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**Foster Rhodes Jackson and the Visual Conquest of the West**

Eve Kaufman

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FOSTER RHODES JACKSON AND THE
VISUAL CONQUEST OF THE WEST

BY: EVE KAUFMAN

In partial fulfillment of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Environmental Analysis, 2019-2020 Academic Year, Scripps College, Claremont, California
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALIFORNIA RISES: MID-CENTURY MODERNISM’S RHETORIC IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY LA</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPARATIVE RESTORATION</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFTERWORD</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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ABSTRACT

Foster Rhodes Jackson (b. 1911, d. 1998), a disciple of world-renowned American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, was a prolific architect. Jackson’s aesthetics were influenced by his time spent at Wright’s Taliesin West school, and Organic architecture, a movement within American mid-century Modernism. This style was taught at Taliesin West and were fundamental to Jackson’s designs.

Modernism initially existed within the canon of European culture and design at the turn of the 20th century and found its way into American use1. However, it was interpreted to suit ideals of the United States at the time, being reimagined as the single family home, with particular allusion to southwestern American landscapes. This was especially true in the way it was incorporated into the sprawling Los Angeles region, ultimately having a far more insidious function within the context of its application.

Architecture, like any artform, can be enjoyed for its beauty, and without analysis can exist in its own right. Regardless of the intentions of the work’s creator, art is always a living reflection of the society and ideas of its time2. It simultaneously encapsulates a wide variety of events and histories, along with the philosophies of the zeitgeist and worldview of the artist itself. This happens intentionally or not, but after art is created, the artist no longer has a say in the message it imparts.

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Thus, although Jackson never clearly stated any motives behind his designs, the essence and operations of his work were such that he did not need to; his intentions were frankly irrelevant. The houses Jackson created, and works by other Taliesin architects, were tools in the settlement of white colonizers to various western landscapes. Jackson’s work was local to the Los Angeles region, and specifically Claremont, which originally belonged to the native Tongva people.\(^3\)

Colonizers settled the Los Angeles and the Southern California region in part by using Modernism’s visual rhetoric and propagandic implications during the time of suburban sprawl. Suburban sprawl refers to the mass single family home development which took place from the 1920s until now but peaked from the 1970s to the 1990s. Los Angeles sprawl grew particularly in the 1950s as soldiers returned from WWII. It was a way for middle class white families to accrue generational wealth and follow through on the American Dream.\(^4\)

The primary result however disenfranchised already marginalized groups. This happened through highly segregationist practices that still have ramifications today. Despite suburban sprawl’s negative social and environmental consequences (including for instance the dependency on automobiles to commute to work), suburban development was given

\(^3\) Jurmain and McCawley, *O, My Ancestor: Recognition and Renewal for the Gabrielino-Tongva People of the Los Angeles Area.* 2009
\(^5\) Historical Census Populations of Counties and Incorporated Cities in California, 1850–2010
ethos and morality through its adjunct cultural motifs and art. The idea of art acting as a moral grounding for humanity is an idea with foundations in german philosophy of aesthetics, something further corroborated by Tolstoys’s negative statement “The consequence of counterfeit art is the corruption of man, the insatiability of pleasures, the weakness of man’s spiritual force”7. In this region, the reigning morality included Organic architecture from the Taliesin school.

A collection of Jackson’s original blueprints were recently discovered following a flood in Jackson’s former house. By studying these blueprints, several previously unrecognized Jackson houses, each a masterpiece in their own right, have been located. We were able to photograph the houses as a result and meet the owners. Some owners allowed us access inside their homes to photograph, deepening our understanding of the works and providing a life to the sketches.

A series of five Jackson houses will serve to identify different notions of colonialism that operated in tandem with modern American ideals. The argument is solidified by investigating contemporary social ailments that exist on a continuum with these houses. Reflection through the lens of this architecture highlights the correlation between mid-century practices and problems today. This interplay is fueled by the aesthetic colonization that seeped into the rhetoric and mindset of the mid-century United States.

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To conclude, there is a common misconception that we live in a post-colonial era. The idea that the Los Angeles settler project took place exclusively in the 1700s disregards the current lived experiences of indigenous people to various carceral subjugations. On the other hand, unlike Jackson, Wright did have an ulterior motive, documented within his writings from his lifetime.

It is not coincidental that the aesthetics Taliesin opted for combined elements of the local environment with an attempted co-opting of indigenous motifs. The aesthetics of this movement were imbued with a philosophy -- a propaganda if you will -- that the homeowners who purchased property in the postwar boom somehow deserved that land at the expense of others, which perpetuated the hegemonic ideals of the time. There was a need to mend the horrors of the recent past as Los Angeles grew. The beauty in Organic architecture and its underlying meaning distanced new waves of Angelenos from the brutal colonial realities of the 1700s-1800s.

This sense of entitlement continues today, and its consequences extend past the erasure and exclusion of indigenous people to the American Dream. It hurts any non-white community and has done so on a continuum from the first contact until today, as illustrated

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8 See Foucault’s Discipline and Punish (1975) for a definition of carceral in reference to systemic oppressions beginning in 1840
by midcentury redlining practices\textsuperscript{10}, and more recently, the push against what would be reparative affordable housing.

\textsuperscript{10} Rothstein, \textit{The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America}. 2017
BIOGRAPHY OF FOSTER RHODES JACKSON

Foster Rhodes Jackson was an architect originally from the East Coast. Native to the Boston area, he was a man of his time. Born in 1911 he first encountered Frank Lloyd Wright’s work at an exhibition at the Boston Museum of Modern Art in 1932. This exhibition first introduced Jackson to Wright’s philosophies.

Jackson studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, graduating in 1934 with a Bachelor’s degree. But his studies seemed perfunctory at best. After graduating, he worked with his father, an architect as well, building carriage houses typical of the 1930s. Eastern coastal cities were in the middle of a post-industrial manufacturing campaign; yet in correspondence with Wright, Jackson longed for something more meaningful.

“It was about 1932 when I first discovered your work. From then on I realized there was more to architecture than I was learning both at M.I.T, and from my father, a practicing architect.”

Jackson found little comfort, inspiration or solace within modern cities, and typical architectural styles of the East Coast fell flat of compelling his sensibilities. Ultimately, he rebelled against the current aesthetic.

“I can remember working for my father and gradually realizing his application of "style" until it worked up to a terrible crescendo in a large "Colonial" apartment house. My spirit rebelled completely and I "went into independent practice". This

12 Wright, Frank Lloyd. Foster Rhodes Jackson to Frank Lloyd Wright, June 21, 1943. Frank Lloyd Wright Correspondence Getty Research Institute.
consisted of very little work but a free spirit and one free enough to say "NO" to the much needed client who insisted on a little house like one in a magazine.”

Jackson did not have to toil long in this condition. World War Two struck and he was drafted into the Navy where he served as a submarine commander. Nonetheless, the world felt pummeled and tired to him, the gray skies--so often a familiar site to those in the New England area--were somehow more stifling than the pitch-black oceanic void that loomed outside his submarine windows.

Reacting to this sense of tedium, Jackson became entranced by the idea of the submarine as an “organic” form, an idea he picked up from Wright’s philosophy. The notion of Organic architecture flooded Jacksons psyche, preoccupying his mind for over ten years, altering the lens through which he viewed the world. Indeed, all environments began showing him their organic qualities, expressions that would go unnoticed to those lacking a discerning eye, but certainly apparent to Jackson in his formative years.

Once again in a letter to Wright, he declared the submarine perhaps “a truly organic structure” suggesting the necessity of the submarine’s shape drove its form through utility, almost becoming a fish made of metal. An honest object -- no frills or expectation, no pomp, no circumstance -- it looked the way it needed to, and as a result became a natural object in its seemingly foreign environment. That’s where the utility of Modernism met and married

13 Ibid.
the otherwise disparate qualities of Organic architecture, thus solidifying it as an offshoot of the whole genre.¹⁴,¹⁵

“At present I am the Executive Officer on a submarine, (a truly organic structure), this is immaterial except for the fact that it interferes with architecture. In spite of this interruption I am still designing in what little time I have available.”¹⁶

One of his first documented designs, found in an exchange between Jackson and Wright, was drafted onboard his craft. Sketches for his friends back East were inspired by Wright’s designs. Jackson was adamant about the necessity of beauty uncommon to the East Coast infiltrating and becoming norm to architecture and would do the job for his friends free of charge, so long as they didn’t expect a “typical cottage” out of the deal.

¹⁴ Ibid.
¹⁵ This view is in line with Greenough, a 19th century architect and theorist’s “division of the term organic into two categories: natural as in the bodies of animals, and mechanical, as in a ship.” (McClung, 132)
¹⁶ Wright, Frank Lloyd. Foster Rhodes Jackson to Frank Lloyd Wright, June 21, 1943. Frank Lloyd Wright Correspondence Getty Research Institute.
Projects became new opportunities for Jackson to disseminate what he was about to learn at Taliesin, and which he had already picked up from the gospel of Frank Lloyd Wright.

“I shall design them what I believe to be right and as near true architecture as I am able. If they are unconvinced by the design, explanations and logic, which I doubt, I will not do them the little colonial cottage they think they want.”

Jackson’s time of solitude commanding a naval craft opened his mind and directed his perceptions toward then-unique aesthetics. He spent his free time on the craft thinking

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17 Ibid.
deeply about architecture in new forms, and now was desperate to move west to join Wright in the Organic architectural movement.

Frank Lloyd Wright was by this time an internationally acclaimed architect responsible for the construction of over 1000 buildings, and the creation of a whole genre within modern architecture. He had established two schools, Taliesin in Wisconsin and Taliesin West in Arizona. What went on at such institutions is the stuff of legend, and had already begun to change the perception Jackson had toward architecture and the world at large. Jackson wanted to join Wright as a fellow for quite some time, expressing to him that it was financially unfeasible until his life in the navy.

“You have been the guiding light of my life for over ten years, You perhaps wonder that, feeling as I do, I haven’t come to Taliesin. To do this has always been one of my greatest hopes. About 1934 I wrote to Taliesin about the fellowship... but I did not have the money, and was considerably in debt at that time. However, I am now out of debt and financially sound.”

Financially sound, life as before the draft was no longer an option for Jackson; finally, he could join Wright at Taliesin. Thus, packing his bags of the few items he owned, recently released from the Navy and now a free man, Jackson took off to Taliesin West, with the hopes of finding himself, communing with nature, and uniting with the mentor who had already changed his life. Jackson believed it was nearly miraculous he should be introduced

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19 Ibid.
to Wright, and quickly picked up on the belief system Wright carried, extending thankfulness when he experienced personal breakthroughs.

“I am most grateful to you our beloved Master, through whom this joy of creative understanding has come.”

