

**TOWARDS A "CRITICAL REGIONALISM" FOR
RAPIDLY DEVELOPING AREAS OF TEXAS**

by

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TOWARDS A "CRITICAL REGIONALISM" FOR
RAPIDLY DEVELOPING AREAS OF TEXAS

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ABSTRACT

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The published intellectual discourse on "Critical Regionalism" is more prolific in the literature of architecture and planning than that of landscape architecture. As a result, the existing parameters used to define regional elements are not always useful to landscape architects, particularly in rapidly developing areas in which there are few, easily recognizable, regional components to the landscape. This thesis uses the ideas embodied in Critical Regionalism as a means to reveal how selected landscape architects and landscape designers interpret the landscapes and architecture of Texas through their individual landscape design philosophies and methodologies. Specific methodologies for extracting regional elements from landscapes that lack any readily discernible, unique components are proposed. Examples of built projects are used to illustrate how selected designers have reinterpreted regional elements in a way that supports a new definition for a critically regionalist approach to

landscape architecture in Texas. Such an approach provides a framework for the design of more unique and imaginative built landscapes in Texas that incorporate the psychological connectedness to place embraced by recent theories of Critical Regionalism.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary use of the term “Critical Regionalism” with regards to architecture and planning was introduced by A. Tzonis and L. Lefaivre in “The Grid and the Pathway,” in Architecture in Greece, No. 15, 1981. Since that time Critical Regionalism has emerged as a prominent idea in contemporary architectural and landscape architectural literature worldwide. To date, the published debate and intellectual discourse on Critical Regionalism has been more prominent in architecture and planning than in landscape architecture. As a result, the parameters used to study regionally defining elements are not always useful to landscape architects, particularly in areas with few easily recognizable regional elements in the landscape.

In recent years, a growing consensus has developed among practicing landscape architects with regard to the importance of regionalism in successful “placemaking.” The dialogue between regionalist landscape designers and emerging regionalist design theories proposed by academics has not kept pace with regionalism’s perceived importance by the same academics. Additionally, the definition of regionalist design has been narrowly interpreted by many landscape architects as a synonym for ecologically based landscape design. This research shows that a broader definition of regionalism allows a wide variety of design aesthetics to coexist with regional elements in a designed landscape. The lack of exposure to a broad range of alternative and competing regionalist theory, and the difficulty in

appropriating regional design elements as form generators and detail elements in existing Texas landscapes has led to a very small body of successful regionalist projects in the state. As a result, landscape architects in Texas are left with few models, both in theory and in practice, of successful “critical” or “informed” regionalist designs by prominent landscape architects. Therefore, a critically regional design paradigm has yet to disseminate into the profession within the state.

This research explores varied definitions of Critical Regionalism, and it uses those definitions to describe how selected landscape architects have interpreted a Critical Regionalism for Texas in their design philosophies, methodologies, and practices. These ideas are then mined to propose specific approaches that can be employed by practicing designers to extract regional elements from landscapes without easily discernible regional components, and then use those elements in creative ways. A portion of this research documents projects in Texas that illustrate approaches to a critical regionalist landscape providing case studies of successful applications of the theories espoused.

Problem Statement

Many landscape architects in Texas are not exposed to regional design methodologies in their professional education, professional organizations and professional practice. The result is few regionalist design implementations, despite the importance that many landscape architects place on such implementations, as demonstrated in the initial interviews of this research. Many landscape architects cite regionalist designers as their models for successful design methodologies. Professional landscape architects need to develop an understanding of

a critically regionalist design methodology in order to successfully implement such a design process.

An understanding of regionally defining elements is the starting point for a regionalist design methodology. Rapidly developing areas in Texas are especially difficult to “read” for their regional design features. For example, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex offers a number of factors that contribute to such a difficulty:

1. the large influx of population into the area (approximately two million people since 1973);
2. the rapid rate of construction projects designed by professionals who are not regionally oriented;
3. the lack of a critical mass of regionalist designers; and
4. the relatively subtle nature of the existing natural and historic, cultural features. (Many rapidly developing areas in North Texas have had most of their original, natural ecosystems destroyed or severely modified by farming and/or ranching prior to their development into more intensive uses.)

Specifically, this research sought to answer the following questions.

1. What is the latest thinking worldwide on Critical Regionalism, and how relevant are its ideas to a Critical Regionalism for landscape architecture in rapidly developing areas of Texas?
2. Have ideas on Critical Regionalism spread from academia to practicing professional landscape architects in Texas, and/or have similar ideas, outside of established academic channels, evolved within the profession in Texas?

3. What are some specific design methodologies and design theories relating to a Critical Regionalism for rapidly developing areas of Texas that offer opportunities to be elaborated upon or amplified through further research?
4. What are the attitudes among Texas landscape architects towards critical regionalist ideas and regionalist designers?
5. What are examples of specific regional elements in Texas?
6. Who are the opinion leaders in the profession with regards to Critical Regionalism in Texas?
7. What are examples of built projects that illustrate critically regional design elements and methodologies?

Regionalist trends have been slow to enter the profession of landscape architecture in Texas. As a result, the built landscape of recent years has not reflected the psychological connectedness to place and the environmental sustainability that many writers on design theory advocate. Landscape architects have too few methodologies and built examples from which to learn if they desire to incorporate regional or critically regional designs into their practice. This research draws on written theory, firsthand interviews, and the critique of built works to provide theoretical and practical models for regionalist design.

This study uncovers fruitful areas for future research. Critical Regionalism is a relatively new design methodology (especially among landscape architects) and has many gaps in both theory and practice at the present time. This document enumerates a variety of ways its research can be continued.

Purposes and Objectives

One purpose of this study is to uncover specific methodologies for extracting form generators for critical regionalist design in rapidly developing areas of Texas. The study seeks specific methodologies for extracting regional elements utilizing both existing theory and widely accepted examples of regionalist design. Another purpose of this study is the furtherance of theory as it relates to Critical Regionalism that can be the basis for on-going research.

The following objectives were incorporated into the study:

1. a demonstration that Critical Regionalism is an important, emerging design approach for landscape architects in the United States and in Texas;
2. a demonstration that agrarian, ecological, historical, client and aesthetic influences can be used as form generators for rapidly developing areas;
3. and, a demonstration that there are examples of built works that have successfully used such influences.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions for terms used in this thesis are offered to clarify the passages in which they are found:

ASLA The American Society of Landscape Architects.

Critical Regionalism. Postmodernism is divided into the postmodern of reaction and Critical Regionalism. In architecture, the postmodern of reaction is strictly a matter of style, in the narrow, mannerist sense. Historical allusion and ornament became desirable elements of architecture, and it was no longer necessary for buildings to express the functionalist image of rationalism (Bourassa 1991).

In Critical Regionalism, practitioners do things that reflect very positively the place where they are being built by utilizing local culture, social institutions, political issues, building techniques, climate, topography, and other elements of the regional context (Bourassa 1991).

Defamiliarization. From a phenomenological perspective, defamiliarization is a way of breaking through “*natural attitude*”—the unnoticed and unquestioned acceptance of the things and experiences of daily living. The landscape becomes, through defamiliarization, a focus of attention and an object for reflective analysis (Seamon, 1980).

Ecological Determinism. A style of design which to a greater or lesser degree, strives to simulate natural processes in the built landscape (Walker, 1994).

Form Generators. Known landscape components that can be reassembled into new combinations to express a particular condition. Cultural symbols replicated, transformed, or reflected in new designs (Trancik, 1986).

Grounded Theory. Theory generated from taking data in the form of descriptions and anecdotes and finding patterns and meaning in the data as related to the context in which they occur (Henderson, 1991).

Modernism. As a reaction to the heavily laden symbolism and decoration of Victorianism (Macowsky, 1993), the modernists focused on space rather than style. Modernists utilize contemporary materials and engineering strategies to develop an expression from the means of production (Treib, 1993). Modernists adopted wholeheartedly the enlightenment idea that rationality could be applied to solve social problems and that mankind's condition could thereby be progressively improved toward some unitary, consensual end (Bourassa, 1991, 133).

Pass Along Plants. A term that was coined by garden writer Alan Lacy, because “about the only way to obtain them is to beg a piece or two from a sympathetic gardening friend” (Bender, 1993). A prime criteria for pass along is the ease and regularity with which they can be propagated and given away (Bender, 1993).

Paradigm. A paradigm is a world view that describes the nature of the social world (Henderson, 1991). An achievement sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of activity ... and sufficiently open ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve (Kuhn, 1970, p. 10).

Placemaking. The process of providing integrative solutions to problems of spatial design (Trancik, 1986).

Postmodernism. An attempt by culture to define the language of space and place of architecture ... after the utilitarian rationalism of the modern movement (MaKowsky, 1993).

Postmodernism. Characterized by skeptical distrust of human rational abilities, respect for tradition, an eclectic aesthetic, recognition of the importance of ornament and symbol, a contextualism that values buildings that attend to surroundings, and an incremental approach to the solution of urban problems (Stern, 1977, quoted in Bourassa, 1991).

Qualitative Methodology. An approach to research that includes interpretive procedures that inductively describe, translate, and focus on meaning rather than the frequency of occurring phenomena. It uses words as the primary symbols for generating grounded theory specific to the context in which the research occurs (Henderson, 1991).

Read [as in to “read” a landscape]. The ability to study and analyze ... landscapes, urban forms, and building typologies (Bechhoefer, 1991, 282).

Regionalism. Architecture designed to respond to local, natural, and man-made place. Place is an expression of integrated ecologies of climate, resources, and culture. Local materials have color, texture, and fiber, and all have particulars of quality. The various zones of a region overlap each other in patterns that require the articulation of human judgment. Neither culture nor nature are “hardlined provinces” (Cook, p. 165).

Romantic Regionalism. Rather than rely on classical precedents for the immutable standards of art, the romantics turned to personal experience and found inspiration in nature, exotic lands, and the past ... (Wilson, 1997).

Topophilia. The affective bond between people and place or setting (Tuan, 1974).

Typology: “Categories of a phenomena that may result in verification of generation of theory” (Henderson, 1991).

Universal Civilization. The scientific, technical, and political rationality that are necessary to take part in modern civilization (Ricoeur, quoted in Frampton, 1982). Contemporary world culture (Wilson, 1997).

Limitations

This study is restricted by certain conditions beyond the researcher’s control. The voluntary nature of the interview format and the relatively small sample size has potentially

limited the results of the research. It is possible that the attitudes of individuals that chose not to participate in the interviews, or who were not selected by the researcher, differ significantly from those of the participating subjects. The sample might more appropriately be termed an incidental sample, i.e., one in which subjects participate on the basis of availability and willingness to cooperate. This factor may restrict the generalizability of the findings regarding subjects' attitudes.

The focus of the study was limited by the qualitative nature of the approach taken. The interview questions were purposefully open-ended to permit new data and theory to emerge. Questions focusing specifically on agrarian, historic, client history, and ecological form generators were not asked since the theory that led to those arose from the interviews.

Delimitation

The scope of the study has been delimited in a number of ways. First, the interview subjects were restricted to registered landscape architects in the Dallas and Austin areas (for practical reasons). Landscape architects in other areas of Texas may have different attitudes and opinions on the subject.

Secondly, other professional disciplines were not interviewed. However, the inclusion of the opinions of architects, academics, and cultural geographers can be found in the literature review.

Finally, the study of built works was delimited to examples with which the researcher had ready access and either already knew or were suggested by the interview subjects. These may not necessarily be the best examples in Texas that illustrate critically regionalist ideas.

Overview of the Study

As has been previously stated, the principal purpose of this study is to uncover specific methodologies for extracting form generators for critical regionalist design in rapidly developing areas of Texas and to generate theory on Critical Regionalism as it relates to rapidly developing areas of Texas. Chapter 2 deals with a review and analysis of the supporting literature relevant to the topic of Critical Regionalism. The methods and procedures of the study are presented in chapter 3, the results of the interviews in chapter 4, and the descriptions of built works are presented in chapter 5. Chapter 6 of the study is concerned with the summary of findings, discussion, implications, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Critical Regionalism

Critical Regionalism was originally proposed as a way to permit a developing area to absorb the technology and new design styles that make development possible without turning the area into a homogenous, “placeless,” consumer driven society that, according to many critics, lacks a rooted, cultural identity. While the original inspiration was for the development of “Third World” countries, the same concerns can be applied to rapidly developing areas of “First World” countries, including Texas.

There is the paradox: how to become modern and return to sources; how to revive an old dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization ... (Ricoeur, quoted in Frampton, 1982).

One of Ricoeur’s conclusions was that we “can no longer practice the dogmatism of a single truth” (Ricoeur, quoted in Frampton, 1982). Hence, the dialectical or meditative premise of Critical Regionalism seeks to mediate the ideologies, aesthetics, and exigencies of professional design practice that influence contemporary designers with the cultural and ecological “anchors” or region.

The definitions of Critical Regionalism are currently in a formative stage. They represent an emerging design methodology and landscape aesthetic. Recent writings on the subject of Critical Regionalism have shown a great diversity of opinions as to what elements

constitute a critical regionalist design. This research reveals a number of factors that tie these diverse writings together. They are as follows:

1. a critique of the perceived excesses of modernism, functionalism, and enlightenment rationality;
2. a critique of the romantic, scenographic approach to regionalism;
3. an embrace of the postmodern emphasis on place, rather than space;
4. a desire to create landscapes that coexist peacefully within the established patterns of a neighborhood;
5. an embrace of regionally defining forms and detail elements;
6. a desire to make the landscape an object for intellectual contemplation as well as sensual pleasure;
7. a distrust of grand design solutions and an embrace of incrementalism;
8. and, a desire to create a bounded space where the excesses of endless megalopolitan development and a consumer driven culture are resisted.

Critical Regionalism: Modernism and Postmodernism

As a reaction to the “heavily laden symbolism and decoration of Victorianism, the modernists focused on space rather than style” (Makowski, 1994). They discounted the influences of culture and personal creativity found in the details of traditional architectural form and focused exclusively on the function or program that led to the form (Pavrides).

One of the most important tenets of Modernism is the premise that all social problems can be solved through a purely rational process. In the area of architecture and landscape architecture, modernists studied the same vernacular designs as the postmodern regionalists now do. However, they derived very different lessons from the study, filtered through their enlightenment ideology and machine aesthetic, it confirmed for them the validity of a rational process approach. Corbusier was inspired by vernacular architecture because of its severely utilitarian nature in responding to climate and locally available materials. The absence of culture defining ornamentation was given a higher dimension by statements as that made by Le Corbusier that "... white wash is extremely moral" (Pavrides, p. 309-310).

The modernists searched for universal and timeless ways of perfecting architecture without any reference to the historic styles and symbols that had dominated Western architecture since the Renaissance. In rejecting traditional architecture, they "... also rejected the human needs, interests, sentiments, and values, that must be given full play in every complete structure" (Mumford, 1952, p. 86). For modernists, the authentic human *expression* found in traditional architectural styles was thought to be in the past or in more simple and exotic cultures (Dovey, 1985).

