grecian and Chinese Architecture* (Melbourne: W. H. Wilson, 1937); see also Zeny Edwards, *The Grecian Pagoda and the Architecture of Eryldene* (Sydney: Zed, 1995) and *William Hardy Wilson: Artist, Architect, Orientalist, Visionary* (Sydney: Watermark, 2001).

76 Madhevi Desai, Miki Desai, Jon Lang, *The Bungalow in Twentieth Century India: The Cultural Expression of Changing Ways of Life and Aspirations in the Domestic Architecture of Colonial and Post-colonial Society* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Broadbent, Rickard & Steven, *India, China, Australia: Trade and Society 1788-1850*.

sensibilities, though local arguments for their promulgation were framed very much in pragmatic and scientific rather than cultural terms.<sup>77</sup>

While embedded in this pragmatic environment it is also within a gradually broadening view of the nation's role within the Asian region that Australia's architectural influence on postcolonial Asia can be viewed. A large part of this influence was due to education, in particular the influx of Asian students. This influx was given initial impetus by the Colombo Plan (1951) as a communist disincentive in assisting the development of Commonwealth countries in South and Southeast Asia.<sup>78</sup> Sponsoring the local education of international students from newly independent nations, the programme's outcomes include a number of significant architects (e.g. Hijjas Kasturi in Malaysia) and architectural educators (e.g. K. R. S. Pieris in Sri Lanka).<sup>79</sup> Architectural education grew from such beginnings to become an export industry to the extent that, by the 1980s, it was estimated ninety per cent of Malaysian architects had an Australian qualification.<sup>80</sup>

The broader implications of Australia as a growing location for Asian architectural education have yet to be fully analysed. However a number of lines of immediate influence can be identified. Connecting Colombo Plan scholars, their places of origins and his own interest in their particular architectural histories, Hugh O'Neill pioneered the teaching of Asian Architectural History at the University of Melbourne in 1962. However while O'Neill's broad interest in Asian architecture was unusual in the 1960s, there was wider interest in the architecture of one particular Asian country. While the interest of early Western modernists in traditional Japanese architecture is well known, the appreciation of modern Japanese architecture as a source of ideas and inspiration (particularly the Metabolist works of Tange, Isozaki, Kurokawa et al.) was greatly boosted by Robin Boyd's writing on Japanese architects, notably his *KenzoTange* (1961) and *New Directions in Japanese Architecture* (1968).<sup>81</sup> For instance Boyd's monograph on Tange inspired Bernard Joyce's visit to Japan in 1962 and subsequently his teaching of architecture students at RMIT University as well as Joyce Nankivell's architectural work in Malaysia (Perak Turf Club 1964; Australian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur 1978).<sup>82</sup> Such works demonstrated the capacity for a non-Western architecture (notwithstanding post-war Japanese architects' adaptation of Western Modernist ideas) to be appreciated, translated and re-contextualized.

This re-contextualization of Asian-derived typologies was combined with earlier investigation into tropical typologies in Queensland in the 1980s where architects such as Rex Addison, Russell Hall,

---

77 Karl Langer, *Sub-tropical housing in Queensland* (Brisbane: A. H. Tucker, 1944).

78 Daniel Oakham, *Facing Asia: A History of the Colombo Plan* (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2004).

79 Anoma Pieris, *Architecture and Nationalism in Sri Lanka: The Trouser Under the Cloth* (London: Routledge, 2012).

80 L. Williams, "Koala Lumpur: The Colombo Plan which brought Asian students to Australia for higher education has borne fruit," *The Age*, Melbourne, 5 December, 1986.

81 Robin Boyd, *KenzoTange* (New York: George Braziller, 1962); and *New Directions in Japanese Architecture* (New York: George Braziller, 1968).

82 Rohan Storey, *Total Car Park Melbourne Heritage Action (MHA) Report* (unpublished Report 2012); Harriet Edquist, "William Nankivell Collection: William Nankivell (1928-2002) architect," in *RMIT Design Archives Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2011).