Through this language we can also garner insight into the cult of personality Wright created around himself. The fellows of the program were devoted to his teachings, and would happily espouse them to their respective, post-Taliesin locations.

After leaving Taliesin Jackson set out on his personal career. He found his place in the foothills of Los Angeles, marking Claremont as his home. Jackson experienced fame and success in the productiveness of the projects he pursued, the friends he carried, and the path his career took him on, exposing him internationally to different audiences all around.

His career coincided and informed a renaissance of architecture, directly before suburban sprawl morphed entirely to soulless mass production, stifling the creativity and subsequent clout allotted to architects of the time. McMansions were inconceivable at this point. Jackson still had a moment to compete with the sprawl to come, and although the post-war era boom was underway, it had yet to discard the craftsman aesthetic. Detached single family units were just being popularized, and their quality had yet to deteriorate. In

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20 Wright, Frank Lloyd. Foster Rhodes Jackson to Frank Lloyd Wright, August 2, 1948. Frank Lloyd Wright Correspondence Getty Research Institute.
fact, Jackson himself participated in an experimental tract housing development, The Padua Hills Artist Colony, contrasted to the later sterile boom.

Jackson also witnessed the culmination of modernity to its intense and fatal climax. He rode the wave it caused in the world of art, architecture and design, and during this era found his own under the tutelage of Frank Lloyd Wright, all swept up in the world of Taliesin. Jackson was dedicated to architecture and the wild entice of the non-developed environment.

Being a man of his time, Jackson embraced the single-family home, a luxury that afforded him plenty of creative opportunities, particularly in a recently developing Los Angeles. Thus, the western landscapes he ventured to post-war benefited his imagination greatly. They inspired and guided him to the creative places he wished to explore, and helped him find meaning and purpose, eventually leading him to settle in Claremont, the town he would help define, and call his home.

Every project for every client was a new case study. His hundreds of works became a repertoire of unbound experimentation. Whether a fresh new construction, for which Jackson had all control over from the seeds of its conception to the finishing touches (of which he was ever so meticulous about, down to the fabric on the built-in furniture), or to the slight additions on houses of more casual clients, he managed to express himself and his Taliesin qualities in all genres and motifs. The intimate relationships Jackson would foster with his clientele were almost a natural occurrence of the dynamic. Those who wished to
have him build their house from beginning to end would go on to tell stories of Jackson for years after.\textsuperscript{22} The man was charismatic, albeit wildly eccentric, and certainly left an impression. He died in 1997\textsuperscript{23}.

\textsuperscript{22} Wilson family letter to Eve Kaufman, 2019
\textsuperscript{23} American Architects Directory, 2019
TALIESIN’S PHILOSOPHY

Figure 2 Taliesin West Main Building, Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Taliesin West was built in 1937\textsuperscript{24}, as one of the two institutes created by Frank Lloyd Wright, a Modernist architect named by American Institute of Architects as the “greatest American architect”.\textsuperscript{25} Wright opened the school to aspiring architects, regardless of prior training, to come and learn alongside him in his home. He moved out to Arizona, finding a deep affinity for the West and its landscapes, rooted in the excitement he felt along for the great frontiers\textsuperscript{26}. Wright created Taliesin West in Arizona because he felt the landscape best

\textsuperscript{24} Hess and Weintraub, \textit{Organic Architecture: The Other Modernism}.
\textsuperscript{25} Brewster, Mike "Frank Lloyd Wright: America’s Architect". \textit{Business Week}. July 28, 2004
\textsuperscript{26} Hess and Weintraub, \textit{Organic Architecture: The Other Modernism}. 
reflected his philosophy of how the interplay of architecture and the built environment should look.27

Wright believed very strongly in an almost defunct transcendental philosophy, echoing Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau in his writings and philosophies.28 He wished to manifest these ideologies of reclamation of space and nature as divine human right through his buildings. California and other western states, being beautiful, yet primarily undeveloped spaces would serve as the perfect landscape to express his beliefs in practice.

Taliesin West was one of Wright’s two schools. The other, known only as Taliesin, was located in Wisconsin. They both handled their respective climate’s environments differently and had divergent expressions of architecture as a result. Frank Lloyd Wright was a huge proponent of Vernacular architecture- that is local architecture created and designed explicitly based on the need of communities and the quality/quantity of materials available. These materials combined with the geometry espoused within the cult of Taliesin became known as Organic architecture29.

This style was primarily a nationalist reactionary movement to European modernism, and language such as “Usonian” (meaning relating to the United States) came out of it30. It

28 Huxtable, Frank Lloyd Wright: A Life. 2008
29 Hess and Weintraub, Organic Architecture: The Other Modernism.
30 Wright and Gutheim, Frank Lloyd Wright on Architecture: Selected Writings; 1894-1940. 1941
prioritized the single-family model over density, and per Transcendentalist thought, believed that architecture should be fused with the landscape to allow man to better meld with it. The exposed wood and stone materials in the buildings and the lively forms they took reflected this movement and its aesthetics.\textsuperscript{31}

**Organic Architecture**

Organic architecture was a style that began in the early twentieth century, and played out mostly within the context of the mid-century Modernist movement. Frank Lloyd Wright coined the term in a newspaper in 1914\textsuperscript{32}, and it grew in popularity as a notion, with the continued dissemination of Taliesin virtues by its disciples and the media alike.

Organic architecture represented the American housing market’s embrace of Vernacular architecture—situated at the intersection of the American dream, transcendentalism, environmental thought, and design. Vernacular architecture is defined as the design of buildings created by local people using nearby found materials, prioritizing function over all else.

Typically contrasted with formal or “high” architecture, Organic architecture depended heavily upon use of sticks, rocks, mud and other natural elements. The result is an integration aesthetically with the landscape\textsuperscript{33}, a pursuit incongruent to the highly

\textsuperscript{31} Hess and Weintraub, *Organic Architecture: The Other Modernism*.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
industrialized context of modernity. It seemed perfect for Los Angeles, the post-industrial city.\textsuperscript{34}

This return to nature noted a departure from the rapid development of cities, simultaneous mass production of goods, and the violent stories returning from abroad of soldiers in World Wars One and Two. It was pastoral, Georgic, and peaceful. More than anything, it highlighted the beauty of the environment.

**Organic Architecture in the Post-Colonial Narrative**

The following quote by Frank Lloyd Wright is buried within volume of Wright’s various writings from the 1930s. It corroborates that indeed Organic architecture was a colonial movement and was fully intended to be such.

\textit{“When a man is once aware of his worth and dignity, he has “come to”, and is henceforth endowed with a conquering power”}\textsuperscript{35}

Part of this power was derived from the beauty found in Organic architecture. Taliesin specifically was heavily dependent upon indigenous histories and cultures; the aesthetic influences a co-option of culture. The style supported settler colonialism in the western United States through notions of usurpation of culture and tying inhabitants of the architecture to the settled land.

\textsuperscript{34}Davis, Societies, and Morrow, \textit{City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles (New Edition)}. 2008

Organic architecture was a more nuanced approach to colonial architecture than say the Spanish mission which is much more commonly found in Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{36}

“The mission literature depicted history of race relations as a pastoral ritual of obedience and paternalism... The romanticized and idyllic theme was quickly picked up and exploited... Everything from furniture suites and candied fruit to commercial and residential architecture stressed the mission motif”\textsuperscript{37}

It originated on the continent as opposed to being a European import. It was born to the land and usurped the cultural motifs and aesthetics of indigenous people, who still reside on this land today.

For example, the main trademark of Taliesin was known as “The Whirling Arrow” and was based on a polygraph Wright found on a rock on the Arizona estate. Furthermore, the classic Taliesin red was actually called “Cherokee Red” by Wright, despite the Cherokee being nowhere near Arizona.\textsuperscript{38} It was a romanization of being native, something Organic architecture was used to pursue. This was all in the hopes of establishing whiteness in the land as a hegemonic power.

Jackson pursued Organic architecture mostly through the use of materials and landscapes he was afforded the ability to work within. His landing in California and more precisely the Claremont foothills gave Jackson much opportunity to lean into the freeform integration of nature and constructed space so integral to the philosophy behind his designs.

\textsuperscript{36} Davis, Societies, and Morrow, \textit{City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles (New Edition)}.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. \textit{Reintroducing the Whirling Arrow}, https://franklloydwright.org/re-introducing-whirling-arrow/
While contemplating the natural world, Jackson wrote and published two books that focused on the order of the natural world and its constitution in all things, animate or not.\textsuperscript{39}

Madeline Gins and Arakawa discuss in their seminal paper, the impact of settling land and establishing physical structures in places previous ones once stood.

“The taking of a particular expanse or event to be a landing site happens in a flash; over in a flash…”\textsuperscript{40}

Here they explain the limitations of a new civilization’s understanding of the history of places. The past is gone in an instant, and their imagination is subject to accepting only what they see before them.

“But various studies have shown that, at any given moment, the world consists, for a person, of only a limited number of activated regions or focal hubs of activity.”\textsuperscript{41}

For a location to be relevant, it must be “activated”, as in physically used by some dominating body, and only these activated spaces and their current context compose any meaning to the onlooker.

“Through landing-site configurations, organism-person-environment takes hold and holds forth.”\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{39} Laws and Principles of Design in Architecture and Art (1950); The Creative Act (Unknown);
\textsuperscript{40} Gins and Arakawa, \textit{Architectural Body}. 2002.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
Thus, the current landing site, which in this context is an Organic settlement, is configured to meld the active user of the space to the landscape, and remains the new history until it too crumbles.

This is why the national imagination is so limited in regard to acknowledging indigenous histories, even in the very recently colonized Los Angeles. In fact, the Tongva tribe, native to Los Angeles, is not a federally recognized unit.\(^{43}\) Any structure that once stood in the place of those now, or communities prior which occupied the same space, no longer existed, and for convenience, never did. New points of occupied physical space exist as a means to solidify a contemporary narrative supporting the colonial inhabitants’ right to native land. This is what is known as the act of erasure, successful and solidified by the building of architectural monuments over the rubble of the past.

**Conservation and Preservation of Colonial Artifact**

Organic architecture defined Claremont as a white space. The aesthetics of the creations in their locales served as visual signifiers: the privileged owners of the properties, ones with access to funding and property rights, which earlier in the century were restricted, were the rightful holders of the space. Now we wish to preserve this style of architecture; powerful actors like the Getty Institute have even become involved with one of Jackson’s houses to do so.