The modernists tried to escape the 'shackles' of tradition and history that are such a pervasive element of culture in Europe. This led to a belief that true aesthetic integrity could emerge only from an ahistoric, empirical, methodologic approach—an aesthetic style known as functionalism. "Functionalism was an 'International style' that was appropriate universally, at all places and times, regardless of the cultural, historical, climatological, or topographic

context” (Bourassa, 1991). The methodology of functionalism arrived at a design solution based on scientific analysis of the design “problem” using a reductionist approach to the elements of the design process.

Refinement of technique ... more scientific programming, better drafting tools, better simulation, critical path scheduling, quality control, more pre-fabrication, ... post-occupancy evaluation, etcetera, became a preoccupation of the design and engineering professions and schools. It was all part of the positivistic attitude that a definite, correct solution could be found for every problem. This has since proven to be an overly optimistic inheritance from the Enlightenment (Kelbough, p. 185).

Modernist architects believed that a building or landscape should not only express its function, structure, and the nature of its materials, but also the spirit of the modern era which embodied a precision and efficiency that were contradicted by ornament and contextual evocation (Wilson, 1997). The postmodernists, by contrast, react to the estrangement that they feel has occurred as a result of the excesses of functionalist design. Some early postmodernists attributed these excesses to the commodification of the landscape in the capitalist world. They argued that the combined forces of rational process and the economic imperatives of our capitalist system make it difficult for a landscape design to rise above the most efficient and least expensive means to achieve the ends of the design program. It should be noted that a high degree of economic development must occur in any society before the alienation caused by modernism becomes an important enough issue to compete with the economic imperatives of development. Ferandez Gallano (1991) describes this dilemma in a critique of regionalist trends in architecture:

The defense of the region in the international theater implies an element of denial. A black square of negative thinking on the white square of the global village. Being regional sounds parochial to the politicians aspiring to

cosmopolitan glamour, suicidal to architects who cannot afford to narrow down their potential clientele (Ferandez-Gallano, p. 32).

Recent writings by postmodernists speak more in terms of authenticity and cultural meaning in architecture rather than any economic ideological position. These writers argue that ordinary space should not be stripped of its cultural significance. Robert Venturi was one of the most influential writers to critique modernism, beginning in the mid-1960s. His writings changed the architectural paradigm towards one of developments that “embody the difficult unity of inclusion” and away from projects that feature an absence of regional design context. He showed his affinity for ornamentation by reinterpreting Mies van der Rohe’s famous dictum that “less is more” to read “less is bore” (Trancik, 1986). Ken Bourassa summarizes the contrast of modernism and postmodernism:

Modernism encompasses Enlightenment rationalism, denial of tradition, a universal functionalist style, prohibition of ornament and symbolism, a romantic individualism which valued buildings that stand out rather than fit in, and a penchant for grand, totalitarian solutions to urban problems. Postmodernism, by contrast, is characterized by skeptical distrust of human rational abilities, respect for tradition, an eclectic aesthetic, recognition of the importance of ornament and symbol, a contextualism that values buildings that attend to surroundings, and an incremental approach to the solution of urban problems (Stern, 1977, quoted in Bourassa, 1991).

Implicit in Bourassa’s summary above is a support for a regionally sensitive Postmodernism where an attentiveness to local culture and history mediate the modernist preoccupation with method and technique.

Regionally based postmodernism is only one of a number of possible alternatives to the modernist ideal. Cline (1991) argues that the conservative and liberal wings of postmodernism are composed of regional or critically regional postmodernists which typify the

former and an alternative expression from whatever the source which describes the latter. One example of a non-regionalist, liberal postmodern methodology is the art-based approach. In such a design process, abstract design systems are extracted from contemporary and historic art movements and reinterpreted into landscape designs.

Bourassa separates the postmodern movement into two, principle-contrasting styles. The "... postmodernism of reaction is strictly a matter of style in the narrow, mannerist sense of the word" (Bourassa, 1991, p. 136). This style is exemplified by Michael Graves with his "grammar of ornament approach" (Collins, 1989, p. 128) and Robert Venturri with his idea of the building as a "decorated shed." In both cases, historical allusion and ornament become highly desirable elements, and it is no longer necessary for architectural form to express the functionalism and machine aesthetic of rationalism. Bourassa (1991, pp. 136-137) criticizes this decorative approach as:

"an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo-historical forms" (Foster, 1985, p. xii), "... do-it-yourself history ..." (Huxtable, 1980, p. 26), "cardboard scenography" (Frampton, 1982, p. 76), or an example of 'precisely that avalanche of academicism, commercialism, and kitsch that is always ready to swamp our culture in the absence of a tradition vigorous enough to resist it'" (Kramer, 1987, p. 327).

Huxtable (1980) summed up the problem: "It takes a creative act, not clever [historic] cannibalism, to turn a building into art" (quoted in Bourassa, 1991, p. 137). The approach above substitutes the authenticity created by designing with a sensitivity to the dwelling practices of everyday life with the belief that authenticity can be created through the manipulation of appearance. Much of this type of design is the result of commercial pressures,

as was functionalism. When applied to landscapes, it serves as advertising for tourism, themed restaurants and commercial developments.

As an alternative to what he refers to as “the stylistic Postmodernism of reaction,” Bourassa (1991) proposes a Postmodernism of Resistance referred to by Frampton as “Critical Regionalism,” and by Fuller as “informed provincialism” Kelbough (p. 182) refers to a resistance against “cultural entropy, cultural trivialization and cultural homogenization,” and Frampton (1991) describes a resistance “against the domination of positivistic technology and its involvement in the maximization of production and consumption, wherein the dominant attitude towards nature is always violent and exploitive.” In addition, Frampton describes “the resistance of locally grounded cultural form as opposed to the phenomenon of universal technology and ... the way in which bounded form can be brought to resist the space endlessness of megalopolitan development.” Additionally, he cites a resistance to an emphasis on the visual experience of place over the senses of hearing, touch and smell. Wilson writes of a resistance to “the tendency to turn culture and the environment into exploitable commodities” (Wilson, 1997).

As soon as we get through all this nonsense about fake Greek, fake Roman, fake whatever, the serious practitioners will be doing things that reflect very positively the place where they are being built. If there is a trend that does make sense right now, it is a very powerful sense of regionalism (Cooper, quoted by Bourassa, p. 137).

Vernacular Influences on Critical Regionalism

... too often ... [vernacular] ... examples of uncanny brilliance are appreciated only as picturesque relics, as romantic projections, or as refined products of

some limited technology rather than as pivotal human solutions that embody cultural persistence across time (Cook, p. 168).

Critical regionalists study vernacular architecture as the most place-centered form system existing in contrast to popular and academic architectures which they interpret as being more recognizable by time or style periods. They see the vernacular as a result of cultural factors; physical forces are seen as secondary and modifying conditions. As evidence for this position, they note that similar conditions of climate, materials and site have produced a great, formal diversity of architectures throughout the world.

Bechoefer (1991) believes that “given a certain climate, the availability of certain materials, and the constraints and capabilities of a given level of technology, what finally decides the form of a dwelling, and molds the spaces and their relationships, is the vision that people have of the ideal life” (Amos Rapoport, quoted in Bechoefer, p. 282). He advocates an understanding of the cultural differences in populations and not just the physical manifestations of those differences as they appear in vernacular architecture. He points to researchers for further study such as the psychologist Edward T. Hall, who studies cultural differences in spatial perception and interpersonal behavior, J. B. Jackson, with his vivid descriptions of built works, and Christopher Alexander, whose pattern language approach can be utilized to study the way people actually use the landscape and architecture.

Another researcher that sought to understand the cultural factors that lead to vernacular design was Labelle Prussin. In her book, Architecture in Northern Ghana, she combined architectural and anthropological methodologies to arrive at an understanding of

both architectural forms and details as well as ethnographic information about the social context in which the architecture functions. She observed that “materials, technology, range of economic activity, social organization, religious and secular ideology, as well as historical factors, all had an influence on architectural form” (Pavlidis, p. 312-313).

Pavlidis (1991) states that critical regionalists try to understand the “richness of information” inherent in vernacular architecture by striving to understand the inhabitant’s point of view, rather than taking a purely visual approach to place analysis. He, like Prussin, believes that the form systems generated by folk or vernacular architecture are the most basic, physical manifestations of cultural determinants, growth and development factors, and the values that a given people impose on their architecture.

In its nature and value, folk architecture is viewed as timeless, uniform, severely utilitarian, and as representative of a people’s “soul”. It is “architecture of necessity by contrast to architecture of pride” (Pavlidis, p. 307).

Regionalism

There are significant “megatrends” in the social and political life of the United States that are encouraging the development of regionally based, postmodern architecture. Examples of such trends include the following observations of this researcher and others.

- Regional architecture has become a contemporary manifestation of the decentralization of power in the United States much as the “picturesque garden with its espousal of irregularity, variety, and roughness” became a symbol for the anti-monarchical movements in England of the late seventeenth century (Tsonis and Lefaivre, p. 6).

- Political power is increasingly being diverted from the national to the state and to the local level as the rise of pluralism moves decisions closer to the source of those affected by them.
- The legal recognition of ethnic identity as the basis for the political allocation of resources has strengthened our perception of each other in racial-ethnic terms (Wilson, 1997).
- The rise of environmentalism has favored regionalism as the more desirable representation of nature and “metaphorically of society in its primitive, good, beautiful and true state” ... unfettered by the alien, rigid, machine aesthetic of technology (Lewis Mumford, quoted in Tsonis and Lefaivre, p. 15). The trend towards “sustainable” development is creating awareness of the benefits of designing landscapes for regional physical environments.
- Cultural aspirations are now encouraged as opposed to the “melting pot” theories that held sway in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Celebrating our geographic roots has inspired a phenomenal increase in the number of state, city, and regional magazines.
- Cultural anthropologists advocate Regionalism as an approach to help people come to grips with the “actual conditions of life” and make them “feel at home” (Lewis Mumford, quoted in Tsonis and Lefaivre, 1991, p. 14). Mobility and pursuit of commercial success causes people to “spread ourselves out wider and wider only to become more and more uncomfortable” as we become estranged from our regional roots. Fernandez-Gallano writes of individual’s “fragmented lives” where we “long for links, even if feigned” (1991, p. 33). Dovey writes of a quest for authenticity and a feeling of “home” engendered by a “serious

disconnectedness in the ecology of person-environment relationships that one might call homelessness” (Dovey, 1985).

- The “mass” media are becoming more personalized and local with the advent of cable television and the rise of the internet.
- Regional cuisine is engendering a heightened appreciation for local foodstuffs, preparation methods and (possibly) the ethnic cultures that produced them.

Critical Regionalism's most prominent cultural precept is “place” creation that acknowledges local culture, social institutions, political issues, building techniques, climate, topography, and other elements of the regional context (Bourassa, 1991).

Architecture becomes regional when designed to respond to local, natural, and man-made place ... place is an expression of integrated ecologies of climate, resources, and culture ... local materials have color, texture, and fiber. All have particulars of quality ... the various zones of a region overlap each other in patterns that require the articulation of human judgment ... neither culture nor nature are hardlined provinces (Cook, p. 165).

The cultural geographer Edward Relph (1981) discusses at length the sensitivity necessary for authentic understanding of “place.” His model is the philosophy of “being” advocated by Martin Heidegger and which Relph refers to as “environmental humility.” Environmental humility is defined by Relph as both a deep respect for, and a continual striving towards, an understanding of both the built and natural landscape. It does not advocate an uncritical reverence for either natural systems or celebrated built works. “It simply means caring for, protecting and appropriating places” (1981, p. 189). Relph describes appropriation as the moment of insight when we see [landscapes] for what they are through the concealment

caused by “familiarity, forgetfulness, the narrowness of science, and the comforts and seductions of materialistic life” (p. 186). In this context, the designer should never threaten local values with a detached expertise which can lead to:

... “self estrangement” as landscapes are increasingly designed by invisible, abstract, social forces unrelated (or alien) to ... inward impulses (Marx, 1964). Alienation is essentially experiencing the world and oneself passively, receptively, as the subject separated from the object (From 1961, quoted in Marx, 1964, p. 177).

By contrast, appropriated spaces add meaning to our lives through our care and concern and thus become a type of anchor for our self-identity. They also offer depth. This includes spatial depth, historical depth, depth of diversity and of learning opportunity that is impossible to recreate with an all encompassing design solution created by detached professional expertise (Dovey, p. 38).

Defining the cultural elements of regionalism is particularly problematic in a relatively recently inhabited region such as North Texas. It takes time to evolve “... a shared vision, recognizable by the inhabitants as representing the history and culture of the place. A vision which is necessarily romantic and regressive with overtones of nostalgia” (Woolsey, p. 325).

Pavrides describes four possible “visions” in a regionally influenced architecture.

A designer can simultaneously evoke an original archetype, employing elements for their symbolism (folkloric regionalism), utilize principles of modern architecture which have been justified through reference to the vernacular (ideological regionalism), echo material qualities and spatial character of the vernacular (experiential regionalism), and respond to the users’ perceptions (anthropological regionalism) (Pavrides, p. 316).

Pavlidis states that theories on folkloric regionalism share certain themes and methodologies. The first is the use of a "typical house," which is then classified typologically as the principle unit of study. The uses and functions of the "archetypal" house are not taken into account, nor are the physical surroundings adjacent to it. The plan diagram is considered to be the most "persistent and least changeable" element of the typical house and, therefore, the most valuable to the folklorists. Surface qualities are considered more changeable and, therefore, less valuable. Another characteristic of folkloric regionalism is the wide variation in regional units. These units can vary from a small area to an entire hemisphere depending on the criteria used to create the housing typologies. "For example, regions can be defined according to national or linguistic groups, topographic features" (Pavlidis, 1991). Folkloric regionalists collect detailed ethnographic information on folk societies which might have otherwise been lost to history. They consider folk architecture to be "timeless," uniform and utilitarian. Finally, they look at buildings of the past and present as products of cultural forces that persist over time.

Folkloric regionalists advocate using folk architecture as a "source for developing a national architectural style" by trying to capture the archetypal styles from the past uncovered in their research. New materials are not embraced and are usually hidden from the users' view. Pavlidis states that the meaning of folkloric regional styles are "lost" to the inhabitants of a region because the surface qualities that define local identity are not part of the definition of the regional typologies (Pavlidis, 1991).

The second type of regionalism described by Pavlides is ideological regionalism which he describes as a type of regionalism that embraces the elements of vernacular architecture that can pass through a filter of modernist ideology. The cultural context is not considered important. The most significant aspects of vernacular design to the modernists is the way that traditional building styles adapted to climate, programmatic requirements and local materials in a very utilitarian way. Corbusier used ideological regionalism to validate such modernist design principles as “asymmetry, repetition, simplicity, use of primary forms” and local materials to arrive at a regional style for designs of Ronchamp and Cap Martin (Pavlides, 1991).

The third type of regionalism described by Pavlides is experiential regionalism, which appears in the work of Robert Venturi, Charles Moore, and Christopher Alexander. Experiential regionalism tries to recreate “the experiential qualities of the vernacular while maintaining most, if not all, of the qualities and principles of modernist architecture such as an open plan and non-symmetrical compositions” (Pavlides, 1991). Experiential regionalism is based on the design sensibilities of the architect who tries to evoke the experiential aspects of the vernacular such as human scale, great views and beautiful surface decoration.