Brit Andresen and Gabriel Poole developed semantic and compositional bases for regional inflection that were clearly based on experience (both Addison and Hall practiced in Papua New Guinea) and an interest in cultural as well as climatic engagement. This is demonstrated by the upswept gable roofs of Poole's Gartner House (1990) and the *haustambaran*-like composition of Hall's Boroko Office and Shops (1978). At the same time, the increasing presence of Australian ex-patriots (e.g. Kerry Hill and Richard Hassall of WOHA in Singapore) and branches of large Australian-based firms (e.g. Hassell in Bangkok, Woods Bagot in Hong Kong) indicated the growth of Australian architectonic engagement within Asia itself.<sup>83</sup>

A more visceral level of Asian-Australian cultural-architectural engagement was engendered by the first major influx of Asian immigrants to Australia; that of Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian refugees (Sri Lankan, Lao, Cambodian, Thai and Indian) in the 1970s and 1980s. The result has not only been the arrival of particular typologies of religious and cultural architecture (e.g. Vietnamese Buddhist temples) but new commercial and inhabitation patterns within Australian cities and suburbs. The buildings of these recent migrants have an uncertain status as architecture, their often literal translations of traditional tropes hybridised more by the "emergent provisionality of the present"<sup>84</sup> rather than architectonic deliberation. However these buildings also speak of Australia's changing demography, a situation in which, as Papastergiadis has noted, the nation's cultural identity has moved from being framed as loss (the tyranny of distance between an emigrant people and their origins) to one of surplus (the overabundance of identities within a hybridizing/localising populace of diverse origins).<sup>85</sup> Consequently, what is important here is not so much that the architecture of these more recent immigrants be recorded, but that they should be understood as being intrinsically Australian.



Fig. 5. Sample of Australia's Regional Influences (1850-2000s).

In a global sense, this blurring of the boundaries between traditional and modern, Asian and Australian, as well as between formal (high) or informal (vernacular) architects provokes on-going questions about Australia's architectural identity in a world where Asia's power and influence is steadily growing in economic, political and cultural terms. Post-colonial Asia has come to redefine

83 Justine Clark, "Export: Exchange, Dialogue, Export - Mapping Australian Architecture Across the Globe," and "Architecture Australia Diaspora Survey Map 2010," in *Architecture Australia* (September/October 2010, 'The Export Issue - Australian architecture around the world').

84 H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 216.

85 Nikos Papastergiadis, *Spatial Aesthetics: Art, Place and the Everyday* (London: Rivers Oram, 2006).

its modernity, not only in reference to the West but also increasingly in relation to intra-Asian developments. Increasingly, Asian architects such as William Lim in Singapore have been challenging the conflation of universal with 'Western' within their received definition of architectural modernity.<sup>86</sup> As a result, the late twentieth to early twenty-first century provincializing of Europe, as Chakrabarty has put it, places Australia as a conduit for particular forms of modernity from both East and West.<sup>87</sup> The development of Australian architectural identity and its relationship to Asia need to be seen in this re-orientated definition of modernity.



**Fig. 6.** A sample of Australian transnational architectural firms linking permanent national and international offices (November 2013). Change in transmission leads to a change in volume.

## Revising Historiography as Translation

Australia is a place of on-going architectural translation. If considered collectively, the flows and productions of those lines explored represent an overlapping series of geo-cultural mobilities that both complement and problematize totalizing narratives of British/North American influence on Australian architectural historiography. Through this exploration of narratives, processes, networks and traces we partially inflect and enrich the Australian architectural narrative, but more pointedly aim to indicate how understanding these traces can provide clues for a way of reconciling Australia's shifting geo-cultural identity in the production of architecture.

Fundamental to this, dynamism and mobility of architects in their approach to architectural design practice provides a context that emphasises that architecture, like culture, is not static or rooted in place, but is intricately configured through the dual processes of locality and mobility - both physical and theoretical. The production of architecture in Australia, as in other immigrant rich societies, provides a case for reinforcing the theory that architectural mobility and travel is integral to the architecture of a place. This requires a more substantial approach to historiography in the analysis of patterns and processes, of identifying possible series and corresponding networks, of testing the contribution as an additive set of parts rather than as individual, sometimes fleeting moments.

<sup>86</sup> William SW Lim, *Asian Alterity: With Special Reference to Architecture + Urbanism through The Lens of Cultural Studies* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2008); Anthony D. King, "Modernism: Where We're At (And How We Got Here)," in *Non West Modernist Past: On Architecture and Modernities*, ed. William S. W. Lim & Jiat-Hwee Chang (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012).

<sup>87</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

For a national psyche, long suffering an identity crisis, understanding Australian architecture in an holistic sense can surely only be found in accepting that of the diversity of peoples which call it home. It will be these geo-cultural lines of influence that have the potential to engender a more heterogeneous and representative view of Australian architecture, providing a foundation upon which to build an alternate narrative in the history of Australian architecture.