\(^{43}\)Jurmain and McCawley, *O, My Ancestor: Recognition and Renewal for the Gabrielino-Tongva People of the Los Angeles Area.*
Conservation and preservation, though important in the understanding of history and appreciation of art, have definite colonial histories that can be traced back to the original conquest of the West. Preservation for the sake of beauty alone risks perpetuating colonial narratives. An intervention exists in preserving the architecture not simply for its beauty, but to critically analyze its use as a colonial tool, as recognition of harm done is the first step to reparations.\(^4^4\)

The idea of natural preservation, as we know it now, was designed by colonizers who entered the frontiers throughout the 18th and 19th century and is represented by this rhetoric.\(^4^5\) The ecological preservationist movement coincided with the transcendentalist movement, a movement that had intense influences on Organic architecture as well. Transcendentalism was an integral aspect of connecting various intellectuals and white classes to the American landscape. It operated to solidify a belonging of white men in previously indigenous spaces\(^4^6\), and subsequently ended up in the founding of our national parks.\(^4^7\) The preservationist movement, while outwardly appearing good-natured, was actually utilized as to remove indigenous people from their land in order to maintain the

\(^4^4\) The concept of recognition as the first step to reparations is an indigenous practice of Restorative Justice.

\(^4^5\) Steinberg, *Down to Earth*.

\(^4^6\) Paryz, *The Postcolonial and Imperial Experience in American Transcendentalism*.

\(^4^7\) Steinberg, *Down to Earth*. 
“pristine purity” of the environment. The spaces were then marketed as a retreat for urbanites to go to on the weekends, often by car.

The preservationist movement was a pivotal moment in the United States where colonizers deemed themselves more worthy stewards of the land than those who had occupied it for generations prior. This was still in spite of cities being industrial, smoggy and polluted destination, which showed a clear disrespect to the health of the land.

Yet it was the maintenance of these parks that eased the psychological stresses of the city, along with comforting the consciousness of those discouraged by the destructive use of environment. It gave the land personal importance to the urbanites that assumed it, one that was not explicitly economic or religiously bound as the ranches and missions had been, but rather guided by the saving of beauty.

The need to “save the land” created an almost heroic complex, that established a feeling of parenthood to the spaces. Contemporarily, this has translated into architectural preservation. The need to maintain structures and parklands built and cultivated generations prior to define the space as livable, acts as a way to establish meaningful “landing site”.

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48 Ibid.  
49 Ibid.  
50 Ibid.  
51 Jurmain and McCawley, O, My Ancestor: Recognition and Renewal for the Gabrielino-Tongva People of the Los Angeles Area.  
52 Ibid.  
53 Gins and Arakawa, Architectural Body.
Inherent Truths to Beauty

Jackson had an affinity for pattern. He loved the constantly evolving forms of nature that would manage to remain perfectly cyclical despite their exponential growth. Nesting iterations -- finding the very core of a subject and then the creativity and imagination which explode past that. His interest in growth was simple: “The increase of a thing in size and substance”.54 This can be seen applied to the geometric intervals the spanning of new developments, and often settler colonial projects, assume55.

True to Wright’s prose and teachings, Jackson found dozens of ways to implement the inherent mathematical phenomena of our everyday life into his typical designs. Wright too thought through this very concept; it was what peaked Jackson’s interest in the topic. Jackson, loving math and science as much as the sport of house building, was eager to correlate the two in whatever ways he could, and called it the “Essence of form”56. The holy crux of civilization.

Derived from notions of enlightenment, geometric simplicity became standard building blocks in all artistic pursuits after German scientist and philosopher Froebel caused a fundamental shift in thinking when he redefined what education in children’s schools should look like. This shift in thought, a return to the essentials, spurred modern

55 Segal et al., A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture.
architectural movements around the globe. Grid systems dominated aesthetic construction and design theory took on a new form. Almost comparable to Ravel’s Bolero in the intense magnitude the repetition takes on.

Wright and Jackson opted for this simplicity, in favor of overcomplication. They kept their argument quick and concise, making their buildings a fundamental virtue and equating it to the very foundations of the universe. This is not dissimilar from the indigenous notion of sanctity in geometric forms, particularly in circles.

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57 Brosterman, *Inventing Kindergarten*.
THE PROPAGANDA OF ARCHITECTURE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles became a municipality in 1850. The history of the previous century had been a bloody one, as the colonization of the land started in 1777. Missions and Ranchos of Spanish settlers were established throughout the region. It was within these institutions that the systematized massacre and erasure of the indigenous Tongva people and their numerous cultures began.

Following the initial conquest, it was the job of European settlers to occupy the land and deem it their own. They did so by erecting monuments and buildings in the style of their empires in Europe. Much of the southwest today is recognized by the mission, though the roots of the architecture far across the pacific rounding back to Spain. The United States needed a style that was both removed from the European roots it attempted to shed, and that could be seen as homegrown and thereby legitimate to the land.

Mid-century modernism, and specifically Organic architecture, acted as this catalyst. Simultaneous forces of cultural appropriation and erasure worked to nativize white expats and Americans to the land. Foster Rhodes Jackson’s work was sensationalized and made popular along with a series of other structures done in this style. The beauty of Jackson’s

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60 Jurmain and McCawley, *O, My Ancestor: Recognition and Renewal for the Gabrielino-Tongva People of the Los Angeles Area.*
61 Ibid.
houses sold them and perpetuated the problems within. Preservation societies intrigued by Frank Lloyd Wright have been entranced by Organic architecture, sometimes disregarding and perpetuating the erasure of earlier histories in the rubble surrounding the foundations of the now sacred houses.\footnote{An example would be the lack of Tongva histories in the museum of the Hollyhock house} Using art as a driving force behind colonialism is an effective facade.

The contradictions within this argument lie in the desire to move forward with the documentation of Jackson’s work, as this thesis acts both as a way to glorify and critically analyze his portfolio -- that they are masterpieces on stolen land, built during a time of great social inequity and continued thievery of native soil. As art tends to do, it reflects the society it was created within. There are certain instances where his buildings will go against hegemony and be radical in their own right, being quite different from the norm in their beauty and unique qualities. Yet here we analyze where they serve an insidious role in a society that needed it at its conception, and perhaps more so today. This radical style drew a reaction that distracted people from addressing the histories underneath, a real estate market designed to dazzle\footnote{Davis, Societies, and Morrow, \textit{City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles (New Edition)}.}. Despite the implications associated with his work Jackson is not personally responsible for the crises we face today, but his buildings speak to many.

Exploring five local case studies of Foster Rhodes Jackson’s work shows the various inequities that resulted from their construction along with the historical context that allowed it. Each house will be analyzed through three lenses. First, a close aesthetic read followed by
a brief historical contextualization. Finally the crux of the matter is revealed through a theoretical analysis assessed through various frameworks. The following paragraphs will give a brief overview of each work as it relates to the argument.

**The Mixon Studio**

The Mixon studio is a residence designed by Jackson that was part of a large tract housing project in Claremont known as the Padua Hills Development. The developers of the tract specifically sought architects who designed in the style of Organic architecture. The studio was built for a ceramics professor at Scripps, and imbues within it the connection between art and architecture.

The building gives insight to how the style was applied to suburban offshoots of Los Angeles. It reveals the aesthetic elements used to tie the new property owners to their surroundings. The structure assumes its position on Tongva soil and uses vernacular elements to pose a commercialized love affair with the land while incorporating nationalist transcendental theory. It’s creation within the context of a tract highlights the almost desperate swiftness of Claremont’s creation.

**Sally Rand House**

Sally Rand was a famous burlesque dancer from the early to mid-twentieth century. She was a Hollywood icon who exerted a great influence on the culture of the time. She was
a highlighted performer at the Chicago 1933 World’s Fair\textsuperscript{65}, and eventually became the spokeswoman for a modern home designed by Jackson.

Modernism, derived from European aesthetics\textsuperscript{66}, now had an American form that was considered newer and better. Just like the silver screen, heroes emerged out of Hollywood, but these heroes were the architects behind the homes and residents of beloved stars.

There are both nationalist and feminist implications within the show of Rand’s house, which was used as an exhibit space in the 1954 Pan-Pacific show in Los Angeles. We will explore how the feminist narrative was used to minimize the experiences of people of color, and its history of doing so in other highly publicized spaces such as the renowned Chicago 1893 World’s fair\textsuperscript{67}. There is a linkage between the two, Sally Rand being one of them, having been a main act of the Chicago World’s Fair of 1933. A clear history is passed between the tradition of modern architectural fairs through the millennia. Sally Rand encapsulated the aesthetics of the modern woman, which were used in the process of settler-colonialism in mid-century California.

**The Goddard House**

The Goddard house acts as case studies into the potential of a typical single-family home for the average nuclear family. The Goddard house specifically was packaged and

\textsuperscript{65} Sally Rand Papers, 1903-1955, Chicago History Museum  
\textsuperscript{66} Friedman, *American Glamour and the Evolution of Modern Architecture.*  
\textsuperscript{67} Astrid Böger, *Architectural Body.*
shipped off to a London exhibition, exporting Usonian ideals across continents. The house was perfectly expressed right in the heart of the San Gabriel Valley (SGV). It became a precedent for wealthy white sprawl, a phenomenon that has perpetuated contemporary inequality, and leads to the overrepresentation of wealthy white people in politics.

For example, this past May SGV assemblyman, Senator Portantino tabled SB50, a measure to dismantle zoning restrictions on development projects which would allow for denser and affordable housing. Such reparative measures would act to undo the not too distant past when the whole land was primed for white American suburban sprawl.

**The Hafif and Jackson Complex**

Conclusively, the Hafif House and the Jackson residence were the magnum opuses of Jackson’s portfolio. They belonged to Jackson and Hafif along with his family and were all developed at the top of the foothills of La Verne, about a ten-minute drive from Claremont. They were isolated at the time, and sprawling. Palatial in their makeup, and totally surrounded by nature.

These were the strongest expressions of Organic architecture in Jackson’s repertoire. Many of the designs were indoors out, and clearly drew from transcendentalist thought.

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68 *The Los Angeles Times. February 17, 1952*  
70 [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB50](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB50)  
71 Huxtable, *Frank Lloyd Wright: A Life*.
along with the desire to locate an Eden of sorts, a divine connection to legitimize their existence on the land. Placed on top of a mountain, much like various temples throughout history, the mansions were highly dependent on vernacular materials and the landscape surround. Deep complexes and maze-like interiors defined the two.

The Hafif house in particular operated in a very specific way. It was built so as to showcase the art and architecture of Claremont, creating an almost museum like structure. This is furthered by the fact the Getty’s purchased it this past summer, to create a historical site. The museum aspects of it can be seen through the woodworking of Sam Maloof, renowned craftsman from Claremont, throughout the house and most noticeably the grand staircase. The fixtures were built in and central to the houses exhibit. In addition, Mike Hill, also a local artist, created interesting glass windows and panels strewn throughout the house.