The final type of regionalism proposed by Pavlides is an anthropological regionalism. This type of regionalism seeks to understand how social relationships are affected by built works in a given community. Vernacular architecture is studied to discover “cultural determinants of form, the factors that influence growth and the values placed on the buildings” (Pavlides, 1991). Pavlides advocates the use of “Sociosemiotic” methodologies to arrive at an

understanding of both the architecture and the ethnography of an area. “Sociosemiotic theory states that conventionalized form of a vernacular architecture constitutes a language useful to the inhabitants social life” (Pavrides, 1991). Such techniques as photographic documentation, scaled drawings, participant observation, informant interviews and “photoelicitation”¹ are used to produce research reports with extensive illustrations that are useful to the architectural design process.

Wilson (1997) describes a type of regionalism that grew out of the picturesque art tradition of the late nineteenth century called romantic regionalism. The term picturesque was first applied to landscape paintings, then romantic gardens, and finally to architecture set in the picturesque landscapes. According to Wilson, the architecture could be romantic in three different ways; “first, by its association with a bygone epoch or exotic land; second, by its informal floor plan and asymmetrical facade composition; and third, by its setting, whether by its use of local materials or its careful siting on the land” (Wilson, 1997).

Romantic regionalism, like critical regionalism, was partially a critique of the excesses of capitalism and industrial society. It was a reaction to the “evils of industrialization” and a desire to return to what was considered the more humane work of artisans and craftsman of the medieval period. This led to the popularity of the Gothic Revival style and to the formation of utopian socialist communities that championed handcraftsmanship and contributed to the birth of the “arts and crafts” movement in the 1890s.

¹ Showing participants photographs to discover how inhabitants interpret the images.

Another element of romantic regionalism occurs in countries striving to assert a national identity. One example is the national, romantic architectural style that evolved in Finland as a resistance to Russian domination at the turn of the twentieth century (Wilson, 1997). Another occurred in Spain after the shock of losing its empire (Tzonis and Lefaivre, 1991).

The romantic regional tradition can be prominently seen today in the tourist industry where such romantic interests as “unspoiled nature, ancient history, distant lands and exotic peoples” have captured the public imagination. Tzonis and Lefaivre (1991) refer to this type of regionalism as Commercial Regionalism which they criticize as a “pornography of sorts,” due to its emphasis on emotion over rationality and the ease with which one can become totally possessed by it in a purely sensual way.

The excesses of the scenographic approach to regionalism have led some architecture critics to denounce all regionalism. The architecture critic John Pastier writing in Texas Journal in 1985 denounced regionalism as a “flight from reality into myth-mongering,” and “a form of economic elitism masquerading as a democratic common-sense style” (Welch, 1989). For Mr. Pastier, “reality” presumably consists of the artistic sensibility of the architect, the program of the client and modern technology, and it does not include the psychological or cultural anchors of region which are more difficult to verify as “reality.” The criticism that regionalism is elitist arises from the denigration of less expensive modern materials by regionalist architects. Ironically, the some regional materials that attained their regional status by virtue of their availability in a given area in some past epoch are now out of reach to all but

the very wealthy. Kelbough's statement that "Critical Regionalists keep ... insisting on real slate floors in their entrance foyers" is a statement that may not have resonance with the lower economic classes due to the high cost of the "regional" and "authentic" material of slate. Another critique of regionalism is that it can lead to the same sort of homogenization as the "International Style," except that the similar designs are in the style of a particular area (Sharky, 1985). These types of criticisms are some of the driving forces behind the developing theories of Critical Regionalism.

Kelbough (1991) distinguishes Critical Regionalism from a provincial regionalism he calls provincialism. Provincials "do not know what they don't know" and lack the same degree of understanding of universal civilization. A provincial might also misunderstand the process as opposed to the product (the way, not the what) and fall into the trap of "artificial scenography, as when adults play cowboys after five by donning boots and big hats to go to Billy Bob's or Gilley's (saloons in Ft. Worth and Houston)" (Welch, 1989).

Frampton (quoted in Kelbough, 1991, p. 182) states that Critical Regionalism "distances itself equally from the Enlightenment 'myth of progress' and from the reactionary, unrealistic impulse to return to architectonic forms of the past." He distinguishes Critical Regionalism from "the simplistic evocation of a sentimental or ironic vernacular currently being conceived as an overdue return to the ethos of a popular culture ..."

for unless such a distinction is made one will end by confusing the resistant capacities of Regionalism with the demagogic tendencies of Populism. In contradistinction to Regionalism, the primary goal of Populism is to serve as a communicative *or* instrumental sign. Such a sign seeks to evoke not a critical perception of reality, but rather the sublimation of a desire for direct experience through the provision of information. Its tactical aim is to attain, as economically

as possible, a preconceived level of gratification in behavioristic terms (Frampton, 1982).

Sorkin criticizes the semiotics of regionalism by lamenting the disconnect between the artificial “urbane disguises” of the “preserved” cities and the people who inhabit them. He notes that such design is based on the same calculus as advertising (or commercial regionalism) and the idea of pure imageability, which may not attend to the real needs and traditions of the people that inhabit an area (Sorkin, 1992).

Critical Regionalism

There was a time when architecture was made with a concern for the way that the sun fell and the winds blew, and that architecture was a backdrop for human events. It gave meaning and focus to people’s lives; it was a way in which a people and a culture explained themselves to each other, understood themselves, and spoke to the future. To make an architecture today that has that capacity for meaning seems to me to be a desirable thing to seek. To make an architecture that is distinct from what much of today’s architecture has become, that is, packaging and fashion, seems to me to be a way to return architecture to its connection with man and therefore nature To produce a richer and more meaningful human experience and, in the best sense of the word, to produce a man-centered architecture ... that has a meaning for people and a place (Wolf, quoted in Amourgis, p. 140).

Wolf (1991) presents above an argument for a regional approach to architecture based on a love of place, or topophilia. Critical Regionalism, by contrast, adds the significant overlay of an educated architect’s reactions to region and an attempt to provoke both intellectual and experiential reactions to the design in the end user. The design in such a process results from a

dialogue between the landscape architect's or architect's mind and experiences and the culture and natural features of place.

Critical Regionalism grew out of attempts to find a way for rooted, regional cultures in developing countries to adapt to rapid economic progress and the resulting foreign, social and technological influences without dissipating "the cultural resources which have made the great civilizations of the past" (Ricoeur, quoted in Frampton, 1982). More recent theory applies the dialectical design processes of Critical Regionalism to a wider variety of geographical areas, especially areas in advanced countries. Rather than preserving a rooted culture, the problem in developed countries is, according to critical regionalists, to mitigate the anomy and atopy engendered by the homogenous, "placeless," endless megalopolitan developments built during the era of modernism, functionalism and the excesses of twentieth-century consumer, culture.

A second impetus for Critical Regionalism was to enrich romantic regionalism with elements of contemporary technology and critical thought. There is a desire by critical regionalists to understand and use not just the surface qualities of regional form systems, but also to question and reinterpret the thinking that led to those systems. The operative word in Critical Regionalism is the word "critical." Diverse writers on Postmodernism have imbued this word with the aesthetic, cultural, and political values that they find most important.

Tsonis and Lefaivre are interested in critical thought and turning buildings into objects that provoke thinking by the user. Critical in this sense does not mean adversarial, but rather refers to a regionalism that is self-examining and self-questioning. Tsonis and Lefaivre distrust the sentimental "embracing" between buildings and their consumers, instead "pricking their

conscience ... [The] critical approach reintroduces 'meaning' in addition to 'feeling' in the view of the man-made world" (Tsonis and Lefaivre, 1991, p. 21). The authors advocate an investigation of the unique, critical character of a region as opposed to a purely romantic regionalism which they criticize as being "chauvinistic, atavistic and sentimentally hallucinationist" (Tsonis and Lefaivre, 1991, p. 3). Implicit in this approach is a critical rethinking of "the very thoughts which lead to ... design and through which people use and appreciate ... buildings" (Tsonis and Lefaivre, 1991, p. 20). The focus is on the sensibility of the architect and the end user as they both react to an interpretation of the regional context.

Ingersol sets up a dialectic between the embracing of regional elements and the distance required for critical reinterpretation of those elements.

[The] necessarily negative side of critical culture is captured in Nietzsche's dictum: "a great truth wants to be criticized, not idolized." It accounts for much of the misunderstanding about Critical Regionalism: If it is to be "critical," it must be both accepted and rejected. The best analogy to explain this difficult and seemingly contradictory condition is the concept of Brechtian theater in which the actor is constantly reminding the audience that he is both a fictional character and a real actor. This kind of awareness creates a critical distance from reality while remaining a part of reality (Ingersol, p. 237).

A more pervasive meaning of critical in Critical Regionalism uses the term to denote a mediation "of the impact of universal civilization with elements derived directly from the peculiarities of a particular place" (Kenneth Frampton, quoted in Tsonis and Lefaivre, 1991, p. 9). Writers on architectural theory usually define universal civilization in terms of the modern technology and social structures that make rapid, economic development possible. One of the difficulties in defining modern technology in terms of landscape design is that the most advanced and forward thinking technical solutions can turn out to be the use of ancient

natural systems. For example, a concrete culvert might be removed and replaced with vegetative erosion and flood control measures. Bioremediation could replace a complex mechanical system of sewage treatment in the postmodern search for “sustainable” design solutions.

Kalogeras defines “critical” in terms of the desire to deal with new opportunities offered by contemporary technology that are balanced by a respect for the lessons of the past. “The study of vernacular architecture as the link to the history and the local culture provides design guidelines and the confidence to approach spatial solutions that address the future while respecting the past” (Kalogeras, quoted in Amourgis, p. 69).

Chafee (quoted in Amourgis, 1991, p. 55) uses Critical Regionalism as a means of discovering new architectural forms that include both understanding of the place and elements of universal civilization which she refers to as the “baggage of the brain.” By “baggage” she refers to “all the past experiences, influences, and sources of information that affect thinking and perception.” Welch describes Critical Regionalism in a similar way as “what results when architects, responding to that which is most innate within themselves, correlate with that which is inherent in site, climate and client (Welch, 1989).

Many critically regionalist designers strive to create a critical distance between a project and the end user through a heightened or altered sensibility created by a process called defamiliarization. Critical Regionalists use defamiliarization as “a way of restoring conscious experience, of breaking through deadening and mechanical habits of conduct, and allowing us to be reborn to the world in its existential freshness and horror” (Frederic Jameson, quoted in

Castro, 1991 p. 208). Castro writes that the goal is to see the world in a new and unforeseen way through a renewal of conscious perception caused by the defamiliarized elements. In a critically regional landscape, the defamiliarized elements would occur within the regional context and established neighborhood patterns and not be created primarily to make the project stand out for commercial reasons, artistic reasons, or to satisfy the ego of the architect.

From a phenomenological perspective, defamiliarization is a way of breaking through what is referred to as “natural attitude”—the unnoticed and unquestioned acceptance of the things and experiences of daily living. The landscape becomes, through defamiliarization, a focus of attention and an object for reflective analysis (Seamon, 1980).

Castro (1991, p. 208) compares defamiliarization to the literary techniques of the Russian formalist writers of the 1920s whose literature did not reflect reality but constituted an interpretation of it. This focus begins with a thorough understanding of the regionally defining elements of place and then “incorporates them ‘strangely’, rather than familiarly, ... [to make] them appear strange, distant, difficult, even disturbing.” Castro writes that defamiliarized regional elements can lead to a new concept of history, as well as a new subjective vision of a contemporary regional context. In this view, historic elements are reinterpreted according to the contemporary vision of the designer in such a way as to “break with the dominant artistic canon of the generation immediately preceding” (Jameson, quoted in Castro, 1991, p. 209).

Defamiliarization places a large responsibility on the designer to understand the essence of each architectural element to be defamiliarized.

... [P]erhaps we are here in order to say: house, bridge, fountain, gate, pitcher, fruit tree, window, at most column, tower. But to say them, you must understand them more intensely than the things themselves ever dream of existing (Anna Maria Rilke, quoted in Amourgis, 1991, p. 62).

The prototypical model for urban Critical Regionalism is the “enclave,” that is, the bounded urban fragment against which the inundation of the place-less, consumerist environment finds itself momentarily checked” (Frampton, 1982). A neighborhood, to be intimately experienced within the symbol or image of a city as a whole, requires such an attitude (Tuan, 1974).

Critical Regionalism is a question of critical intelligence, discrimination, and sensitivity. In the end, as with genuine and sincere criticism itself, it is a question of sense ... of place, of nature, of history, of craft, and of limits (Kelbough, p. 187).

[Critical Regionalism] suggests the possibility of systemic thought coexistent with locational response: a kind of hybrid of ideal intention and freely responsive interpretation, a kind of conversation among cousins standing in the shadow of the departed, heroic grandfather [of Modernism], sharing blood and genes but cast to a changed world in idiosyncratic ways (Cline, p. 290).

Critical Regionalism mediates nostalgia and technology, past and future, ideals and local truths. It becomes critical through the appropriate use of available technology. It becomes believable through design at the level of the construction detail. Critical Regionalism is a process through which we can each generate our own appropriate “ism,” an architecture of space, time and ideals. It is not a theory of form. Critical Regionalism is a theory of process (Woolsey, p. 328).

Conclusion

Critical Regionalism was originally proposed as a way to permit a developing area to absorb the technology and new design styles that make development possible, without turning

the area into a homogenous, placeless, consumer driven society that, according to many critics, lacks a rooted cultural identity. While the original inspiration was for the development of “Third World” countries, the same concerns can be applied to rapidly developing areas of “First World” areas, including Texas.

There is the paradox: how to become modern and return to sources; how to revive an old dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization (Ricoeur, quoted in Frampton, 1982).

One of Ricoeur’s conclusions was that we “can no longer practice the dogmatism of a single truth” (Ricoeur, quoted in Frampton, 1982). Hence, he proposes the dialectical or mediative premise of Critical Regionalism. There are a number of “mediative” dialectics relevant to a critically regional design process:

1. the mediation of the ideology and exigencies of professional practice that affect the design styles of contemporary designers with the cultural and ecological “anchors” or region;
2. the mediation of a romantic or nostalgic regional design with critical thinking, design ideas gained through the experience of travel to other cultures, and theory learned through design education and professional practice;
3. the mediation of a design based on an art movement with the cultural and ecological anchors of region that permit the design to fit more comfortably into an existing context;
4. the mediation of an ecologically determined design with the critical thinking that recognizes that nature, too, is a historically and socially situated construct that is subject to the ideology of the designer;

5. the mediation of a design based on the great landscapes throughout the world by not reproducing them as “virtual worlds” that can be replicated without reflection or local environmental and cultural context; and
6. the mediation of the critique of modernism with the recognition that economic progress is not possible without modern technology and the process oriented methodologies developed by the “Modern School” in solving spatial and programmatic problems.

Critical Regionalism allows each designer to create his or her own design style as long as it acknowledges the local environmental context, modern technology and systems, and the potential of the landscape to be both experienced sensually and to serve as an object for critical contemplation. Critical Regionalism requires the rigor to see a design solution from a variety of perspectives and rejects the paths of “least resistance.” It seeks to create bounded space, an enclave in which the excesses of “boundless,” “placeless,” commodified landscapes are momentarily checked.

In summary, Critical Regionalism mediates the personal design aesthetics of the designer with the needs of the client and the community for the psychological and ecological anchors of region; it resists the forces of commercialism that would define every landscape as primarily a commodity, and it approaches each design with a rigor that permits the understanding and influence of multiple design viewpoints including form generators from outside the region. It attempts to engage the user both emotionally and intellectually with a critical interpretation of both the program of the project and the details of the region.

Methodology of Critical Regionalism

A proposition that intends to be more than a passive materialization, refuses to reduce that same reality, analyzing each of its aspects, one by one; that proposition can't find support in a fixed image, can't follow a linear evolution.... Each designer must catch, with the utmost rigor, a precise moment of the flittering image, in all its shades, and the better you can recognize the flittering quality of reality, the clearer your design will be (Siza y Vera, quoted in Frampton, 1982).

Richard Ingersol has written that Critical Regionalism is not only “difficult to understand (because of its dialectical premises) but nearly impossible to visualize ... for it is not a style; one cannot unequivocally recognize a critical regionalist work” (Ingersol, p. 233). Whether this is an inherent result of the process of Critical Regionalism or merely the “zeitgeist” of being too close to a contemporary trend to see the style (as was Modernism in its early years) remains to be seen. Nevertheless, if Critical Regionalism is to move beyond the bounds of academic writing and architectural criticism and into the main stream of designed works of landscape architecture, a practical methodological approach must be developed.

Developing any systematic approach to Critical Regionalism threatens to undermine its original premise of an architect's unique response to region. Woolsey (1991, p. 326) states that the dangers are threefold. The first danger is pursuing a regionalist design without an ideological position. One example of such would be a “Texas-themed” restaurant in the Dallas area with a crushed lava rock and cactus landscape that is supposed to represent an image of Texas. The landscape evokes an image of Texas without a search for knowledge, rigor, or any universal garden or design ideal that would arise from the ideological position of the designer. Such a design is unable to rise above illusion (Woolsey, 1991).

The second danger is the generation of a “superficial shared vision.” The above referenced restaurant may not have taken into account the unique social patterns of the people in the Dallas area that could make such a design rise above the level of a pure scenographic image. The landscape could influence the creation of similarly trite landscape vignettes creating the illusion of truth.

The third danger, according to Woolsey, is a regionalism without concern for available technology. She states that technology creates connection both to the time that the project is constructed and to the popular culture that produced the technology. Welch has also written on the dangers of ignoring contemporary technology and focusing on “bucolic structures” with the consequent loss of a connection in time. The resulting design may be “sentimental, anachronistic, irrelevant, a pretense concerned with effects, not essences.” He believes that good architecture must be responsive to “time, place and context,” but it must also transcend “time, place, and context” to deliver a design that is successful on many levels (Welch, 1989).

Bassani (1991, p. 269) expresses his concern that “... the search for a common denominator, a super method, could result in the formation of a new “oppressive universal architectural order ... [or] might deteriorate into a mere list of approaches.” He believes that with the demise of modernism as the paradigm for design “all the rational, social, and methodological” norms should be replaced by a pervasive eclecticism that draws inspiration from outside of the field of architecture. He is interested in using the social sciences to understand how architecture can be reinterpreted in terms of the usage patterns of a given population, rather than using it to play with “technologies and historic or modern forms” (p. 270).

John Nesbitt writes that “(W)hen the situation is constantly changing, as it is in today’s world, the process of reconceptualization must itself be a constant process” (quoted in Amourgis, 1991). Wurster describes similar sentiments by describing the true meaning of a style as “meaning of today, which means it will be different tomorrow” (Wurster, quoted in Welch, 1989).

Woolsey believes that the only constant in the process of Critical Regionalism is the quality of the ideological position of the architect. This ideological position will necessarily evolve over time through the expansion of the experiences of the architect and the course of the international debate on the profession.

The existence of a focused architectural ideology as a point of beginning, modified by factors of people, places, and events, allows customized solutions to become part of a greater artistic discourse. The problem then becomes the reconciliation of high art [or high ideology] with popular culture, and this is the real strength of Critical Regionalism as a theory of process (Woolsey, 1991).

Woolsey’s starting position is high art. However, depending on the type and scale of the project, and the sensibilities of the designer, the ideological position can also be political, environmental, behavioral or historic. The methodology of the designer, as driven by his ideology, then becomes a lever of resistance rather than a practical means to an ideological end. In addition, the ideology would be mitigated by influences of region and contemporary culture in the process of Critical Regionalism. Landscape Journal defines the ideology of a garden designer as their “intentionality” and lists a number of possible regional ideological positions:

Is he or she trying to sell a myth, reveal a landscape’s essence, respond in a unique personal way to the environment, supply a collective emblem, arrive at a stunning image, provide a drama, order a stage set, or a background, or just a

project that works? And what difference does this finally make to regional garden design? (Vol. 11, Spring, 1992)

The central precept of Critical Regionalism is a special sensitivity to region that enhances the identity and intensifies the cultural significance of place making (Bourassa, 1991). As the American architect Romaldo Giurgola has stated:

I believe that it is in the making of coherent connections in time, history, and cultural identities ... that a building becomes true architecture. That making of clear connections with a cultural past and present is very different from the sophisticated playing with shapes which often passes for architecture today (Giurgola, 1987, p. 44).

These connections to place are described by Kelbaugh in biological/behavioral terms with a discussion of "rhyme." To rhyme, "images must be neither too similar nor too dissimilar to each other. In the former case, the human tends to lose interest too easily and in the latter case to become confused and discouraged too easily...." (Kelbough, p. 184). Kelbaugh believes that the "happy medium" between these two extremes produces a pleasurable biological response in humans. This response then becomes an important component of what we refer to as beauty. Kelbough states that Critical Regionalists transform familiar architectural language in a subtle enough way that the result will "rhyme with ... historic precedents." Wurster expresses a similar approach to rhyme in discussing how a critically regionalist design should fit into an existing architectural framework.

Use the site, the money, the local materials, the client, the climate to decide what shall be. See with eyes to the front, be appropriate in what you do, do not be barbaric in a conventional neighborhood, or unnecessarily prim in Bohemia (quoted in Welch, 1989).

Critical Regionalism Form Generators

Whichever methodology is adopted by critical regionalist designers, the first step must be a thorough understanding of regionally defining elements. Critical regionalists in Texas must look for form generators beyond those most readily apparent to the casual observer. While they may use historic, iconic images to produce a “theater of memory,” they also must look for more abstract levels of regional character.

Spatial experience may be used as a form generator rather than the decorative details of the region. Similarly, the massing and scale of a typical, local, built feature may help a new design fit into an existing context. The local, natural context can serve as an important inspiration even if it is no longer readily apparent in the particular location being considered. In the case of landscape architecture, a fundamental source of inspiration for the core ideology of a regionalist designer is the degree to which historic, cultural precedents are balanced with an understanding of and appreciation for the local natural topography, ecosystems, geology, ecology, hydrology and weather of the locale. Peters adds time to the list of natural form generators “whether by stressing the importance of the seasons or by implication through reference to the geographic isolation and ingrained evolution of life” (Peters, quoted in Amourgis, p. 118). Kelbough, writing from the point of view of an architect, believes that while it is important to study nature, history is a more direct design inspiration to conserve and synthesize “whether it be for commodity, firmness or delight” (Kelbough, p. 185).

Murcutt adds the additional design influences of local technology and traditional materials to those of historic memory, the environment, and nature (Murcutt, quoted in

Amourgis, 1991). Bechoefer broadens the list by including “. . .urban forms, street types, architectural details, ... construction methods ... use patterns, private and social rituals, ... [and] non visual sensations such as noise and smells, language, food, art, and craft traditions” (p. 284).

Bernard Rudofsky focused on the experiential qualities of regional architectures rather than focusing on regional typologies or ideological positions. He looked for form systems that heightened a sense of well being or contributed to successful social interactions between the inhabitants such as “human scale, great views, opportunities to gather in small groups, and visual variety...” Architects such as Christopher Alexander, Charles Moore, and Robert Venturi sought to recreate the experiential qualities of the vernacular while preserving most of the “qualities and principles of modernist architecture such as an open plan, non-symmetrical compositions, complex articulation in section, etcetera. There [was] no attempt to evoke the regional vernacular as a symbolic image... Experiential regionalism [was] based on an interpretation of the vernacular through the sensibility of the architect...” (Pavrides, p. 311-312). Experiential Regionalism differs from Critical Regionalism in that it does not seek to defamiliarize the landscape or to provoke critical thinking as a corollary to the experiential qualities. It is similar to Critical Regionalism in that they both embrace modern technology and regional design vocabularies.

Use patterns may lead to the discovery of regional prototypes with “... plan and form generated by appropriate and similar organizational conditions” (Koulermos, quoted in Amourgis, p. 75). These prototypes must be understood in order to accomplish the

incremental change that is a hallmark of postmodern design philosophy. However, the new tendency in Critical Regionalism is to view “the agenda of the program as secondary to the agenda of the site” (Kelbough, p. 186). According to Kelbough, the visual environmental context and the historic context then becomes the prime influence on the outer appearance of form “at the expense of structure, technics, materials, and function”. This is another example of a tenet of Critical Regionalism that needs to be translated to apply to a landscape design. In landscape design there is no “inner” and “outer” form, there are only “inner” and “outer” areas of the landscape. In this view, the part of the landscape that is visible to neighboring users would be more influenced by neighborhood design elements than the portion hidden from view by plants or structures.

Typology as a form generator in Critical Regionalism is advocated by Kelbough. He believes that typology is a good point of departure for designing a regional landscape even though it “seeks truth and beauty through typicality rather than uniqueness and particularity” (Kelbough, p. 184). These “enduring prototypes ... can be slowly converted, subverted, and inverted ... to express and to accommodate both local contextual and new programmatic forces” (Kelbough, p. 184). The typologies are an element of “universal civilization” that can be transformed in the same as that neighborhood elements in the discussion of “rhyme” above. Bassani moves the discussion to the planning scale. He states that the transformations of enduring typologies needs to be accomplished through the rules of a territory’s history and not through the strict application of abstract planning patterns (Bassani, p. 270).

Cline discusses transformations in terms of a critical response to region using modernist design principles as a starting point. This type of approach can help bridge the gap in design philosophy between modernist and postmodernist designers. It would allow a designer to bring all his or her modernist “baggage of the brain” to a project but still permit the placemaking that is advocated by regionalist designers.

While we may begin with the perfect geometry of modernism, we do so fully intending from the start that this perfection become altered in ways that become the more expressive because they are referent to something [regional] ... we now have a network of deviants ... and in each deviation we are introduced to the heart of the matter. When we deform this shape in this place, we find we are most satisfied by this deformation which might draw its inspiration from some element defamiliarized, or from some feature typified. The deformation begins the insistence upon the key steps to critically regional design, and at the same time relates them globally: the collection of cousins ... reunited to family (Cline, p. 299).

Form Generators for Rapidly Developing Areas

In July of 1996, a retreat was held by a major national landscape architecture firm based in Colorado to determine if there is such a thing as a discernible Colorado Style of landscape architecture. Through a telephone interview with a landscape architect that was a participant, the researcher learned that their conclusion was that there is not a “Colorado Style”. If a regional style for a rapidly developing areas such as Colorado or Texas is not found, then landscape designers who wish to design in a critically regionalist way must develop a regional style based on a heightened sensitivity to the regionally defining elements that they decide are most important.

Bechhoefer has stated that “the ability to ‘read’ an environmental context is the particular analytic skill that an architecture program in Regionalism should teach” (p. 283). The problem then for landscape architects in rapidly-developing areas such as North Texas concerns where to look for a point of departure for a regional or critically regional design

when the immediate environmental context may have little or no prominent regional elements. A typical example of this problem in North Texas confronts designers of the ubiquitous suburban housing and commercial developments built by developers in former agricultural fields with little or no existing native plants, topography, or readily discernible regional design context.

The interviews conducted as part of this research revealed four possible sources for regional design inspiration appropriate to such a scenario. The approaches are important partly because they are within the realm of what a practicing landscape architect could reasonably be expected to accommodate in a design process. The four approaches revealed are:

1. Agrarian Form Systems (design elements derived from the farmstead or ranch)
2. Ecologically Determined Design
3. An Anthropological Approach (based on the personal history and aesthetics of the client),
and
4. An Historic/Great Monument Approach.

These four strategies are defined further in Chapter 3 in order to facilitate their connection to regional form generation in the project descriptions and analyses that follow.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the search for methodologies for approaching the design of a landscape in an area with few discernible regional elements in a critically regional way, the qualitative approaches of content analysis, in-depth interviewing, and case studies are utilized.

Research Design

“Content analysis is a process for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying characteristics of messages... [thus allowing] researchers to analyze systematically some dimension that appears in written form” (Henderson, 1991, p. 95). Textual analysis or hermeneutics is used to discover theory of Critical Regionalism and to ascertain their relevance to rapidly developing areas such as those in North Texas.

Critical Regionalism is a postmodern design movement that is developing simultaneously in parts of the world as diverse as Brazil, Israel, Italy and the United States. This geographical diversity makes the text-based approach an efficient way to tie the literature reviews together into a comprehensive definition of Critical Regionalism. Henderson warns that “one would not use written materials if they were unrepresentative samples, lacked objectivity, or were not valid” (Henderson, 1991). Most of the sources on Critical Regionalism quoted in the literature review are recognized academics and/or architects or

landscape architects. Many of the cited essays were taken from a book based on a conference on Critical Regionalism held at The California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, in 1991 entitled Critical Regionalism, The Pomona Meeting Proceedings. Of this compilation, Richard Pommer¹ has written:

New texts by Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis, who first broached the concept of Critical Regionalism, and by Kenneth Frampton, who did much to make it widely known and influential, as well as many others, have been skillfully edited ... to form an extremely useful commentary on one of the most important architectural concepts of recent decades (Amourgis, 1991).

The hermeneutic analysis in the literature review is used as a basis to generate theory regarding the relevance of Critical Regionalism to landscape design in rapidly developing areas such as North Texas. This theory is then developed and tested using in-depth interviewing and place analysis. The interviews are used to test "... preferences, attitudes ... and perceptions and thus avoid using ... [theory] based only on impressions, hunches, and informal observations" (Makowsky, 1994, p. 93). Henderson lists interviewing as a viable alternative if:

...the research interests are relatively clear and well defined ... the researcher has some time constraints, the researcher is depending on a broad range of settings or people, and ... the researcher wants to illuminate subjective human experience (Henderson, 1991, p. 73).

One of the interview subjects stated that "Critical Regionalism is such an odd topic there is very little documentation." As a former professor in the Landscape Architecture Program at The University of Texas at Arlington, he is much better informed on design trends than most landscape architects. The researcher hoped to find a scholarly work that defined the

¹ Solow Professor, History of Architecture, NYU, Institute of Fine Arts.

topic of Critical Regionalism. The lack of success in finding such a document led to a research methodology that focused on the determination of such a theory. The lack of documentation of theory and built works relating to Critical Regionalism in Texas landscape architecture was also one of the reasons that interviews were used to link theory to existing professional practice.