Thus, the art and architecture lent a certain morality to the whole project. This encapsulated the entirety of his projects and gave it almost mausoleum like qualities to the movement. These were the heroes of the time, and the people who defined the place. There was no room for marginalized groups in this narrative, only the dominating hegemonic power.
DECONSTRUCTING JACKSON’S HOUSES

Case Study: Goddard House -- Circumscribed (1949)

Figure 3 Jackson, Foster Rhodes. The Jackson Collection. Claremont Heritage, Claremont, CA.

Description

The Goddard house, its blueprints pictured above, was one of Jackson’s more classically modern works. Its main connection to notions of Organic architecture rested in the fact it was made on an isolated plane with plenty of natural overgrowth. The shapes, clearly very circular, also demarcated some aspects popular to the movement, and even drew inspiration from one of Wright’s works, shown below.
Main contrasts include the intended focal points of the room, the exterior landscape, both planned through landscaping and unplanned by letting the preexisting surroundings go untouched, scale of the structure, and of course the intended audience.

In regard to focal points and highlighted functionalities, the fire remains central to the home's construction. It is off kilter in regard to the assumed orientation of the house, the living room being planned as the most central circle at least from the perspective of the blueprints. The fireplace is the first structure seen upon entering the home, and as is the dominating force within the living room, asserts itself as the literal and figurative hearth of the home.

The patio is once again created in a courtyard style with the circular periphery of the building surrounding the enclosure. The house is a series of circles repeating within themselves, the exterior circle defining the initial pattern. The exterior circle is comprised of...
the property’s extents, the drive for cars paved around as a bounding to the structure. To the north-west edge of the drive is the laundry and service yard. Here typical things for upkeep are kept stashed to the side, close to the house but not in the center of the structure, rather out of the way and to the far left of the entrance off the street.

![Figure 5 Goddard House interior fireplace - The Los Angeles Times. February 17, 1952](image)

This drive marks the first, exterior circle in a series of iterations growing ever smaller within it. The very smallest expression of this iteration is found within the connection between the kitchen and living room within the fireplace—the literal hearth of the home. The living room is the bounding circle upon which the fireplace’s insertion is appended to. This corresponds to the philosophy of what the purpose a living room serves, it is the point
in which people can gather, an anchor necessary to congregate around. The kitchen is adjacent to this focal point, a triangular structure fitted to the corner of the house. The kitchen, in a noteworthy fashion, is almost reflective of an open floor plan, something which is common today yet in a time where compartmentalizing rooms and removing the work of the kitchen was the standard. The entrance opens up directly into the living room or kitchen. Upon coming in, one can walk left, directly into its services, or right, which led into the living room. All other parts of the house are accessible only past these rooms.

More functionally, a heater room is cornered off to the western side of the living room. Its existence allows for the curvature of the wall, as its inner mechanics are hidden behind the boards which separate it from the rest of the house, boards which were creatively used to sustain and incorporate the desired design elements of the house. A circle, being a highly atypical form to pursue in the art of box making, which is to say architecture, is generally incongruent with possible building practices. To achieve the desired aesthetic, certain measures must be made, and creative fashioning of nooks and crannies the only possible solution.

As is typical to Jackson’s designs, all the furniture has already been accounted for in built-in form. The two 14x16 bedrooms are flush with beds, the one on the western side of the house furnished with a single, large bed in the center along the south wall. This is clearly thus demarcated as the master suite. The eastern bedroom which sits opposite the circular
courtyard has two twin beds melded along the circumference of the wall, essentially solving any problem that may arise from fitting squares into circles.

Not all squares have been obliterated from this work, however. Still the carport remains angular, and specific pieces within the home, such as beds, stay true to their rectangular shape. Strict functionality cannot be rule broken, despite all the bending happening around it. Even exterior corners have sharp angles.

Figure 6 Goddard House exterior The Los Angeles Times. February 17, 1952

The children’s bathroom as well maintains plenty of square shapes, the sink and shower in particular contrasted to the master bath’s rounded sink and full bath. Within the canon of this design there should be no room for such implementations, yet here it seems to cut corners, if you will. If we are to accept this as an inconsideration on the part of Jackson it deformulates the whole conception.

Rather, a break in the pattern is necessary. This is the first break we focus on in this design, though there are three. The second is the carport itself, and lastly the need to Segway
the house to the street. The scope of the house needs a breaking point for entry and exit, and is presented within the three rings, the final and main one being the drive to the street.

![Goddard House street view](image)

*Figure 7 Goddard House street view - Bowers, Zach. 2019*

This creates a steady reintegration into surrounding society, as opposed to a stark, jarring explosion from the lulling comforts of circular movement into the bright white of civilization, necessary to remove one’s car from the driveway.

To corroborate this idea, we must look to make certain other instances of this “break” don’t take place outside of the pattern. To give this further thought, there are three specific moments in which square shapes come into play, and each aligns once with a main bounding circle.
The bath break occurs once within the interior circle, the second of the three takes place at the foot path away from the circular patio, and the last is the car port which breaks away from the whole loop and spits out whatever is inside it out onto the street. The use of the yard as a way to complete the outer-bounding of the second circle is also of note.

**Historical Analysis**

The Goddard house was built in 1949, on a plane that was entirely empty, nestled within the fields of what is now Ontario, California. The once empty plane, has since become more typical suburban sprawl; bland split-level ranches abound up and down the blocks that were developed over the next few decades. The house remains an anomaly on the street. It had stuck out before the neighborhood’s development as the only construction, and now remains isolated in its ambitious style.

It was exhibited in a 1953 international architectural viewing show based in London. This was an instance of the pan-american (or in this case pan-pacific) movement being exported abroad. This also fell in line with the americanization of Europe\(^2\). Los Angeles specifically was making international waves, and the architectural movement within it was intriguing enough to capture the attention of those abroad. At this point as well, The United States were on the winning side of World War Two, and held clout for that within

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\(^2\) Davis, Societies, and Morrow, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles (New Edition)*.
international perception. Culture makers of this time rode the opportunity to define global virtues.

**Theoretical Analysis**

The whole house was constructed for the modern family, a belief inherent to the philosophy of hyper-stylized architecture that anyone can benefit from the deliberate, and at times odd aesthetics of a room. Even the family unit, children and all, are surrounded by such vogue construction. What is now perceived as a more adult medium, architecture had at one point been popularized and sensationalized in the mainstream to the point it even fit into the American dream. Sprawl became not only about a house as a kingdom. It was a piece of art that one should raise children in.

The design itself was a layer of circles, one within the other. It is interesting to note that the Indigenous network of villages that existed up until the Spanish missions were developed as a series of concentric circles throughout the San Gabriel Valley. Though the Mixon studio’s materials and coloring are not co-opting of indigenous aesthetics in the same way other Taliesin buildings are, the house operates from an aerial perspective as a new addition to one of these, now imaginary circles. Prior to the development of the rest of the neighborhood, it would have been a demarcation on a map, the single family home mimicking the entire circular structure of a village.

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73 Cite.
Furthermore, the idea of a circle is an important indigenous symbol. Communities developed in these shapes and rituals would assume patterns in regard to its simplicity and fundamental virtues. Taking this symbol for the use of or propagating the single family home entirely warps its intended meaning.74

![Image](image1.png)

*Figure 8 Aerials of house, Google Maps. 2019.
Tongva Villages in Los Angeles, LA Times, [https://www.bunkhistory.org/resources/4228](https://www.bunkhistory.org/resources/4228)*

The single family home had the opportunity here to replace the need for communal living. The Goddard house was exported abroad and disseminated this ideology as well.

Winners loved suburbia-it was beautiful, pastoral, and primarily safe. What more could a post-war world desire but the draw of the gilded United States homestead\textsuperscript{75}. 

\textsuperscript{75} Friedman, \textit{American Glamour and the Evolution of Modern Architecture}. 
Case Study: The Rand House (1954)

Description

The Rand House was built in 1954, and destroyed toward the later half of the mid-century. The structure was classically mid-century. Large walls exclusively of glass windows made up the largest portion of the house—the living room—and fundamental geometry frame the whole thing. The Rand house was built on the foundations of triangles, its columns a series of five large triangular structures upon which the horizontal roof laid flat, and the walls steadfast together. These columns occur in an array across the south facing front of the house, the façade of which was broken up by their imposing structure.
The house itself was initially designed with an added room for Rand’s child. A single mother, she was to live alone with her son Sean. Interestingly, in its final form the house seemed to leave this notion of motherhood out. The additional room for Sean was never built. The 2000+ square foot home remained a single bedroom, with a study and walk-in closet as the chosen additional spaces.
A view from the west side of the house gives a different perspective of the unique columns. Here, they protrude from the façade, their full form invisible from this direction, and give dimension in the X plane that would otherwise remain flat. Their repetition continued out of sight, going off into the horizon, suggesting the illusion of infinitum. The typical onlooker simply saw a stunning show of triangular structures marching off into the distance, their grandeur and simplicity in shape evoked a feeling of essence in the work itself. The foundational aspects of its angular construction tied the house into different dimensions, which despite only having five columns, is perceptibly continuous past that.

The interiors were harmonious in their color scheme, a palette that continued throughout the bedrooms and picked up again in different areas. 76 Additionally, the ‘Z’

76 Los Angeles Times, August 8, 1954
shaped walls, on their 45º angles, were used again reflecting the triangular structure of its supports.


The living room had recessed ceilings that lead to triangular light shelves in the roof, fitted with louvred windows. This gave both the appearance of airiness and lightness while it still maintained the cozier aspects of being in a contained space. Exposed wood and lower ceilings in certain parts balance out the harsher elements of metal, glass and the feeling of utter exposure from the wall of windows. Wright was a firm believer that at the end of the day, all people want is a small box. This helped find a way to introduce artistic styles while maintaining a homey feeling.

**Historical Analysis**

Wright dabbled in notions of such stark geometry but it was Le Corbusier who was known for his affinity of the most basic shapes cut with glass and steel\(^\text{77}\). Although the Rand House was Taliesin enough, the classic materials of this school relied heavily on stone and a

visibly gritty, heterogeneous mixture of concrete. But this house was far more streamlined and similar to European modernisms in its choice of materials and silhouette. It was still in line with houses created later by Taliesin fellows such as Neutra and Lautner. Primarily, it was the application of minimalist aesthetics to the single family home, and general accompanying ostentation that solidified this as part of the Organic architectural movement, though less dependent on local materials.

Certain parts of the layout were very vogue. The TV room was noted in a Los Angeles Times piece from 1954 as something of interest. A room entirely dedicated to media watching, semi-attached to the social room, but not. “An interesting architectural feature is the TV alcove – a part of the general living area and yet separate enough to give consideration to viewers and nonviewers alike.”

That is of course discounting its fixture as a detached house - a signifier of American values and architecture.