Seven personal interviews took place in 1996 and 1997. The interviewees were all registered landscape architects with an average of twenty-three years in the profession. Although the interviews were led by specific questions, there was considerable latitude permitted in the responses and follow-up questions so that the person being interviewed could develop the ideas that they felt were most important. Therefore in keeping with the advantages of in-depth interviewing, responses to stimuli were deemed as important as the stimuli themselves (Henderson, 1991). All interviews were recorded on a tape recorder.

A standardized, open-ended approach was used in which the same questions were asked of each respondent, but they could answer the questions in any way they wished. This approach makes sure that the basic issues are covered, but it permits new data specific to each interviewee to emerge. The questions at the beginning of the interviews were set up so as not to reveal the nature of the study until the basic ideology or design agenda of the subjects had been revealed. Questions were rearranged when necessary to fit the flow of the conversations. Some academic jargon (such as defamiliarization and universal civilization) was used intentionally to test the degree to which these words, which are used frequently in academic papers on Critical Regionalism, had disseminated into the profession of landscape architecture

in Texas at the time of the interview. These terms were then explained, if necessary, to permit a discussion of their meanings.

The selection criteria for those individuals interviewed included:

1. a sufficient time spent in the profession to balance personal design philosophy and career goals with the realities of the profession of landscape architecture;
2. individuals in the Texas area noted through the reputation of their built works and through media coverage for having a regional sensibility at the planning or the site-specific scale of landscape architecture, or individuals representative of mainstream landscape architects in Texas; and
3. recommendations by professional landscape architects of their peers who were articulate spokespersons for their individual points of view.

There were seven subjects (in order of the interviews).

Oliver Windham, ASLA, a landscape architect in private practice. His principal areas of practice are master planning of industrial, commercial and public park developments, as well as light commercial design, office buildings and residential projects. He has been in practice for over thirty years.

Bill Dakin, ASLA, a landscape architect with the Plano, Texas, Parks Department. His principal areas of practice are riparian revegetation and hydraulic restoration, correcting erosion in creeks and woods, creation and maintenance of large recreational and natural environments, pond dredging, park additions, pond enhancements, bridges, senior centers, neighborhood parks, trail repairs, developing databases for GIS and facilities management. He has been in the profession for sixteen years.

Jim Richards, ASLA, a landscape architect in private practice. His principle areas of practice at the time of his interview include comprehensive master planning of water ways for flood control and economic development, as well as development of aesthetic criteria for the creation of scenic byways for the State of Texas. He has been in practice for over nineteen years.

David T. Retzsch, ASLA, a landscape architect and director of landscape architecture at the firm of Post, Buckley, Schuh & Jernigan, Inc. His principal areas of practice are residential communities, office and hotel developments, as well as park and recreational projects. He has been in practice for over eighteen years.

James David a landscape architect based in the Austin, Texas area. His principal areas of practice are landscape architectural planning and consultation. He is president of de Grey Gardens, Inc. which consists of a nursery, retail shop and landscape architectural design and construction practice in Austin, Texas. His projects are primarily in Texas, but they include national and international projects. He works primarily in residential practice with some commercial work such as arboreta. He has been a designer for over thirty years.

Eleanor H. McKinney, ASLA, a landscape architect based in Austin, Texas. Her principal area of practice is residential and light commercial design. She has also worked on larger scale projects such as The Texas Wildflower Research Center. She has been a designer for over nine years.

Rosa Finsley a landscape architect based in Cedar Hill, Texas. She is the owner of Kings Creek Landscaping, Inc. (a design/build firm) and Kings Creek Gardens (a retail nursery) in Cedar Hill, Texas. Her principal areas of practice are private residences and small scale institutional projects (hospitals, arboreta, schools and museums).

The purpose of the interviews was:

1. to examine how the personal design aesthetics of the subjects evolved and how they relate to ideas of regionalism;
2. to ascertain the level to which the theory and “jargon” discussed in the literature review has filtered down from academia to practicing professionals, or if similar ideas outside of established academic channels has evolved among the professionals interviewed;
3. to discover specific methodologies relating to a Critical Regionalism for Texas that could be elaborated upon or amplified through further research;
4. to determine attitudes among the landscape architects interviewed towards regionalist ideas and regionalist designers;

5. to uncover the specific regional elements that the designers find most important; and
6. to determine who the opinion leaders in the profession are with regards to Critical Regionalism in Texas.

The Hypotheses generated from the literature review and grounded through in-depth interviewing are triangulated in this document by citing specific examples of built landscapes in Texas. Data and methodological triangulation are used to “guard against the accusation that ... findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single data source, or a single investigator’s bias” (Henderson, 1991). Data triangulation involves the use of a variety of data sources and methodological triangulation uses multiple methods. The contrasting landscapes cited show "salient geographic variables of human-environment interaction describable not only with physical attributes but with associated symbolic meanings" (Makowsky, 1994) within the forms and patterns of their unique response to elements of Critical Regionalism. The last part in the triangulation process is the use of “member checks” or cross examinations (Henderson, 1991). This was accomplished by submitting preliminary copies of the research results to the interview subjects for comment.

The place research used criteria for analysis based on the theory discussed in chapter 2 and the interviews. The four form generators elaborated upon below were suggested by the interviews. They are elaborated upon below in order to make their use in the place research more understandable.

Form Generators-Historic/Great Monument

Until the creation of the International Style and the establishment of schools of architecture ... based on the rejection of precedent, architects continually searched the past for sources of inspiration. There is, however, a world of

difference between borrowing and imitating, with the former bearing all the attributes of a creative act and the latter presenting all the characteristics of a fail-safe attitude (Carlhian, quoted in Trancik, 1986, p. 60).

The explosive growth in the cultural landscape of Texas is producing more and more models of successful landscape design. These models can be accessed directly for the study of design elements. Published work that gives a historical framework to the development of specific landscape projects can be used also. Historical frameworks can be used to determine the cultural and human characteristics of the designs as well as specific physical regional influences on the design projects.

Eleanor McKinney (one of the interview subjects) undertook a study of such design models for her final project for a Masters of Landscape Architecture at Texas A&M University. The purpose of her study was to cite successful examples of landscape architecture projects throughout Texas that could be used to promote the profession of landscape architecture. Such places were determined by her survey of landscape architects. She divided the study into specific types of places.

Such place research is beyond the scope of practicing landscape design professionals and is best accomplished by research institutes, governmental entities or the three universities in Texas which have landscape architecture programs. For each place documented, Ms. McKinney made multiple site visits, gathered a wide variety of archival materials, documented the site through photography and conducted numerous interviews. This process revealed the history of the development of the projects, the rationale for their designs and the people most responsible for major decisions. She also described contemporary users' perceptions of the

TYPE OF PLACE	NAME OF PROJECT
The Home Place	The Woodlands, Houston
The Educational Place	Rice University, Houston McClennan Community College, Waco
The Work Place	United Services Automobile Association, Austin
The Recreational Place	San Antonio River Corridor, San Antonio
The Recreational Place	Town Lake Park, Austin Turtle Creek, Dallas
The Market Place	West End Historic District, Dallas
The Community Ceremonial Place	Williams Square, Las Colinas, Irving

Figure 1. Historical Documentation of Works by Eleanor McKinney.

projects. The archival material collected included sources from books, magazines, promotional material on the projects by the owners, written reports and graphics by design professionals, pamphlets by historical societies, chambers of commerce, park and recreation departments, urban planning departments and development companies as well as articles in newspapers. The breadth of the material compresses a relatively thorough understanding of the design implications of the projects into a format that is convenient for the busiest professional.

Agrarian Form Generators

While we in the United States have venerated the agricultural garden and enshrined the American farmstead as part of our heritage, we have systematically erased the agrarian elements of landscapes from our ideas of beauty in the garden. The plowed field, wind-rows, and allees admired by travelers as beautiful entrances to Palladian villas and French estates have been ignored, or derided, by garden theorists. We have gone along with the view that the landscape should be Arcadian scenery (Solomon, 1991).

This quote from the book, Green Architecture and The Agrarian Garden, proposes a regional landscape approach that incorporates agrarian prototypes. Much of the book is a polemic designed to encourage the integration of landscape and architecture, particularly the farm landscape. Solomon uses historic models ranging across thousands of years of human history to justify an integration of farm and dwelling. How this integration could be accomplished in an era of mechanized (and chemical-laden) agriculture was beyond the author's purpose. She advocates such a connection using the villas of the Veneto in Italy as her models. The book contains excellent references to literature devoted to an understanding of historical agrarian landscapes for various regions of the United States such as John Stilgoe's Common Landscapes of America: 1580 to 1845. Stilgoe's work contains prose, historical photographs and drawings of agrarian prototypes that can be used as design elements and form generators by contemporary landscape architects.

The regional agrarian form systems are almost always in place long before an area is designed by a landscape architect or other design professional. They are the landscape counterpart to the ranch and industrial building vernacular that has become so popular with regionalist architects such as the firm of Lake/Flato. "This work [uses] planted materials with the same utilitarian pride in performance needed in the use of traditional building materials" (Solomon, 1991). Solomon catalogued a series of ways of using plant material as architecture with "agrarian logic and visual splendor" (Solomon, 1991).

Kaufman (1991) took this same approach one step further by using the "pattern language" approach of Christopher Alexander. Alexander defines a pattern as "a definite

empirical relationship between a limited context, a set of forces that occurs there, and the pattern which resolves those forces” (Alexander, 1979, p. 254). Kaufman traveled throughout his study area of rural Iowa and recorded and observed outstanding agrarian sites. The patterns of “space form” were then recorded in written, graphic, and finally three-dimensional model forms. These models were then used as mnemonic devices to work with clients to create “new, yet indigenous, environmental possibilities” (Kaufman, 1991, p. 12).

Such agrarian prototypes have a direct relevance to form generation on a variety of scales and can have regional corollaries developed for the various ecological zones of Texas in a critically regional way. The Munson Garden and the Solana Business Park near Dallas are described in chapter 5, and they are examples of how these prototypes can be used as either form generators or specific design elements in contemporary landscape architecture.

Ecologically Determined Design

Many landscape architects in Texas have difficulty determining the regional ecological influences that can be used in their designs. At the same time, scientists, horticulturists, educators, designers, artists and writers in Texas are producing an ever increasing understanding of how to bring natural systems into the design process. Plant researchers such as Benny Simpson and Lyn Lowrey, institutions such as The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Research Center and Botanical Research Institute of Texas, over sixty native plant nurseries and twenty-eight local chapters of The Native Plant Society of Texas have created a voluminous amount of information that is easily accessible through written works, lecture series, educational institutions, and public landscapes.

Designing with a special sensitivity to the physical characteristics of the prairie goes back to the work of Jens Jensen and O. C. Simonds who were the leaders of the “Prairie School” of landscape architects beginning in the 1870s. A thorough discussion of the Prairie School is beyond the scope of this research, but it can be found in Robert E. Grese’s book Jens Jensen (1992). He details the lives, colleagues, built works and design methodologies of Jensen, Simonds and other important “Prairie School” designers.

Grese describes three main aspects of the Prairie School that developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The first element is the conservation of Western scenery. These landscape architects believed that one the most important roles of designers seeking to undertake a naturalistic design in the prairie was to sensitize themselves and their clients to its subtle beauty. Such an education would lead to the preservation of existing natural landscapes, a process which was “more beautiful and less costly than leveling every hill and filling every ravine” (Miller, quoted in Grese, p. 50).

A second aspect of the Prairie School was the introduction of native species into the built landscape. Jensen, Simonds, and many others studied prairie remnants, forests, and transitional zones to discover not just the showier plants, but also the more common plants that grouped themselves naturally into plant “communities” that could become the basis for planting design (Grese, 1992). The plants deemed suitable for cultivation were carefully photographed, both by themselves and in their natural associations. This led, by the late 1890s, to numerous books on gardening with native plants, information on horticultural practices and native plant propagation.

A third aspect of the Prairie School was the extraction of form systems from the prairie landscape and an artistic response to those systems. These landscape designers believed that a “unity of repose” and a “rightness of fit” in planting design could be achieved by studying such design elements as the forms of plant groupings in fields and forests, their massing and voids, and the patterns and repetitions they created. They focused on horizontal planes inspired by the wide “endless” horizon of the prairies. These horizontal lines were mirrored in horizontally branching plant material, wide expanses of water and flat bedding planes of stone work. They also used the huge spaces of the prairie to experiment with levels of enclosure and perspective effects. The designers took advantage of the strong sunlight in the prairie landscape to create “sun openings” as focal points in wooded areas and to create visual highlights with backlit plants (Grese, 1992).

To create effectively, the landscape architect must work outdoors to “feel” each rock and stone, the trees and vines, sand and earth, the sky and water, reflecting light and shadow, the mist, the snow and ice, the rain, the wind and the odors and the noises that are all about us (Bye, 1983).

This quote, taken from the book, Art into Landscape: Landscape into Art, by the author, educator and landscape architect, A. E. Bye, echoes the attitudes found in the interview portion of this research where three of the designers used the experience of being on the site as a major focus of their design methodologies. A. E. Bye shows in Art into Landscape: Landscape into Art numerous specific examples of how the elements of a particularly beautiful natural place can be used as form generators for the designed landscape. The book focuses on the northeastern region of the United States. This focus is enlightening to a Texas based designer in that it accentuates the methodology and engenders critical

thinking by showing landscape elements that are somewhat unfamiliar in the Texas region. The book presents written and photographic descriptions of completed naturalistic projects and follows these with a photograph of the original inspiration for the naturalistic design (figures 2-4).



Figure 2. Inspiration for the “Soros” Landscape by
A. E. Bye and Peter Johnson (Bye, p. 5).

Bye makes the native landscape a more readily accessible source for design inspiration by showing varied examples of how widely divergent types of natural landscapes can be integrated into the built environment. He closes the book with a photographic montage of “moods” in the landscape. The examples cited of mystery, dazzle, cleanness, complexity-intricacy, delicacy-fragility, elegance and brittleness help the designer to see the natural



Figure 3. The Constructed Landscape (Bye, 1983, p. 2).