All said, it was documented that even with the extensive commotion and press linking the house to Jackson, Rand still spread a rumor that the design was by Wright himself, desiring someone with Usonian aesthetics to validate her rightful place amongst the rich and famous. This further exemplified the American need to commodify and package architecture up with a sense of pride and status. It was this need that gave the rhetoric teeth.

78 Price, Stories of Old Glendora.
Rand, Architecture, and the Pan-American Fairground

It’s the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair; the show was named “The White City” and was used to celebrate Columbus’ arrival to the continent, and the founding of the United States about 100 years prior\textsuperscript{79}. The United States and its cities were put on the map for their artistic and architectural endeavors and unifying them into a high-profile show, a focus of which, like other contemporary fairs\textsuperscript{80} was American architecture\textsuperscript{81}.

In addition to architecture, there were deep feminist undercurrents to the fair that carried on into the public imagination after the fact\textsuperscript{82}. Unfortunately, the feminism present was one dependent on racism, and equating white women to white men- their power derived from their race instead of gender\textsuperscript{83}. All of these aspects influenced the coming century and began to play out in various cases throughout the states after the fact. Women of color were depicted tribally and as “primitive”. This foil acted to more closely align white women with their male counterparts and continued the process of naturalization of white people to the Americas\textsuperscript{84}.

\textsuperscript{79} Di Cola and Stone, \textit{Chicago’s 1893 World’s Fair}.
\textsuperscript{80} Friedman, \textit{American Glamour and the Evolution of Modern Architecture}.
\textsuperscript{81} Di Cola and Stone, \textit{Chicago’s 1893 World’s Fair}.
\textsuperscript{82} Böger, Astrid, \textit{Architectural Body}.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
However, it is not lost that this was a pre-war movement, and the American imagination was about to change drastically after both wars and the subsequent cold war⁸⁵. These interruptions however did not stop the tradition of fairs along with their rhetorics from being realized in Southern California, just over 50 years later. This is shown by the case of The Sally Rand house, one of Jackson’s most celebrated designs. The Rand House was used as an exhibition space for a midcentury modern show. Sally Rand being a public woman figure, was in the spotlight for this exhibit, and the architecture of Foster Rhodes Jackson was what framed it all.

Thus, the notions created in the Chicago World’s Fair carried, and were picked up and used in the Sally Rand exhibit, hosted by the Pan-Pacific Home Show as one of an annual showcase. The Pan-Pacific sported architectural masterpieces along with new mid-century modern inventions that captivated crowds with their chrome glimmer and sheen, similar to the moth-like attraction of rural folk to lighting displays in 1893⁸⁶.

The Pan-Pacific show reached toward previous American values and positioned them in a new context, the culture of California. The existence of California’s publicly solidified and structurally developed culture made it ripe for such a time. All implications of the Pan-Pacific’s 1893 showy predecessor were of course at play, the World’s Fair being an influence

⁸⁶ LA Times August 8, 1954
on culture for decades to come, and being it was a time of westward expansion into the foothills of southern California, acted to once again nativize white people, this time to Tongva land.

The connection to the 1893 fair is even more apparent when one considers Rand’s role in the 1933 fair.


She was the focus of the spectacle and captured the audience with her burlesque dancing and coy smiles. She became the new face of the world’s fair during the mid-century, the show called “A Century of Progress”.

“Progress” aside, she inherited the ideals of The White City from a mere fifty years earlier. The fair’s tradition continued through Rand herself, and later translated to her participation in the Pan-Pacific show. These histories became a part of the house.

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87 Böger, Astrid, Architectural Body.
The whole Pan-Pacific exhibit took place in a house designed by Foster Rhodes Jackson. Initially built on a mountainous plot of land in the foothills of Glendora, the house was then moved to the Pan Pacific exhibition grounds and boasted as an exemplary space worthy of adoration. There was much press around the exhibit, and Sally Rand being a constant figure in the public eye was the perfect spokeswoman for it. This was the home of Sally Rand—a sex icon and mischievous figure. Notorious for being risqué and financially messy\(^{89}\), Rand had no trouble assuming the role of the modern woman within this context.

The house of an independent liberated woman was on display in Southern California, a classically seemingly progressive place\(^{90}\). The nature of it being a detached-house still rang true to midcentury sprawl at the height of the nuclear family, yet here it was not about her kitchen-- rather it was about her modern sensibilities.

**Theoretical Analysis**

Its recursive property is what tricks the eye into believing the house has the ability to continue across planes, crossing deserts and new terrains, realizing manifest destiny and notions of sprawl- taking up space. The values inherent to this make the culture of the time expand past the mind’s eye, comforting the viewer into a belief that Americana can be everywhere and belongs anywhere. If its self-perpetuating, its limits unbound, the autonomy of midcentury values have a metaphor which rolls into new spaces on its own accord.

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\(^{89}\) Sally Rand Papers, 1903-1955, Chicago History Museum

\(^{90}\) Davis, Societies, and Morrow, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles (New Edition)*.
In Rand’s narrative, there was no room for motherhood. The focus remained on Sally as a character, undefinable by a son or husband. The functionality of this decision was of course questionable, as her son did need somewhere to sleep, but it gives an insight into the priorities of the house in terms of the message it sends. Here is one of many instances of feminism being used to propagate imperialism.

Furthermore, participating in the Pan-Pacific show offers a direct foil to the idea of “Pan-America”. Pan-America was an ideal that initially started out of South America, Bolivia specifically, but ended up becoming a term often used in the United States for various exhibitions of modern gadgets and architecture. By focusing now on pan-pacific, leaving behind the idea of pan-America, the house becomes explicitly Usonian. The stage is clearly set for Los Angeles and looking toward other cultures and regions was restricted.

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Case Study: The Mixon Studio (1955)

Figure 16 Rendering of Mixon Studio Elevation - Bowers, Zach. 2019

Description

As I type this, I sit in the foothills where the Mixon Studio is situated. The house I currently occupy as I dog sit for a local Claremont family is a standard villa, its construction somewhere in the early 2000s making it neither noteworthy nor unfortunate. The Mixon studio, now called the Tanega House, is functionally my neighbor in this moment.

The landscape is what made development out here so appealing. Not quite in the mountains so that construction wasn't a horrific mess, yet close enough to thoroughly enjoy
their splendor. Having been out at dusk this past evening to walk Kora, the family's Husky, the silhouette of the mountains radiated in contrast against a dimming purple sky. What has yet to be developed on the way to the Claremont Loop is gated, the growth past the fencing that of sage scrub and other native Claremont plants. Kora very much wants to break into this enclosure, but I keep her steady on the recently created footpath which leads to the Loop. This footpath, amongst a few others leading up Mills Avenue, was the city's attempts to make a typically dangerous venture for the pedestrian a bit more enjoyable. Prior to its conception it was just lanes for the car, and before that undoubtedly a coyote tramping ground.

The Mixon Studio was created as a part of a unique Claremont project linked to the Garner family along with the Hafif's- both prominent names who played foundational roles in the construction of Claremont as we know it today. It is within these foothills as well that Jackson chose to make his home. The project was known as The Padua Hills Artist Colony and garnered the support and attention of architectural designers everywhere.

It had governmental support, and there were official documents submitted by various staffers for as to how to build into the mountainside. The colony was clearly an intentional development and occupation of the land. This is comparable to certain actions of the Israeli government in the later half of the 20th century to build into the west bank. Also a mountainous region, official plans were submitted to settler projects so as to make
construction easier, and use physical bodies to the end of nativizing non-indigenous people to the land.

It was a large-scale plan to house the local artists and professors associated with the strong art scene in Claremont at the time and ensure each received their own plot of land. Lindley Mixon, for whom the studio was built, was a ceramicist himself, who eventually, desiring to live on the premises, converted the studio into a two-bedroom home. The likes of Neutra and Millard Sheets had been contracted for plans out here too, the realized structures of which can be found through a simple walk up what was then called Camp Baldy Road (now Mount. Baldy Road).

Jackson had a particular affinity for these parts of town, as stated in his book *The Creative Act* (1950), and seen through the construction of his own home up the mountain. Furthermore, the proximity to Claremont as an incorporated municipality offered highly valuable infrastructure.

The Padua Hills project contained dozens of houses all done in mid-century style, solidifying Claremont as a destination for architecture both then and now. To this day various tours operate throughout these hills, attracting visitors to Claremont (ask David for numbers) every year.

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92 *Declaration of Restrictions*” (1931)
The Mixon studio’s location is a part of what defines it, and more specifically its design. The studio exists to be congruous to its landscape, whether this is a feasible idea or not. The stout, sturdy building sits only slightly facing the street.

Despite the demureness of its face, the studio can still easily be spotted while driving past. In fact, it has drawn a variety of campers and hikers on their way to Baldy into its premises. Yet still the design opts for privacy both through its directional positioning along with a series of barriers, of which match the building’s exterior materials, and have been set up along the property’s perimeter and its front. Even the carport acts as shelter from the curious eye. What can be constituted as a lawn, despite the unclear nature of house
compared to its “cottage” counterpart, is now littered with a variety of artifacts. Plenty of sculptures reminiscent of its original owner crop up in a few spots like daisies pushing through the ground, paying homage to Mixon.

The Mixon studio looks more closely like a product of classic Taliesin in its make. The building is founded upon great layers of concrete which were accomplished through a lengthy process of mixing, pouring, waiting, curing and repeating. there are a variety of steps that went into this- doing all the concrete at once on such a structure would be unsound. the result of multiple pours of concrete are deep striations easily apparent from the outside between each level. The concrete used was made of a blend of four differently sized silts, sands and broken rocks, as opposed to a typical three-ingredient concrete mixture consisting of cement, aggregate and water.

Incorporating the slight eastern angle of the house into a part of the design. is done so as to maximize the amount of light and the view that comes in through the main east facing facade. However, the angular form of the house, accompanied by its heavy stature, make the shape appear congruent with the flow of the mountainscape.
In addition to the blending of the silhouette to its backdrop, the material of the house’s construction gives it the appearance of not just being in the mountains, but actually being of the mountain. It comes from a desire to meld to its surroundings, as it is set in heavy stone, giving all the properties of a creation plausibly derived from the san andreas fault itself.

Fundamentally, the house is a large poured concrete structure, situated deeply into the earth. This is created through pouring a series of layers, using a highly corrugated concrete mixture following the intentional inlaying of local rocks.
This results in two, seemingly oppositional outcomes. Firstly, the effect from the
bumpy striated concrete layers evokes the sense of a true mountain. The concrete’s texture.
similar to the striation a of a metamorphic rock, developed over millions of years and its
beauty derived from high temperatures and massive pressures. it is this allegory, this pressure
to plow the building deep into the landscape, as though it emerged millennia ago. This
metamorphic aesthetic is contrasted with the general appearance of newer coagulation, a
sedimentary rock, which occurs as a result of the appended stones within.

Furthermore, the wood paneling on the exterior wall which match the surrounding
trees, along with the decision to not install glass panes into the top back windows (which
remain open to this day) creates a visual flow between the indoors to the outside.
The front is made up of a large series of windows that have been split primarily into three sections, the most visible being in the center and top, right above the door. The door and its surrounding windows are the second section, stationed right below the large open windows of the top, and finally the border framing the central pieces is made of a series of smaller Windows which surround the perimeter of glass, the bottom most panels switched with concrete with a showcase of mosaic. This mosaic is carried on around the perimeter of the roof line, small tiles designed by Jackson in a repetitive square ornament line up one against the other, creating a narrow split between the house, sky, and roof. Once again, this added effect was a perfect marriage between Taliesin aesthetics and Jackson’s propensity to decorate, along with a ceramicist’s love for a good tile. The tile remains to this day, true to the original design.

The free-standing walls which surround the building are fashioned in one of Jackson’s common elements, a typical “z” style, used in plenty of other Jackson houses. The walls zig-
zag, pieces of metal joined vertically at the seams in opposing directions. Slanting and sloping was often utilized in Jackson’s designs, and was one of his favorite elements, repeated in the Rand and Hafif house as well as his own studio. This technique, when accomplished indoors, does not require typical construction methods, and uses no nails, glue or screws. It is based on the Japanese tradition of attaching wood through a series of joints, creating a sturdy structure without the necessities of exterior force. Of course, due to regulations that generally favor of things such as nails, glue and screws, these walls were not structural. That is not to suggest the idea that much of what Jackson designed would be in any way feasible today given contemporary construction and zoning regulations.

**Historical Analysis**

Building regulations during the mid 20th century were quite lenient. It was only in response to recorded instances of safety hazards that over the century this changed. Until then, architects had plenty of free reign during this time to build to their liking. Zoning ordinances were also far less contested. Now, Zoning ordinances act to functionally maintain exclusivity within regions like Claremont however this exclusivity was once outright written law, and ensured a disparity between class through segregation of different races,

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93 Cite.
94 Payne and Trüby, *Exit-Architecture. Design Between War and Peace: With a Foreword by Heiner Mühlmann and a Project by Exit Ltd.*
implemented through restrictions on property ownership. This particular colony, started in the 1920s and had specific neighborhood orders to not sell any of the estates to someone of color.

![Image](image-url)

**Figure 21 “Declaration of Restrictions” (1931) Clear display of segregationist community action in Padua Development. Claremont Heritage, Claremont, CA**

This primary covenant, in tandem with later acts of redlining, broke the promise of the American Dream to any non-white individual.

**Theoretical Analysis**

The house is now occupied by Norma Tanega, a Scripps alumnus from the graduating class of 1960. She too is an artist and is famous for her songwriting, although prefers painting which she does in the original studio. Once a spot for pottery, the studio’s kiln room now acts as storage for extra paintings and supplies. Thus, its tradition of artistry has been maintained, the whole property itself a work to be reckoned with. Here we see how notions of tradition become infused to the fabric of this house. Under the auspices of culture, there is an intergenerational act of property exchange, if only through narrative of artistry.

An interesting combination of the two types of rock the structure evokes can be seen as a metaphor of subsuming one to create another. the concrete pour declares itself the older
through the aesthetic analogy to being metamorphic, despite literally being more recent, it removes allowance for the question of its origins. The addition of the stones, which like the structure to a newer rock, articulates the necessity of indigenous material for its construction, with the implied result of a neo-colonial structure, a sedimentary formation.

Additionally, the indoors-out quality of the openness of the large front windows combined with the open back asserts a presence in both spaces. Thus, along with the deed to the house, through the tying of this construction to the landscape that surrounds it, the owner of the property has an imagined right to the mountains themselves. The core of the architectural style and its desire to blend seamlessly with the landscape is here expressed, so those who dwell within the construction can be better imagined as belonging to it, rather than to the Tongva people who initially occupied the land.

To draw it back to Taliesin, once again it opts for the red, along with a tiling designed by Jackson that is similar to the whirling arrow, and other native, or “organic” patterns. The combination of creating ties both to the local environment and to the culture of indigenous people, through the color, tiling and use of local rock, the dweller of the house is given a false sense of ownership to the land and its histories.

The continuity of building to landscape is now a recognized aesthetic colonial tool in the domination of various spaces. “Up until recent times only a few Mountain settlements were surrounded by walls or fences as settlers argued that their homes must form a continuity with their Landscapes that they were not foreign Invaders in need of protection.
but rather that the Palestinians were those who needed to be fenced in.”\textsuperscript{96} We seen this “fencing in”, through the construction of ghettos both within and outside of Claremont.\textsuperscript{97}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{construction_plan.png}
\caption{Example of construction plans issued by Claremont government to build into terrain, Claremont Heritage, Claremont, CA. 1931}
\end{figure}

Now the same action is perpetuated through more insidious channels, ones that are dependent on a long-running institution of oppression. Interlocking systems of domination continue on from past centuries to now in this very region. Downzoning and prohibitive housing costs continue to do the same today.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{96} Segal et al., \textit{A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture}.

\textsuperscript{97} A Study of the Redevelopment of the Arbol Verde Tract, Claremont City Planning Division. 1964

Case Study: The Jackson and Hafif Houses (1955, 195x)

Figure 23 Hafif House elevations pre-expansion, The Jackson Collection, Claremont Heritage, Claremont, CA

Figure 24 Aerial of Jackson Studio, post renovations, Johnson, Jeffrey. 2019
“The long road to the heavenly city has been traced in all periods of western Christianity… by poets like Henry Vaughan longing in the “The Retreat” for “That shady city of palm trees.””

Description

Now is the moment to consider Jackson’s magnum opuses- his own home and studio and the neighboring home, belonging to his good friend Herbert Hafif. Jackson was good friends with Hafif, who was a known local philanthropist and appreciator of the arts. The two houses are a stone’s throw away from one another in the foothills of this region. Both houses are done in styles very similar to one another but have highly varied histories. This is mostly due to funding (or lack thereof) for the Jackson house, as it began in the 50’s similarly to Hafif’s, however was only finished in 1987. The structures, however, being timeless, did

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100 As told by current owners
not suffer in their congruence. Everybody likes a good pair, a couple. This was Jackson and Hafif's friendship, their two houses complementary and a reflection of this.

Both homes are palatial in their existence. One was designed as a place for the family, the other, Jackson's, an artist's paradise. The Hafif family home is actually nestled into the what is almost the peak of the mountain, and the Jackson residence clearly demarcated at the very top.

**Historical Analysis**

Herbert Hafif (b. 1929, d. 2019) was a local philanthropist of Claremont. A successful lawyer, he had the means to fund a variety of projects and contribute finances to the local art scene. His family runs a foundation in his name, supporting various social programs throughout the region

He built this house, and the complex it was stationed on in the mountains of La Verne, so as to create both a personal paradise and a significant communal space. Hafif hosted an annual “Concert Under the Stars” for Claremont residents on his property, and he hoped the site could serve as a cultural station within the Claremont region.

The construction in the style of Organic architecture also linked the mansions to other Claremont works, and established a furthered presence into different spaces and locations, even beyond the foothills. At the very pinnacle of available land, he situated his

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complex on the top of a mountain-scape with views down to the city below, and the horizons past.

In conversation with the new owners of the Jackson home, it was revealed the extreme extent to which the house opens itself to nature. There was hardly any infrastructure available at the time of purchase, and coyotes and plenty of rattle snakes and tarantulas would often find themselves in the home.

Other houses popped up around the development over time, and now it is officially a neighborhood, almost gated due to the difficulty of traversing the winding roads and the hidden nature of the houses.

It took Jackson quite a while to finish the crowning jewel of the landscape, as he frequently ran out of money to build it. At one point he became a professor simply to access the cheap labor of the architectural students he was teaching. He made building his home into a fundamental aspect of the class’ curriculum. It was completed over the timespan of thirty years, beginning in the 1950’s and ending in the 1980’s. Hafif’s properties in contrast were all successfully completed in the 1950’s and expanded upon throughout the 70’s.

**Theoretical Analysis**

This was the final Manifest Destiny of his work. The plot of land, determinedly higher up the mountain than the home of his peer Hafif, the official pinnacle “landing place” of his whole body of work. He was now in the mountains, the highest temple as far as the
eye could see (past tense, as now even farther up has been developed, almost as a signifier to the success of the first landing place in the settlement).

Notions of acting within the space and giving different purposes to rooms in the house solidifies the takeover of space. When meaning is given to the place by those who inhabit it, a story is told and the space comes alive with the daily behavior of those who dwell there within\textsuperscript{102}. A particularly impactful result of the Hafif house is the incorporation of skilled local artists like Maloof and Hill into the structure of the house, in addition to Jackson designing it all in the first place. This creates an almost museum-like quality to the space as it was used to exhibit some of the finest Claremont craftsman. This is perhaps the most poignant moment of culture and art stepping into solidification of the house’s legitimacy\textsuperscript{103}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Gins and Arakawa, \textit{Architectural Body}.
\item Von Schiller, JC Friedrich. "Letters upon the aesthetic education of man." \textit{Literary and Philosophical Essays: French, German and Italian} 32 (2004): 221-313.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Figure 26 Rand House colored sketches, Adventures in Spacious Living, The Los Angeles Times, August 8, 1954.

Figure 27 Hafif House, front, Kaufman, Eve. 2019
As Organic architecture drew heavily from transcendentalism\textsuperscript{104}, the desire to be separated from Claremont and hidden amongst the sage scrub and other brush was apparent. Infused into the very construction of the house was the desire to commune with nature, be among the folkloric palms. This house built into the mountain seems almost like a fortress, at once with and protected by nature, hidden behind foliage and palms.

It is this appearance of palm trees and the attempt to be at the very height of the mountain-scape that showed the desire to reach almost religious status. A temple atop a mountain, a holy relic. This is a primary split between Usonian Organic architecture and transcendentalism—there is no shroud of humbleness nor piety in these works as one might find in Thoreau’s meditations. They operated to feed into the egotistic western desire to be a star, a god with a pool\textsuperscript{105}. Nature became an object as opposed to the main fixture. Still, it operated as a means to naturalize and justify the work, in a spiritual way.

“Heavenly space is different. In its terrestrial origin it develops upon a site that is understood in some way to be set apart from undifferentiated nature and proximate to heaven, connected by a mountain, tree, or a vine”\textsuperscript{106}.