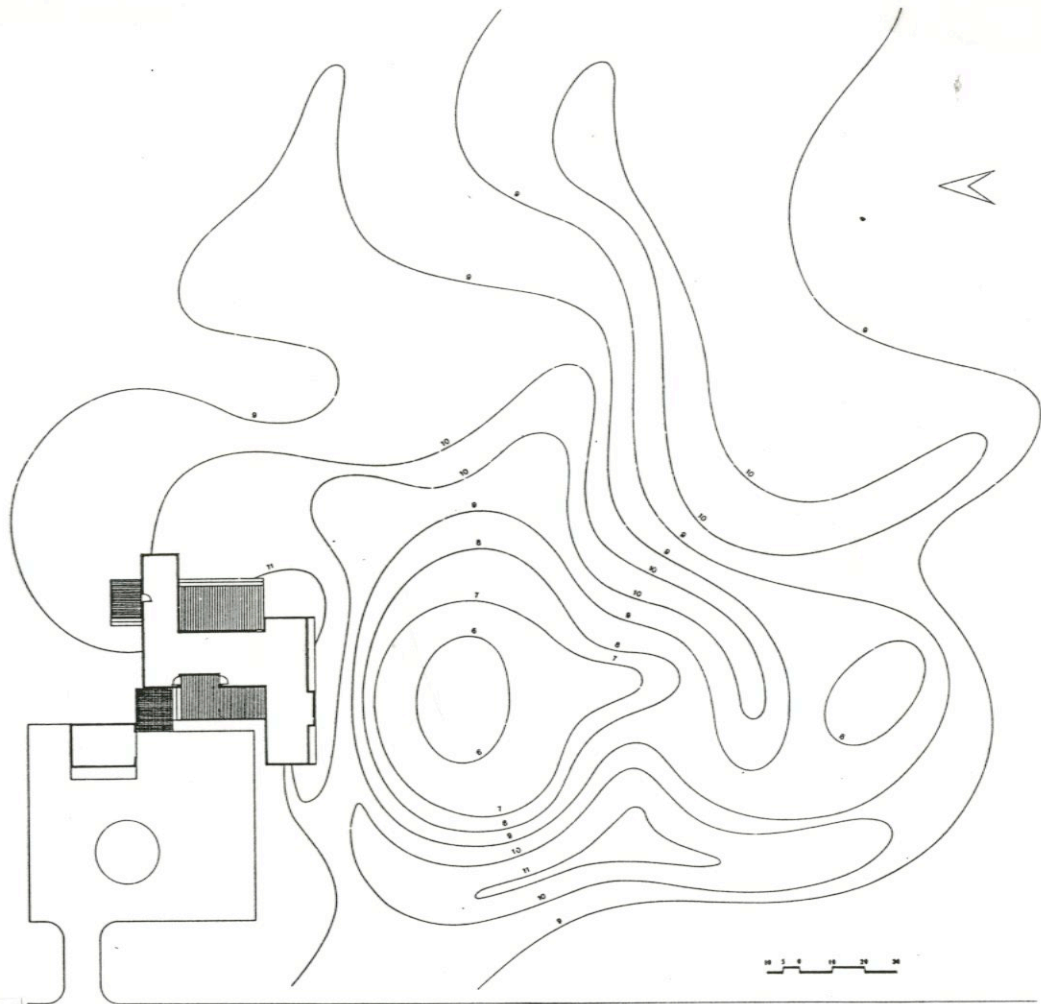


Figure 4. Plan for the Soros Landscape (Bye, 1983, p. 8).



Figure 5: Brittleness (Bye, p. 172).

landscape in new ways. These new ways of seeing engender an environmentally based, critically regional, design methodology.

The written works of the husband and wife team of Sally and Andy Wasowski are a present day counterpart to the work of the "Prairie School" and outline similar possibilities for a Texas, ecologically-based, design methodology. Their two most important works are Native Texas Plants and Native Texas Gardens.

In the book, Native Texas Plants, the Wasowskis have compiled a range of authoritative information on the ecological regions of Texas, native plants suitable for landscape use, sample plans for the state's various regions, consultants who are qualified to answer questions about native plant materials and communities, an excellent bibliography on Texas native plants and public landscapes in Texas that are good examples of the utilization of native plant materials and ecological design principles. The Wasowskis divided the state into ten ecological regions with specific cities listed for each region, and soil types are described to facilitate identification of each ecological zone. Each zone was then given a complete enough description (plant communities, rainfall, temperature extremes, etc.) to get a "feel" for the area antecedent to the creation of a landscape design there. A small scale plan for each zone is included that lists ground covers, grasses, annuals, biennials, perennials, shrubs, trees, vines, and water and bog plants that are adapted to each region.

Native Texas Plants and Native Texas Gardens are examples of how regionally based ideas that are useful to landscape architects have evolved out of related disciplines. The authors are not landscape architects coming from the professions of garden design (Sally

Wasowski) and free-lance writing and garden photography (Andy Wasowski). Much of their secondary research comes from the natural sciences (horticulture, botany, ecology, soil science, and range management) The ideas expressed in the books, however, are respected by landscape architects as evidenced by the many landscape architects with featured projects in the most recently published of the two books.

Personal History Approach

A personal history approach to garden design takes significant events, or garden elements with significant meaning for a person or small group of people and uses them as form generators or detail elements to add regional cultural meaning to a garden. To understand the personal history elements, the designer must first understand the garden design aesthetics of the culture by which the client has been most influenced, both in the local area being developed and/or in their area of origin, if that is more appropriate. Bourassa refers to these as cultural rules. The second aspect of this approach is the understanding of the idiosyncrasies of each individual client that allows them to see the landscape in non-traditional ways based on their personal preferences and background. Bourassa (1991) refers to these form generators as "personal strategies." All of the parameters of critical regionalism (defamiliarization and mediation of universal civilization with the local context) can be applied to this personal history approach.

The fact that the United States is a country of immigrants is especially true in Texas. In 1996, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex added 112,175 residents.² Since 1973, the area has

² All demographic information taken from The Dallas Morning News: 4/25/97.

seen an influx of almost two million residents and has grown from a population of 2.8 million to 4.6 million as of January 1, 1997. In 1996, most of the new residents in the area moved from a foreign country rather than from somewhere in Texas, or the United States. Such demographics illustrate the importance that an understanding of garden styles in other cultures has to a personal history approach to landscape design.

Many immigrants bring from their former homes a “mental image of what a garden ought to be” (Welch, 1995). An understanding of this mental image will sensitize the designer to the “story” of the client that itself can become a form generator for the garden. It becomes the cultural regional garden corollary to an understanding of the ecology of the region.

In an era of rapid environmental change, visual biases and aesthetic traditions are used to slow landscape transformation. Landscape tastes, it would seem, reflect the biases of a people toward the artifacts of their occupancy by giving cultures a sense of historical perspective and identity through their surroundings (Rowntree, quoted in Bourassa, 1991).

Bourassa stresses the importance of understanding the point of view of the client. He calls this the “insider’s perspective.” In a pluralistic society, the designer may have an entirely different value system from their clients’. Regardless of training, talent or sensitivity, designers may not be able to achieve this insiders perspective without becoming familiar with the values of the client in a systematic way.

Many books focus on Native American, Spanish, French, African American, English and German influences on garden design. The particular cultures listed above are selected because they are the most established presences in terms of the built landscape. Other influences such as Asian and Arab garden designs are becoming more important in Texas each

year as the percentage of the population from these areas increases. Examples of places where designers find information on a particular regional historical style include the Southern Garden History Society and The Center for American History in Austin, Texas, and The Center for Southwest Studies at The University of Texas at Arlington. These institutions can provide a wealth of information such as lists of adapted plants that are not native but may be regionally defining, cultural, garden artifacts.

Conclusion

“Harper (1981) has cautioned that it is sometimes easier to fit reality to our methods than to fit method to the reality” (quoted in Henderson, 1991, p. 32). Henderson (1991) stresses the need for a multiplicity of methodologies to reach the bottom line of making the world more understandable. The use of the text-based, research approach to generate hypotheses and a testing of those hypotheses using recognized experts with interviews and case studies validates this research in a multi-linear way.

In qualitative techniques of research design, data discovery, data interpretation, and developing theories all tend to occur simultaneously and provide a constant feedback concerning how the study is emerging (Henderson, 1991, p. 40).

The methodology used provides sufficient checks and balances in relating the design philosophy and built works of the featured landscape architects to the context of Critical Regionalism in order to generate grounded, design theory.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

Ideology

The discussion of Critical Regionalism in the literature review assumes a conscious methodology of design based on a driving aesthetic concern or ideology. One of the most striking findings to emerge from the interviews confirms the degree to which intuition plays a major role in the design process versus a consciously structured aesthetic or “academic framework” for design ideas. It is also apparent from the interviews that the academic jargon and associated definitions have not filtered down to working landscape architects. This was true whether they were “doing their thing” in a relatively isolated environment or they were more in the mainstream of corporate landscape architecture and very active in the ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects). None of the designers had a working knowledge of the term Critical Regionalism at the beginning of the interviews. Despite the lack of an academic framework in which to place their ideas, the researcher was able to demonstrate that the subjects are using some of the principles of Critical Regionalism to guide their design aesthetics.

The questions at the beginning of the interviews were designed to ascertain the level to which the selected designers were aware of their own design philosophy or “ideology.” The questions were very open ended, and did not attempt to steer the interviewee in a particular

direction. This is the principle point in an interview where designers can express themselves on their personal design agenda without being “steered” by any specific questions. The questions sought to determine the relationship between a consciously focused design ideology and regional or critically regional tendencies. They also sought to uncover the factors that led to the design ideology of each designer. In general, two groups emerged. One group could not immediately put his or her ideology into a form that could be readily articulated, and the other held beliefs strong enough to frame into powerful arguments for a personal design aesthetic.

In the first group (three of the seven designers), one designer stated that he “was not consciously aware of” what influenced his underlying agenda, although he considered an agenda “very important.” Another member of this group stated that “I don’t know that I really have a personal agenda” as it relates to design aesthetics, or as he referred to it, “a personal design approach.” Further exploration revealed that, in both designers, the absence of an overriding philosophy or aesthetic center led to a design process predominantly oriented toward the needs of the client. Their design processes evolved primarily out of work experience and the nature of their practice. The third designer stated: “I try not to have any preconception.”

It should be noted that the qualitative approach taken in the interviews showed many contradictions in the interviewees’ statements. In some cases, the answers at the beginning of the interviews were more revealing about the degree to which the designers placed an intellectual framework around their ideas than about their commitment to those ideas as they stated them.

The nature of one designer's practice made the person contracting for his services the most important "client." "Meeting minimum code requirements and city criteria, liability constraints, constraints of budget, time and politics, programmatic issues, [etc.]" are the driving forces of his projects rather than ... "principles of art, composition, environment, or personal viewpoint in the same way that an artist creates something through a personal rationale". This designer, however, does feel that it is important to have a design agenda in order to "differentiate from generic design" engendered by the factors listed above. He described his use of the modernist approach to design, referring to it as a rational process. He describes this as a "problem solving philosophy ... research based" that enabled him to "... not have a design style ... no philosophical principles ... but rather to be able to work in any style." This business-oriented approach (or business-oriented agenda) is further reinforced by the "fixed fee devoted to the projects" that he designs. The time required to educate his clients to design possibilities that are more amenable "to the way you might want to approach it" is at odds with the fixed fee structure of his firm. "That has a snowballing effect because many clients then see the product of following the path of least resistance, and then that sets their perspective of what should be accomplished. We are all influenced by our surroundings." This is a design aspect of commercial projects that a Critical Regionalist would attempt to "resist" with a focused design ideology.

The designer stated in response to various questions that he is not a regionalist designer, and yet he also stated, "I believe that design should be regionally based." This type

of ambivalence towards regionalist design was a common theme among the three designers who did not express strongly articulated aesthetic positions on their personal design aesthetic.

Another designer stated that he has developed a special sensitivity to the end user and “their happiness.” “I became more aware of others and their happiness [and] think less of what I would want....” Through his years of practice, he stated, he had evolved an end user-oriented agenda without consciously attempting to do so. This lack of a conscious ideology for the design process led to some striking contradictions regarding his regionalist proclivities that were uncovered as the interview progressed. In response to the question, “How important is it for a designer to be intimately familiar with an area before attempting a design there?” his response was: “For me, it is crucial, there is no greater influence ... it requires more than just a day’s worth of thinking.... In four or five visits I can get eighty percent of my inspiration, and the rest I can get during construction, which might have an effect on future phases.” Later in the interview, in response to the question about the geographical boundaries of the region for which he is most comfortable designing, he replied in part: “If I had ten minutes and I had fifteen photographs, I could design anything, anywhere in the United States; if I knew where, and knew the climate.”

The third designer that did not express an awareness of a strong personal design aesthetic stated, “I am sure there is a theme in my work, but I never see it.” Later in the interview, however, he described his goal of creating “sensual beauty.” This designer’s aesthetics (like the previous two) are tied into his professional practice through his firm. He sees the construction process as part of the design process and stated that “the ability to

change my mind in the middle of a project” is an important element in an agenda of “trying to create beauty.”

Like the second respondent, the lack of an intellectual framework for this designer’s own agenda led to many contradictory statements about regionalism. On the one hand, he has very negative feelings toward regionalist design. In response to various questions he stated:

So much bad work is done in the name of regionalism ... regionalism has no meaning to the general public.... I go to trade shows and contemporary furniture shows in Paris, Cologne, etc. I see myself as part of all that, and yet I see myself terribly isolated here in Texas. The general public is steeped in southern traditionalism that I find repulsive (interview, February, 1996).

Additionally, in response to the question about the importance of being intimately familiar with an area before attempting a design there, he replied in part:

I used to think that a designer had to be familiar with the plants and materials [of an area]. I don’t know if that’s so important ... I think that if it is a good project, who gives a damn (interview, February, 1996).

Despite the statements above, when asked if he considers himself a regionalist designer he replied, “Yes, but I would hate to be called that.... Yes, I guess so.... I use natural materials from the place I work and respect the cultural and historical place I am in.” Additionally, three of the seven designers interviewed listed this individual as a recognized, regionalist landscape architect.

These apparent contradictions are addressed by Frampton (1991) and Kelbough (1991). The third respondent does not want to simply copy architectonic forms of the region or to deny his cosmopolitan design background (universal civilization). He clearly does not want to be labeled a “provincial,” and yet he has strong regional roots in the hardscape

materials, plants, labor force, and cultural traditions of Texas. The mediation of these types of sentiments is one of the reasons that Critical Regionalism is evolving as a design approach. Luis Fernandez-Gallano described a similar attitude among politicians and architects based on his observations during a conference on regionalism he organized in Seville, Spain, in 1985. He states that “the architects felt insulted” when described as regionalist architects (Fernandez-Gallano, 1981).

The four designers with the most strongly articulated, personal design aesthetics also felt that they are a very important issue in the design process. To the question about the importance of a personal design aesthetic, they replied in part:

I think that all good designers have an agenda, whether they have identified it or not.

Without some driving mechanism, you will never arrive.... Very important!

In order to do competent work, it is not a threshold consideration. In order to do superlative work, you must have a passion about certain parameters that define a project.

It's very important to fit your agenda to your client but I don't think that you can go against what you think is right in the process.... I impose my agenda more than I used to.

All four landscape architects quoted above hold strong regionalist tendencies. These four designers listed plants and other natural materials as a central focus of their evolved regionalist sensibilities, although all of them arrived at these tendencies from different backgrounds. They developed a sensitivity to region before entering the profession of landscape architecture and subsequently have undertaken a career path that allows them to put those proclivities into practice.

One respondent grew up with a family in the “green industry”. He stated that “we are of the earth.... I lived on a farm, and that’s the relationship that I can relate to.” Another has an undergraduate degree in botany and worked at The Rare Plant Center in Austin (whose purpose was to bring rare native plants into the “Green Industry”). She also taught gardening. “The combination of living with and studying gardens in England and the Texas Hill Country are my main influences.” The third designer of this group started in zoo design and evolved into designing “natural habitats” for people.

I am very interested in plants because that is the thing that is always changing in the landscape. It’s fun to both discover the niches plants will thrive in and to create the microcosms that will create the niches you need for your designs. I like to discover a really neat place in the wild that makes me feel good and then try to find out the factors that make me feel that way and how that might be reproduced in the landscape ... whether it is the massing of the rock, the plant materials, the lighting, the shapes of things can be very soothing or very exciting” (interview, November, 1997).

The only designer with regionalist tendencies that did not list plant materials as of paramount importance grew up in New Orleans, a city with a rich, readily discernible natural and cultural regional character, and is primarily involved with design at the planning scale.

... living in New Orleans ... living in a place where a sense of history, community roots, historic architecture, gives you a sense of where you are in the flow of things ... [where] the landscape is overwhelming ... large canopy trees ... bugs, animals etc. This instilled a love of history, culture and why things evolved the way they did, settlement patterns etc. ... as opposed to here [Arlington, Texas] where the most overwhelming influences are the man-made things ... the freeway ramps, the commercial districts, the skyline, the overwhelming flatness of everything. There is no emphasis of these elements in [design] education. It is more process oriented. Most people in New Orleans have a much stronger feel for history than people around here. The last six or seven years I have seemed to go into areas that all have common threads of ... large scale rural landscapes, and an understanding of the history and culture of a place, a curiosity of why it evolved, what the underlying stories are, how you can connect those stories to

what you are trying to do in a contemporary setting (interview, November, 1997).

Beyond the common denominator of a special sensitivity to regional plant material, the designers with regionalist tendencies generally followed the four types of regionalism as described by Pavlides. One designer described her agenda in terms of anthropological regionalism, without actually using the term, defined by Eleftherios Pavlides as a design based on a response to the users' perceptions. She felt that it was not only important to learn about a site, but also to discover the clients reactions to it "like an anthropologist."

For me, my agenda is to be more like an anthropologist. To go in and learn about the site and the people. Every client will have a different response on a given site. The site tells you one thing, but the site through the reactions of the client tells you something entirely different, so to raise my sensitivity to that is my agenda. And also to build on my sense of place (interview, March, 1997).

Another designer takes a similar view by asking his clients "Why are you here? What is it about this place, regionalism, site specific, residential house specific that has brought you [the client] to this place?" Similarly, another respondent, when describing a methodology for working with a town of five to ten thousand people, described anthropological regionalism by discussing the need to understand the "history and culture of a place," how it evolved, "the underlying stories that are there [so that] you can connect those stories to what you are trying to do in a contemporary setting."

A critical approach using vernacular regionalism was described by the same subject:

... the vernacular speaks to the culture, it's got some history behind it, not to imitate but to use the lessons to emulate it in such a way that you are using concepts rather than copying exact forms (interview, December, 1996).

Two very different conceptions of an experiential regionalism are described by two designers. One leans toward the Pavlides idea of experiential regionalism as evoking the experiential qualities without evoking the regional vernacular symbolic image. He describes the design of outbuildings in a park as having the forms, colors, and materials of farm buildings, without actually imitating a barn. Additionally, his design aesthetic has evolved into one that tends towards minimalism and functionality. "Clean lines ... no unrelated relationships ... clean finishes ... what you see is what you get ... very functional ... you don't see many farms laid out in a hodge podge" (interview, February, 1996). This designer, whose personal design aesthetic is not primarily oriented towards plant material, evokes the austere functionality of the farmstead as the archetype for a Texas regionalism.

By contrast, another designer who uses experiential descriptions of her design aesthetic based on a highly evolved sensibility to plant material, does not fit quite as neatly into Pavlides intellectual framework. She uses native ecological niches as the starting point for a critical landscape design aesthetic rather than the cultural landscape forms of the farm. "I look first to nature; what the natural systems are; what the biotic provinces are; what grows there; how it grows; how it paces itself; the arrangements that plants make naturally" (interview, November, 1997). She then blends this sensitivity to the natural systems of a place with the naturalistic landscape design traditions of Japan, China, and England to reinterpret the native landscape in Critically Regional ways. This landscape design counterpart of the "natural" human landscape, called alternately folkloric or vernacular, could be referred to as the "natural," non human landscape. A sensitivity to this landscape of plants, stone, land

forms, and water can lead to environmental determinism as the starting point for a regional or critically regional garden or landscape design aesthetic. This is an important element that is missing from the general intellectual framework of Critical Regionalism as outlined in the summary of Critical Regionalism by Pavlides, et al.

Dissemination of Academic “Buzzwords”

Two terms of academic jargon that are used frequently in the literature review above are defamiliarization and universal civilization. The interviews explored whether the terminology has infiltrated into the profession of landscape architecture and if the underlying ideas are being used under the guise of another terminology or no terminology.

None of the seven designers had actually heard the term “defamiliarization.” The portion of the literature review dealing with this subject was subsequently read to them to obtain their reactions. Two of the designers had no comment on the readings. Of the five that did, three interpreted the idea as an end product of users’ reactions to a built work:

We do it with little things like using bigger rock than anybody thought we could use. I try to break out of the mindlessness where everything is automatic to create things interesting enough and pretty enough to get people thinking and looking. Like using native plants in a different way than they would be in the wild, by increasing the saturation of certain species for example. I would never do it just for the sheer effect. I would rather that the landscape feel really good. I would rather “win them” a little softer. The thinking is brought on by people seeing the juxtaposition of native plant material and more traditional landscape plants. I have never been into shock landscape (interview, November, 1997).

It is a way of directly or indirectly accentuating something. It happens an awful lot. You may have a project where you do not have the opportunity to do everything that you want, so you put it all into one “statement,” kind of put all your eggs into one basket” (interview, April, 1997).

We do that everyday ... for example, turning a gash in a hill into an asset ... or, on a slope, you can either terrace the slope or create a long pier across the contours to emphasize it. We frequently build swimming pools not parallel to the contours but across the contours. On a slope, you can terrace the slope or go out on a long pier from the house to emphasize it. I frequently build swimming pools not parallel to the contours but across the contours (interview, March, 1997).

The other two designers interpreted defamiliarization as an extension of the modernist design process whereby a designer approaches a project with no preconceived notions.

The word I would use is paradigm shift. My biggest attribute as a designer is to look at projects with no preconceived notions ... let's see what we have ... and explore enhanced alternatives (interview, February, 1996).

If you are going to be a designer, that is the foundation ... the first step in the educational process is to erase all your preconceptions (interview, December, 1996).

The other term of academic jargon that was explored in the interviews was "universal civilization." This term goes to the heart of the matter since one of the most pervasive definitions of Critical Regionalism is the integration into the design process of universal civilization, as interpreted by each designer, with regionally defined elements. It is apparent from the interviews that among the subjects, universal civilization, or global design community, is a concept that is not a part of their educational or professional experience or vocabulary:

1. I have never thought of either one of those terms ... they have never occurred to me.
2. It is not a term that I have heard.
3. I don't think about such terms.
4. I have never heard of either one of those [terms].
5. I have no working experience with those terms.

The meanings that the subjects ascribed to the terms was generally indicative of their design agenda or ideology. Using the terms "global design community" to describe "universal civilization" may have been a mistake the part of the researcher. This seemed to limit the discussions to the narrow area of design rather than a more comprehensive "baggage of the brain" definition as outlined by Chafee above.

One respondent defined universal civilization in terms of natural forces and cultural expressions:

If you look deep enough there are universal archetypes that express simple and direct ways of responding to land, weather, and forces like erosion, wind and rain, geology, and soil conditions... [These archetypes] are most eloquently expressed in the most primitive cultures... They go beyond historical influences and fashion to ... the underlying influences ... of universal expressions. This is not a style, but involves a deep understanding of the forces in a given location (interview, December, 1996).

When asked the follow-up question: "How does that relate to universal cultural expressions that do not have anything to do with natural systems?" he replied in part:

You can instill in students basic art elements and the impact they have on perception and experience. Things like scale, texture. Things you might see in Istanbul, for example, that speak to you very strongly, that have all those things in perfect proportions. Not because it is in Istanbul, but rather because it expresses those things in a way that is almost musical, and the way they all work together. Start with the foundation of art and perception, then proceed to a study of archetypes, and a hell of a lot of travel. The more you see in different areas, the more you start to see patterns of universal art elements melded to that particular site that become timeless (interview, December, 1996).

Another respondent stated: "I like those terms," although he had not heard of them. His responses reflected his status as an active member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and a designer whose methodology is tied to rational process in corporate practice.

He also defined the terms two ways. One was as “the network for landscape architects worldwide, ... not that there is one, but there are attempts at one.” He felt that this network is promoting “a variety of agendas driven by American landscape architecture.” The second definition he offered involved the studying of great monuments around the world not “to use them as a point of departure,” but to “use them as examples of how to develop solutions from the site and the technology available ... because that is what they did back then ... great monuments were a response to a specific program of their time.”

One respondent interpreted universal civilization in terms of garden design, the process of design and his avowed stance as an environmentalist. In terms of garden design, he discussed reinterpretation of “foreign” regional styles:

First I have to understand what each persons interpretation of a regional garden style is ... English, Japanese, Islamic, Victorian, etc. If the client is open to the look and “feel” of a style, but not a pure representation of the style, then it can be reinterpreted with regional elements (interview, November, 1996).

He further interpreted global design community to mean the process of designing projects on a global scale, rather than the definition as described in the literature review as an acculturation to the methods and icons of the profession on a global scale blended with the background of the designer.

You may design in a region differently, but the design process should be the same. By that I mean you collect all the data; you review all that data, and you make sound decisions based on all that data that has been collected. If you collaborate with knowledgeable people, then you are going to address those issues accurately ... most countries are recognizing the need for more specialists to get involved. The landscape architects, then, try to make the various pieces fit. The great monuments of the past were made by people needing to make personal statements.... We have gone beyond the expressionism of trying to dominate the

environment and are now trying to work in a more environmental way (interview, April, 1997).

One designer interprets both terms by what he continues to assimilate from travel and his ability to make his clients receptive to his very personal vision of what their landscape could look like.

I am constantly aware of what is going on around the world. I go to trade shows ... contemporary furniture shows in Paris, Cologne, etc. I see myself as part of all that, and yet I see myself terribly isolated here in Texas.... It all filters down and translates down.... I'm always trying to push.... You are constantly trying to push people into seeing things in new ways (interview, March, 1997).

Another responded that she is not particularly interested in the contemporary global design community either in terms of built projects or through written works or organizations.

I work pretty much by myself all of the time. I have been influenced by older landscapes, not necessarily what is happening today.... As designers we always look to Sisinghurst... I have learned more from seeing things than from talking to people about them. I get a little bored with landscape architecture sometimes, when there is an agenda that somebody is pushing that doesn't necessarily match mine. That's one of the reasons that I am not very active in the landscape architecture things (interview, November, 1997).

Another also interpreted the terms through an experiential paradigm rather than any sort of intellectual exercise. She stated that her main "global" influences were "living in and studying gardens in England and the Texas Hill Country." England sensitized her to "the enclosure of space and an understanding of the transitions ... passing through the garden room.... There are so many things that are now just filtering in ... that will be with me for a long time."

One respondent felt that these concepts, as he interpreted them, were not relevant to his thinking or design methodology. "I am not cognizant of projects around the world. It's not important to me. For the person out there who does not have the time to study, it's not as important to them." This designer did mention Stourhead in England as an important influence on a park project that he was working on. This is another example of how the ideas behind Critical Regionalism are in the profession of landscape architecture without the intellectual framework being a conscious part of the design process for a particular designer.

It is apparent from the responses above that most of the subjects found the concepts interesting and relevant to their design process, despite the fact that none had ever actually put the ideas into the intellectual framework of the terms defamiliarization and universal civilization. The established methods of information dissemination (academic, professional, and organizational) have not integrated the intellectual framework for the terms into the profession as yet, at least as indicated by the designers interviewed above.

Regional Design Elements

The questions in the interviews pertaining to specific physical elements that can be used as regionally defining design features were asked in a variety of ways to extract as much information as possible. The first question, "Where do you think should we look for regional design inspiration in landscape architecture?" was very open ended. Subsequent questions were more focused to get the subjects thinking about specific areas of regional influence.

Five of the seven subjects listed natural systems as the primary influence on regionalist design, although they had different views on what constitutes a "natural system." One

respondent's interpretation of natural systems reflected his professional practice as a large scale planner. This respondent outlined a methodology for approaching a large scale project from a natural systems viewpoint:

First, take a satellite photograph and stand by and look at it and squint your eyes and see how the drainage ways work; how the topography works; the underlying geology and how to take advantage of it.... Pick up on hedgerows ... see the type of materials coming from the land.... Route roads to imitate the drainage patterns and place trees along them to imitate the natural flow of riparian woodland .. not trees everywhere. If you can get in touch with a place, you can follow the logic right down to the type of plant material, or stone coming out of the creek bottoms, etc. (interview, December, 1996).

Another respondent thinks of regional features in terms of the contrast to his experience designing in other areas of the South, particularly Florida.

The environment itself is quite harsh—the extremes.... [The] arid southwest is very much like the Islamic part of the world and that type of approach is to live within that environment. How you play with water.... You don't have broad lakes and things like that, so a little bit of water makes a big difference.... I have lived all across the south from east to west and I find that the plant palette is similar, it just grows differently here. It is a matter of recognizing those differences and then working within that framework (interview, November, 1996).

Another respondent takes a more detailed regional approach to design inspirations from natural systems and also listed man-made influences as principle, regional elements:

I look first to nature—what the natural systems are? What the biotic provinces are? What grows there? How it grows, how it paces itself.... The arrangements that plants make naturally.... When I go to a new area one of the first things I do is to prowl around and study plants to see how they arrange themselves. How the light plays on different aspects of the landscape? What the massing and open spaces are? Also prowl back alleys, cemeteries, etc. to see which plants planted by man have lasted a long time.... It gives you a real feel for what else might grow there when you see what conditions plants will grow in.... Then you know which other plants will probably grow there also.... For cultural modifiers, I look at what local resources were used before it was possible to ship everything in; what kind of aesthetics evolved from using the local materials? Also, what's the

heritage of the people you are working with? We do hardscape that ties in with both the local climate and local materials (interview, November, 1996).

Another respondent described her most important regional influences by referring back to her preferred "home design base" of the Austin, Texas area and the Texas Hill Country:

Central Texas is easy. We have the Hill Country. We have the rock ledges. We have water pools. Look to natural systems, native and old fashioned adapted plants, and pass along plants.

Another respondent has a very different view of natural regional elements. The nature of his corporate practice will not let him try out regional ideas in the same way to which someone involved in residential work might be able.

I would need to feel that I was really on top of a regionalist methodology in a very educated way in order to attempt a strict regionalist approach. I would have to be an absolute expert.... It's not the sort of thing that you just 'wing' and can experiment your way into because of the nature of my practice. My clients will not allow me to experiment. I would need some type of 'total immersion' educational experience in order to undertake these principles.... I don't really understand the environment.... I have never really found a good source of information for local ecosystems. I don't know where to look ... landscape architects don't have the answers.... I can't think of projects in Dallas that capture what I perceive to be the natural environment of North Texas.... The vastness of prairies gives it its characteristics ... the horizon, the flatness, the openness, the minimalist elements (interview, December, 1996).

Another respondent takes a very practical approach to looking for regional inspiration in keeping with his client-driven, design approach.

Completed projects that people are happy with, that are at or under budget.... For my work, the region would be the Metroplex. I would want to see the type of project that I am involved in such as municipal parks ... what has worked ... not theory but successful practice. Pieces of those projects could be studied to produce a guide as to what is regionalism. Seeing is believing.... I want to see finished work in the Metroplex ... molding art and science together (interview, March, 1997).