\textsuperscript{104} Huxtable, \textit{Frank Lloyd Wright: A Life}.
\textsuperscript{105} Friedman, \textit{American Glamour and the Evolution of Modern Architecture}.
\textsuperscript{106} McClung, \textit{The Architecture of Paradise: Survivals of Eden and Jerusalem}.
Developments of this sort became an argument, a refutation of notions of city as eden- a new Jerusalem. Rather the belief that somehow one could return to the Garden of Eden was made. All his dreams, fantasies, and attempts to reach a divine source manifested in the house he built for himself. Here was the clear incentive, the end goal for Jackson. It was a lifelong pursuit. Along the roof mark various dates signifying the completion of a new section. The last dates from the mid 1980’s.

Figure 28 Blueprint of Jackson Studio, The Jackson Collection, Claremont Heritage, Claremont CA
Figure 29 Great room of Jackson Studio, Kaufman, Eve. 2019
CALIFORNIA RISES: MID-CENTURY MODERNISM’S RHETORIC IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY LA

The ego driven attempts of these works to be palatial and mountainous, while covering up an insidious past, presents an irony that jabs at the superficial mission of Organic architecture. Finally, after unpacking this movement, Its origins are now in question - it is safe to say the philosophy of Organic architecture was always paradoxical, as it was meant to sustain and be one with nature - that said the buildings were always intrusions in planes previously left silent. There is an inherent dissonance between theory and praxis.

In Usonian thought, the landscape was to be celebrated and melded with. That stated no structure imposed onto such an ecological formation could ever blend. It is a flaw in the argument, an incongruence. A crack in the foundations of a belief system, and rather a rhetoric to perpetuate the construction of white American suburbs. The roof to the entire discipline is as leaky as any Wright house. The supposed morality, in line with a German tradition of aesthetics, of art is here tested. This focus of morality in regard to architecture specifically, has developed out of a long conversation that dates centuries back.

In the time of Taliesin, the direct foil would've been European modernism. The styles within this canon are seen as much more utilitarian and suited for efficiency, away from superfluous in a variety of forms. Much of what the previously referenced 1893 World’s fair was attempting to accomplish was a push for the acceptance of the international style. This is a modernist movement that favors density and skyscrapers. However, with a newfound surge
of nationalism post WWII, temporarily discarded Usonian Utopias were shrugged off for the allure of skylines like that of Chicago or New York. Los Angeles County was initially zoned for 11 million people. By the time of the construction of these homes, that was culturally irrelevant. Now, it's illegal\textsuperscript{107}.

There is a belief that the ownership of property inherently deteriorates the morality of it\textsuperscript{108} particularly when one considers colonialism. The westward American expansion into suburban sprawl was realized without such moral qualms, but upon analyzing its origins now must face them.

There are immediate solutions to addressing the ethics of it all. Namely, architecture, particularly in modernist aesthetics, can be used to address housing shortages and crises. If only we were to separate the necessity for the single-family home and its accompanying glory, no doubt such constructions would be feasible, much like in the school of Le Corbusier. Furthermore, when employed correctly the various materials Jackson used are actually innovative and a wonderful departure from the deeply damaging and toxic building materials today. There are plenty of case studies globally that demonstrate the viability of using vernacular materials to quickly build durable and sustainable housing. Take Yasmeen Lari, the first woman architect of Pakistan, for instance. Lari runs a non-profit dedicated to the very topic of sustainable building practice, in regard to rapid building methods and

resilience to various natural hazards such as floods. Her organization houses hundreds of people using these local tools\textsuperscript{109}.

At the heart of what Jackson was hoping to accomplish truly was a marriage of land with people and their buildings. Despite the inherent flaws in this idea, Jackson’s principles were that local materials are what brought about true art and innovation. In a complex, nearly contradictory way he refuted globalism and enlightenment, the predecessor that brought modernism to admire the most basic shapes in the first place. Now understanding what he does, there’s almost recourse in his tone, a desire to go back to what once was.

\begin{quote}
Compare, in your own mind, the simple natural approach of the primitive Navajo with the approach and work of the so-called American primitive painters. The minds of these American primitive painters are cluttered up with a mass of objective experiences and thoughts of themselves and others. They have absorbed the art of calendars, candy boxes, posters, comics and advertising. This has placed a barrier between them and the source the Navajo draws upon so naturally.

The art of the American primitive painters is an art of objective conglomeration utilizing childish, coarse and crude techniques. It will be relegated to the scrap heap of art in due time.

You may infer from the above, that if an artist is to create a great work of art he must either be the product of an isolated civilization or erase from his consciousness all of his objective experiences.

It is not possible for an American artist to do either of these things, but neither is it necessary.

Think for a minute about the fact that completely isolated civilizations in various times and various geographical locations, have each created a great art. These arts, although differing in their esoteric forms possess, nevertheless, the same esoteric essence.

This may seem strange to you, but if you remind yourself that there are certain principles of a scientific nature that seem to partake of an infinite quality both as to time and space, the strangeness should vanish.
\end{quote}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure30.png}
\caption{Excerpt from Jackson’s book “The Creative Act”,}
\end{figure}

Still, this desire and yearning for a homeland and a culture uninfluenced by the specter of surrounding societies, a typical colonial phenomenon, rings true to his writing. It is what drove his desire to mimic and blend with the landscape, to not be seen as an outsider— to belong in his own right, whether through culture or a definite connection to the land itself. This desperate urge to relate to new frontiers were at the very core of Taliesin’s existential crisis.
REPARATIVE RESTORATION

Beyond the implications of colonial art and architecture and the power bestowed on writers of history, there exist instances of decolonial preservationist attempts as well. As discussed earlier, an intervention of recognition works to repair and prevent total erasure, and by extension holds those responsible culpable.

Preservation societies have taken this power to work in combating the excusal of injustices. In the 1980s, a historically Mexican neighborhood faced demolition through the construction of Claremont Boulevard, an act that was reminiscent of parallel constructions of highways throughout New York City by Robert Moses, and similar stories in Boston, DC, Baltimore and other large United States cities (June 1964 “A Study of the Redevelopment of the Arbol Verde Tract” Dale C. Johnson, Planning Associate Claremont). This was a process that began in the late 60’s but continues to this day. The last big wave occurred in the 1980s.¹¹⁰

Claremont Heritage fought vehemently against the racist policy to destroy the neighborhood in favor of the construction CMC’s construction, and did so through the argument of preserving local architecture and heritage.¹¹¹ Even Claremont undergrads got involved, a case for Arbol Verde was made by a Pitzer student in 1984.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Final EIR Arbol Vere Specific Plan (September 1986)
¹¹¹ Progress Bulletin August 6 1988 “Preserving a neighborhoods character”
¹¹² Ginger Elliot to preservation Issues Committee RE: AV Development (February 10, 1992)
Arbol Verde was targeted through a variety of channels, of which were primarily institutional. Actions on the part of the government, including redlining from the beginning, alongside the local colleges attempts to slowly buy it out made the neighborhood vulnerable. Finally, the city allowing for Claremont McKenna College to destroy the neighborhood so as to build Claremont Boulevard was the solidifying factor\textsuperscript{113} One of the most impactful destructions from the creation of Claremont Boulevard was the demolition of Arbol Verde’s church.\textsuperscript{114}

Gathering spaces are strongholds of healthy communities.\textsuperscript{115} By specifically targeting the church as one of the first casualties, it hurt the foundations of Arbol Verde’s identity and organizing power. When living conditions were difficult in private realms, there was always the church that acted as a space to share and belong.

Residents had already found it difficult to purchase homes in Arbol Verde in the early century, due to community covenants restricting it.\textsuperscript{116} As a result, they were primarily renters. Decades later, the ordinances were banned.\textsuperscript{117} Despite this, newer routes of ensuring that the Mexican residents could not easily buy homes were created through discriminatory lending practices throughout the united states. Claremont had been “redlined” -- that is

\textsuperscript{113} Development Agreement, City of Claremont and Claremont McKenna College January 20, 1992. 
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{117} 1948 Shelley vs. Kraemer.
when the institution known as the Homeowners’ Loan Association (set up on the part of the federal banks) determined which neighborhoods seemed worth investing in.\textsuperscript{118} This meant any neighborhoods or areas therein that had non-white residents, or residents of low-income, were highlighted as red on regional maps, and marked as unsuitable for receiving mortgages. As a result, Claremont homeowners were primarily white, and the residents of Arbol Verde infrequently owned the property they lived and grew up in.

Claremont McKenna College, founded in 1946 originally as Claremont Men’s College, was a project that cropped up alongside the boundaries of Arbol Verde. Wishing to expand, they used policies like eminent domain as a means to remove the preexisting houses and got the backing of the city.\textsuperscript{119} Claremont Heritage used any sway they had against the college. They gathered community support and frequently lobbied the city in an effort to stop the demolitions.

Though the project did not save the neighborhood or its inhabitants from displacement, a product of it was meticulous documentation of the houses and its inhabitants. This includes a series of interviews conducted on the part of volunteers and the director of the heritage at the time (letters corroborate this). Arbol Verde lives on in the local archives despite the destruction the Mexican neighborhood faced. This act, effectively, prevented the total erasure of the group.

\textsuperscript{118} Rothstein, \textit{The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America}.
\textsuperscript{119} Development Agreement - City of Claremont and Claremont McKenna College January 20, 1992.
Following the loss, Claremont Heritage stored what files they had leftover from the fight. Over time the collection has grown, as researchers like Sean Stanley, the hired archivist, spends his days scouring for various Claremont histories. In addition plenty of donations arrive regularly, ever expanding the Arbol Verde collection. This has created a comprehensive understanding of the situation. The materials speak for themselves. The remnants of the history live on in the archives, without a specific narrative framing it all. They are the primary documents.

Moving forward, the available information around Arbol Verde serves as a great testament to the histories of the people at the time. Contrasted to the erasure the buildings Jackson created, the documentation of these houses clearly depicts what was once there, and it's a history that is not white nor wealthy. It makes it impossible for a revisionist history to be taken seriously, and serves as a reminder of what was lost, and the implications of it. This work was a grassroots project which attempted to finally stop the targeting of a community that was being eyed for the timespan of nearly a century. The results are a visual tie to what once was, a sustained landing site in the imagination.
Figure 31 Sacred Heart Chapel, front, Arbol Verde Collection, Claremont Heritage, Claremont, CA

Figure 32 Street view of Arbol Verde, Arbol Verde Collection, Claremont Heritage, Claremont, CA
A more recent donation to the Heritage, acquired this past September, is a sizeable assortment of photos of an event that took place in Arbol Verde’s church, the Sacred Heart Chapel. The images (pictured above) show the core of the community in its prime. One can see congregants together and celebrating. The stage was held for various speakers and preachers, and celebrations abounded. Importantly are a series of clear photos depicting the exterior of the church. The front, back and sides are all documented within the photoset, in addition to the interior shots.

Based on images of a procession at Arbol Verde, I propose the following: create a CAD reproduction of the architectural elements of the church in Arbol Verde that held significant

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*Figure 33* Arbol Verde residents in a procession along the tracks, Arbol Verde Collection, Claremont Heritage, Claremont, CA

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community ties. The design will be available as an open source utility, and anyone who wishes would be able to download its file.

The intention of a 3D model is so individuals have a more interactive experience with the structure, than what is typical from interacting with photographic documentation. Furthermore, being a CAD file, once downloaded it can be 3D printed and brought into our plane yet again.

Figure 34 Mockup of CAD model of Sacred Heart Chapel, Arbol Verde, to 3D print

Pictured above is a SketchUp mockup of CAD renderings. Once properly processed, this file can be used to print models of the structure. Already, the added three dimensionality and coloring of the model have an impact on the viewer and act to revivify the structure.
The past can never be undone—nor should it be. It can and should be acknowledged and honored, however.

Claremont Heritage also works in other ways to keep the culture of Arbol Verde alive. They have begun an annual celebration of “the Mexican Players” as a means to channel Arbol Verde’s deep artistic culture into Claremont’s current art scene. The event centers current Mexican performers in a space once used as a platform for Arbol Verde residents. This works to both honor and celebrate the neighborhood and its beauties.
CONCLUSION

Architects forge relationships with the people they build for which are nothing if not eternal. The building becomes an expression of the architect’s philosophy, the space imbued with the notions the architect carries with them. People within the space unwittingly interact with the architect’s innermost thoughts, a solo conversation, a struggle with the surround within which the building came to be.

What informs the architect? With whom does the architect negotiate politics of space and design? It is, remarkably, not the client (although to some extent as it is the client’s budget), as this is simply an afterthought to the form that has already manifested in the architect’s imagination. Rather, it is the context the architect finds themselves in, finds inspiration in, and who they take up as companions throughout their life.

It’s their experiences that create the shapes in their mind they now so meticulously pursue. Foster Rhodes Jackson clearly believed in Taliesin, and his clients’ worlds, after contracting Jackson, became shaped by this. His experiences on the east coast, followed by his time in the dark, dank submarine. The clients, their families and friends now subscribers as well to Organic architecture the moment they step within the premises of the clients’ home. Their environment is determined by the implications of the style, and ultimately is what suits the southwestern imagination to this day.

Beginning my study of mid-century modern architecture, close to three years ago now, felt almost like walking into a room while a very specific conversation is taking place,
yet being totally oblivious to it. I was walking into the rooms of these architects who were
enraptured by modernism. A predominant portion of Los Angeles is built in this style, yet its
construction is so simple it takes a trained, or specifically curious eye to become privy to the
pattern. Once the reality presents itself, trying to figure out what to do with it is as equally
complicated. As we have now seen, there is much history that went into its construction, and
now that it’s the standard, there seems little room to question it.

Since 9/11, be it simply due to the turning of the century or perhaps a genuine result
of shifting political narratives, architectural discourse fell far below the mainstream. There is
still a concern for architecture, but in a way, as an art form, it is almost encapsulated within
the 20th century. Starchitects like Bjarke Ingles have noted that following the fall of the twin
towers in 2001, New York City has been a hub of regrowth and structural generation,
attracting large firms from all over the world to build various skyscrapers there. He also
insisted that the time of the west coast’s architectural triumph is now in the past, effectively
meaning United States (or as Wright would say, Usonian) architecture is now a relic of the
past120.

The international style which Wright so vehemently opposed in his time in Chicago
is now back in full throttle. Even large American firms are mostly dedicated to the
construction of shiny and compelling high-rises, starting at the tail-end of midcentury

120 Adler, Ben, Design After 9/11. 2011 https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/design-after-9-11_o
modernism’s glory days\textsuperscript{121}. What this means in the context of this thesis is primarily imbued into notions of contemporary communal destruction and erasure.

The process known as gentrification is dependent on the branding of city centers through architecturally relevant hubs in large cities that were previously assumed to be too dangerous to live in\textsuperscript{122}. Of course, there are numerous other factors that play into this, but one exemplary project would be Jay-Z’s Barclay’s center, a development funded by AECOM, known for its oil investments. The Barclay’s Center caused a huge surge in rental prices and destruction of market housing. Long-time residents were over-policed and eventually forced out of their homes to facilitate in this process as well.

“Cops are used to occupy neighborhoods and force evictions in order to colonize them for developers’ schemes”\textsuperscript{123}

The lack of affordability in cities that occurs as a result of gentrification is amplified by the historic acts of downzoning in suburbs and lack of dense housing in these city outposts, which took place from the mid-century and remains until now. Furthermore, internal to the cities, politicians who rule in favor of developments that lead to hyper-

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ada Louise Huxtable, The Tall Building Artistically Reconsidered, The New Yorker, November 1982
\item \textsuperscript{123} Patterson, Dean. Marchers in Brooklyn Map a Geography on Gentrification. https://indypendent.org/2017/09/marchers-in-brooklyn-map-the-boroughs-crooked-geography-of-gentrification/, 2017
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
gentrification, give plenty of tax-breaks and incentives, and evict tenants through asserting eminent domain.

Here through the language we can see a repetition of colonialism on a different scale one might not necessarily recognize as colonialism. Becoming privy to the various implementations of these systems of oppression throughout even recent histories can show how they are still perpetuated today, through tactics that are shockingly representative of one another.

Gentrification, a form of colonialism that causes displacement and higher rates of policing. This inevitably ends in higher rates of imprisonment and death. Instances of houselessness have been on the rise for years now and will keep going up until intervention is taken. Such intervention is hard to address as a personal responsibility without recognizing the continuum they exist on. Suburbs that have histories similar to Claremont will continue denying developers the ability to pursue dense housing, and plenty of NIMBY\textsuperscript{124}ism have caused non-profit developers, that would create affordable housing, to go elsewhere.

As problems grow in the United States and globally it is essential that as a nation, we become aware of past realities so as to approach the present. Plenty of culture and beauty have come out of this continent, but it risks falling into Tolstoy’s warning of bad art, that is a petty distraction. If we are to truly investigate masterpieces as we find them, it will

\textsuperscript{124} Not In My Back Yard - a term used to describe individuals against the construction of necessary constructions in the public, and in regard to dense housing, private realm
undoubtedly become quite revealing. The art available to us is one of a set of tools available to our society and can aid in the turnaround of our currently entropic reality.

Be it due to the empathy it can engender or the horrors it reveals, art and architecture give us the power to move forward. Moving forward means developing the empathy necessary to remove ourselves from the current isolationist individualistic society we have found ourselves in. A return to a communal consciousness and inter-support systems can bring us out of our current mess. It’s only a matter of reading the writing on the wall, and actually doing something with it.

California can be an equitable place. It can have better public services, less policing, and more homes instead of prisons. The same is true for the rest of the United States. I hope to see a future that looks to its past as a warning and can still enjoy the beauty that comes out of these times, fraught with its ever-complicated context.
AFTERWORD

It’s been a wild ride. Writing a thesis is truly as stressful, draining, and chaotic as it’s cracked up to be. Given who I am as a person, it seemed nearly impossible to compile all of this together. It’s not that I find it very difficult to come up with an argument- I’m full of those. Rather it’s about solidifying the argument, finding sources of inspiration, and sources of corroboration- that is anybody (or text, really) who agrees with you so as to back up some random idea.

At the very beginning of this semester, we had a workshop where we explained our thesis to a random partner we received. It took fifteen minutes before they realized my thesis was about architecture. That was a jarring moment, but also one of deep importance. I had so many great thoughts in my head, thoughts that have been springing up for literal years now, and they were interesting, nuanced and fresh. Still, they were deeply embedded in my brain and if I never had the chance to write this thesis, well it’s likely they would’ve stayed there. Now whenever anybody asks me what my thesis is, I still return with long rambling sentences, but at least they get it’s about architecture, and more importantly Claremont.

This journey began quite some time ago. In January of 2017, I had just gotten an internship at Claremont Heritage. My intense curiosity and budding passion for architecture led me to discover the current town I was occupying. I wanted to know where the heck I was and what the heck was happening past the college’s borders. Such an interesting dynamic I’ve discovered. While delving deep into the complicated, beautiful histories of
Claremont I’ve unexpectedly found a very present community of people outside of the archives.

I ended up spending this past summer in Claremont, having received a grant to continue my research at Claremont Heritage. My acquaintanceship with Jackson’s blueprints had just begun, and I wanted more. It was over this summer I visited many of the houses in person and got to see their full form. It was also when Inclusive Claremont began, and I became more connected to the community than ever before.

I have experienced inspiration to great degrees during the thesis writing process, in the years leading up to the writing and conclusively with this semester. This thesis is what my life is right now. It incorporates the things I love. Architecture, art, urbanism, social justice and the difficult act of introspection—recognizing the wrongs of oneself and society. It draws from everything I have learned. Without realizing it until now, this thesis is a summary of my junior year. It was deeply influenced by a Professor Phyllis Jackson class, the Arts of Africa, and Build Los Angeles, with Professor Char Miller and Professor Groves, both of whom are my readers for this current document.

I learned excellent art analysis skills from the former and am still in the process of learning how to take some of the more important aspects, the parts that addressed colonialism in everyday life of the class with me in all my pursuits.

Building Los Angeles inspired a great love of the city and its architecture in capacities i was only just beginning to learn on the microcosm in Claremont. It was through this lens I
began seeing Claremont differently, and was better able to contextualize it within a great metropolis of architecture, diversity, varied ecologies and culture.

Applying these to my work and research at Claremont Heritage has been fascinating and lets me learn something new every time I open up the same set of blueprints I’ve been working with since my sophomore year. It has given such a deeper meaning to the city than I could have anticipated. Claremont is the first city I have lived in outside of Brooklyn, and I have been spurred into various projects within it, making me feel so deeply connected to it. It led me to working with Inclusive Claremont, a pro affordable housing coalition, so as to foster a Claremont that we all want to see. A place whose beauty and intrigue can be shared by all. Claremont and its beauty is conclusively what conjured up my love for architecture in a way I could no longer ignore.

From the off-the-cuff decision to apply for an internship at Claremont Heritage, to first being assigned the task of cataloging the Arbol Verde collection, to beginning the digitization of Jackson’s blueprints (which had by chance just been donated to the heritage’s archives by Alan Hess), this whole process has been nothing if not serendipitous. Even the recent donation of photographs from the Sacred heart Chapel helped me in ways I could not even have guessed writing my thesis proposal last spring. The chapel had always been a source of intrigue for me, as I understand shared space to be of utmost importance in a healthy community, and I had intended to include it in my thesis despite not having a great understanding of what it looked like- I mostly had written documents as evidence to its
existence. I feel very lucky to have been given these opportunities, and as a result have pursued them to the best of my ability, learning much about Claremont on the micro-scale, Los Angeles, and our country as a result.
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