Later, when asked if he believed that minimalism and clean lines are a regional style for Texas, he replied in part by describing his agrarian design influences:

That makes a lot of sense. It ties in very well. You didn't see any free form, curvilinear, unrelated relationships. Everything was very symmetrical. Laid out with clean site lines ... clean finishes ... wood joining stone.... What you see is what you get. Very functional! That's my design style! Some parks are very-free form and curvilinear, but that's only because the site demands that. A very rectangular and symmetrical design won't work if you have a lot of topo changes.... Most of our development is on sites that will accept a rectilinear form system (interview, March, 1997).

The final respondent, also, did not focus on natural systems as a first priority in a regional approach.

I have been influenced not just physically but culturally. The cultural impact of the city, of the community, of Texas, our relationship to Mexico, of our relationship to the Southwest.

He also stated that "if there is anything regional about my work it comes from my choice of materials...." By "materials," the researcher assumes he meant both plant materials and hardscape elements, since he is a noted "plantsman."

Several questions were asked concerning "hardscape" design influences. In retrospect, perhaps the words "form generators" should have been used to distinguish form from the actual materials. Most of the subjects interpreted the questions to mean specific materials with a regional component whereas the researcher was interested in both the materials and the regional form systems.

One respondent listed the regional hardscape elements as "... gravel, stone, brick, and concrete." He also derived inspiration from designers other than landscape designers in the tradition of the "arts and crafts" movement.

We view stone as structural elements in the garden, not as veneer surfaces.... It changes the way stone looks.... This is the traditional way that stone is used in any developing area where the material is cheap and available. My palette of materials tends to be fairly consistent because they are readily available.... The big mistake is to think that I would only learn only from garden designers or other landscape architects. You learn from everybody. You see things all the time. I say; "I really like that." How do I translate that into the garden? We also design furniture for clients and have it built for their gardens. That inspiration might come from a furniture designer.... I might see a piece in wood and make it in steel for example. I change it, or adapt it, or modify it. You can't work in a total vacuum (interview, March, 1997).

Another response was centered on the respondent's home design base of Austin and the Texas Hill Country. She elaborated on another respondent's (also from Austin) response of "brick" to list "old, used brick" and "the Elgin Butler brick company." She also stated that she was "of the notion not to import too much stone" and liked to use ... "limestone block from quarries around Austin." When asked the follow-up question about regional influences on space relationships, she replied in part:

There is not enough intimacy of scale. The wide open spaces! If you have a view, that's great! You can open up the landscape to that view. However, to have wide open spaces without definition doesn't invite you into the landscape (interview, March, 1997).

This echoes the resistance that Frampton referred to in his description of Critical Regionalism. Frampton describes this resistance as the way in which bounded form can be brought to resist the space endlessness of megalopolitan development.

Another subject stated that the biggest hardscape design influences in the Dallas area are "copying of the Eastern United States." For the Hill Country, she listed the "German influence mixed with the Spanish." For regional hardscape materials, she listed "walls built

with local rock, and using cedar and mesquite wood for construction.” She also listed “the stones we have to work with, the gravel, and the decomposed granites.”

Another respondent described the hardscape design influences in the same way he referred to plant materials, in terms of the arid Southwest. “Intense light colors, bold textures like agave, long overhangs, contrast of light and dark.” He also stated that he was “surprised at how much we have here ... more so than other places I have worked,” in describing the materials available in Texas. He listed those materials as “native flagstones, limestone, granite, pulverized materials” and “concrete textured in various ways and blended with native aggregate.”

Another subject had a similar response to the question about hardscape influences in relating cultural modifiers to earlier technology:

If you can pick up on the vernacular architecture, it is a natural marriage because it used natural materials; it speaks to the culture already. It’s got some history behind it, not to imitate but to use the lessons, to emulate it in such a way that you are using the concepts rather than copying the exact forms. For example, the Town Lake in Austin is a design manual for building using native limestone. The tradition of ornamental iron work, vernacular farm buildings with the seamed metal roofs, the dark green of the live oaks and the cedars (dark green metal, etc.), and limestone. Ideas can be reinterpreted ... delve back into a period where you did not have giant earth movers, etc. (interview, December, 1996).

In terms of the actual hardscape materials, he stated that “stone speaks the strongest, because it has more time and evolution [which] gives a sense of timelessness.... You must understand the visual qualities of stone and take advantage of the size, the irregularity, and weight of the stone and the weight of one stone against another as opposed to all this stuff floating in mortar.” He once again equated regionalism with natural local elements by stating that some

stone (Milsap, sandstone) is associated with the North Texas area because it “used so ubiquitously,” rather than because it is inherently an “indigenous part of the landscape.”

Another subject listed the local materials as “white limestone, brick masonry, and iron work.” He stated that he did not “understand” why those materials were used, and that perhaps it was “more out of habit” than anything else. Additionally, he felt that “lighter color brick is more appropriate” because “most colors are light in the landscape.” He listed those “sun bleached” colors as “light grays, tans, and light greens.”

The discussion of regional influences above illustrates one of the principle themes discovered in the interviews. In the words of one subject, “the best regional design work has been a collaboration with those doing the installation, rather than out of large offices ...maybe, because of being in touch with the materials all the time.”

The two designers with the biggest reputations as regionalists work in a very intuitive way, partly due to the “hands on” approach involved in their design/build practices. They both rely heavily on designing on site, without using extensive paper documentation. One stated:

I see the construction process as a part of the design process.... I’m a hands-on person, not a draftsman.... We do very little drawings in this office. I used to do sheets and sheets and sheets of drawings, now they are lucky if they get one.... Because I am the contractor, all I need is enough information to get the ideas across.... That gives me all the flexibility I want. I don’t do much commercial work, and I don’t do any state or public work because the flexibility to adapt on a moment-to-moment basis during construction is not there. On the other hand, the flexibility dictates a certain limit to the kind of projects that I can undertake. There are always certain tradeoffs.... I am a doer, not a planner.... I’m very product oriented (interview, March, 1997).

Their clients place a great deal of trust in them due to their reputations. As a result, they are free to experiment with landscape design in a very intuitive and “hands-on” way that is foreign to the day-to-day professional practice of a typical landscape architecture firm.

The design/build nature of their practice allows both designers to learn from people doing the actual installation. One mentioned that he had “especially learned from the stonemasons.” The other mentioned that she has been influenced “more by plantsman than anything. ... recently by Pat MacNeil, and in the past by Benny Simpson and Lyn Lowry.” She also mentioned the value of learning from the close working relationships with clients that can evolve in a design/build project.

I have been fortunate to have creative and talented clients that have been partners on projects.... To see how they think about their landscapes gives a whole new perspective. You teach your clients, but you also listen to them and see things through their eyes which changes your viewpoint (interview, November, 1997).

Both respondents do not actively engage in a dialogue with other landscape architects outside of their firms. One stated:

I have learned more from seeing things than from talking about them or reading about them.... I get a little bored with landscape architecture sometimes, when there is an agenda that somebody is pushing that doesn't necessarily match mine.... That's one of the reasons that I am not very active in the landscape architecture things. Maybe if I got involved with them I would like it more, but from what I have seen on the edges, I would not necessarily want to be a part of it (interview, November, 1997).

In a similar vein, the other stated: “I don't know what other landscape architects do. I don't really know anyone.... I know of Rosa Finsley, but I have never really seen any of her work....

The best designers I know are not educated ... they are self taught people without formal training.”

Both landscape architects are frequently published and have projects featured in magazines, but not usually in the professional journals most likely to be read by practicing landscape architects or academics in the profession. They also are frequent speakers on garden and landscape design; but again, the lectures are not in the usual venues for an exchange of information with other landscape architects.

The relative isolation of recognized regionalist designers has prevented their special sensitivity to regional elements from being documented in such a way that more mainstream practitioners can take advantage of them. Additionally, designers need to look to more unconventional sources of information to get “up to speed” for regionalist designs in specific areas.

Attitudes to Regional Design

The interview subjects’ attitudes towards regionalist design can be deduced both from specific questions asked about regionalist design and from the general tone of their answers to all the questions on Critical Regionalism.

When asked if they considered themselves to be regionalist designers, only one subject replied with a definite no. The other designers reflected some of the confusion about just what is regionalist design in their responses.

One stated that he was not a regionalist designer although, “I allow myself to be influenced by regional factors more than most designers.” It “is not a line that I draw in the

sand and say, "I will not work on this unless you allow me to bring my regionalist baggage with me," because that is what I am about." This statement was made, despite the very articulate way that he expressed his understanding of regional elements and methodologies for Texas and surrounding states and his statement that "in ninety nine percent of the cases, if you do not have something of the influence of what's going on around you, it is not good site specific design." Apparently, he interprets the term regionalism as one that defines a limit to the type of work that a particular designer can produce. Paul Horgan wrote in Yale Review, (quoted in Wilson, 1997) "[I] have never seen a statement by a truly gifted artist which admitted to his being a 'regionalist', no matter how firmly he had been assigned the classification." Antoine Predock (quoted in Wilson, 1997) jokes, "regionalism means not being able to get a job out of state." The broader definitions of Critical Regionalism offer a way out of this dilemma by permitting the regional sensibilities developed by these designers to influence designs in subtle ways that may not fit the traditional view of regionalist design as driven entirely by local ecology or regional scenographic elements.

The remaining four landscape architects do not have a problem calling themselves regional designers:

... Sure, I am of my region.

If you mean [a designer] ... that will fit into the ecosystem of an area, probably so ... I do try to have a sense of place.

Yes, I am more influenced by what I see in Texas than anywhere else ... I take little bits from whatever I see and put it together with my experiences here.

I am the only one [laughs].

The second specific question about attitudes asked the interviewees if they felt that a designer labeled as a regionalist was limited professionally by the attitudes of other design professionals. Two of the designers stated that a designer was not limited, although for very different reasons. One said no because “most people don’t know what that [regionalism] means ... like what does formal mean? Another stated, “[No], if the other design professionals are astute.”

The other five designers attached more qualifiers to their responses. One stated that “it depends on the individual.” Another stated that in terms of her own practice “you probably get known for a style.... If someone wants a different style you would not be the person they would think of first.” The third also answered in terms of her own practice:

There is a limitation of understanding of what we [regionalists] do in general and that’s why we have a constant need for education.... I am in the room now with people that might not have considered regionalist landscape architecture previously, but they might not know how to get there. Clearly, I am limited. They want that [regionalist design] but the gap from where they are to where I am is so great that they cannot get there except in the long haul (interview, March, 1997).

Two of the respondents felt that designers are limited professionally by having a reputation as regionalist designers, but only in the short term.

[Regionalist design] is a fraternity ... seen as a distinct entity by the larger mass of professionals that do not work that way. They are held up as somebody [who] finally got it right. In the short term, yes. In the longer term, it is more the type of thing that people want to see more of (interview, December, 1996).

It’s possible [that designers are limited] ... and even if it is a limitation, so what. Ten years from now it may be the norm” (interview, April, 1997).

The overall tone in the interviews was very positive towards a regionalist approach. There was an underlying consensus that, despite the problems in understanding specific methodologies, this is a very desirable direction for the profession of landscape architecture to move in the near future. Regionalism is seen as a “style,” and like any style is somewhat limiting as potential clients react to a body of work in that style. The design diversity inherent in Critical Regionalism may offer a way out of this dilemma.

Regionalist Designers

All the respondents expressed difficulty in thinking of designers that they knew of as having a cultivated regionalist sensibility. The table in the appendix shows all persons named and the frequency with which they were mentioned.

CHAPTER 5

EXAMPLES OF BUILT WORKS

The two works examined for elements of Critical Regionalism are both in the north Texas area and open to the public. One falls under the category of what is traditionally referred to as a “garden.” The other project studied is the 900-acre Solana office park in Southlake and Westlake, Texas. Solana falls more into the realm of the traditional practice of landscape architecture because of its size and scope.

The projects were studied both for evidence of the four form generators uncovered in the interviews and for elements of Critical Regionalism as defined in the literature review. The figure in the appendix lists the elements that were studied.

The Munson Memorial Garden

Introduction

The Munson family garden at Texoma Medical Center, Denison, Texas, was commissioned by the Munson family of North Texas. The impetus for the garden was the creation of a space that featured a variety of design elements that connect the garden to the Munson family and to the family’s history in the Denison area of North Texas.

Background

The best known ancestor of the Munson family was Thomas Volney (T. V.) Munson (1843-1913). T. V. Munson developed a passion for experimentation with grapes after visiting

the vineyard of Dr. Robert Peter (his college chemistry professor at The University of Kentucky) in 1873. There he saw a collection of "all the leading and nearly all the then introduced varieties of American grapes" (Munson, quoted in Renfro, 1992). Subsequently he came to the conclusion that "the grape was the most beautiful, most wholesome and nutritious, most certain, and most profitable fruit that could be grown" (Munson, quoted in Renfro, 1992). T. V. Munson spent the rest of his life investigating grape species, traveling more than 50,000 miles in forty states to gather grape specimens, and to study soils and climates. This study eventually made him one of the nation's foremost authorities on the grape (Renfro, 1992).

Munson arrived in Denison, Texas in April 1876 and began to improve a "rough piece of dark limestone, timbered land on the bluffs of the Red River" (Renfro, 1992). Munson later wrote of his arrival in Grayson County;

Here were six or eight good species of wild grapes, several of which had not been seen by me previously. I had found my grape paradise! Surely now, thought I, this is the place for experimentation with grapes! (Munson, quoted in Renfro, 1992).

He spent the remaining years of his life in the Denison area developing superior grape varieties from the wild native grapes along the bluffs of the Red River and its tributaries. He established one of the most famous vineyards in the South, and created a well-known nursery business. T.V. Munson became the acknowledged authority on the native wild grapes of North America, and authored the authoritative Bulletin No. C., Division of Pomology, United States Department of Agriculture (Classification and Generic Synopsis of the Wild Grapes of

North America, published in 1890). The bulletin paved the way for his later and better known work, Foundations of American Grape Culture, which was published in 1909.

T.V. Munson's horticultural and scientific work in hybridizing and perfecting the American *Vitis*, by developing more than 300 distinct varieties, won him a diploma from the French government in 1888, and the decoration of the Legion of Honor, with the title of Chevalier du Merit Agricole. The honors were bestowed for the aid Munson rendered to France by developing insect and disease resistant rootstocks. These rootstocks saved the French grape varieties from extinction due to an infestation of the Phylloxera root louse. He is one of only two Americans to receive the decoration of the Legion of Honor (the other being Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was also born in Denison, Texas).

Garden Description

The garden's principle features are twelve stone columns that create a highly stylized grape arbor as a tribute to the Munson family's connection to the grape industry. The arbor leads to an artificial stream with a watercourse that begins under the arbor and ends in a pool. One of the initial designs shown to the client employed a more Victorian-looking gazebo or pergola. The Munson family decided that they

... wanted something a little more organic, a little more earthy, a little more informal. Something that would not derive its design from any other structure on the hospital campus, so we went with something so out of context with the existing buildings that it speaks for itself. What was here was a lot of redbuds and a lawn. It was a place that you walked through as opposed to place that you walk to. [The Munson Garden] was to be a stop between the hospital and Reba's House, but in reality it has become its own destination for people that are at the hospital that would like a place gather in private for reflection or conversation" (interview, 1998).



Figure 6. View of Upper Terrace of Munson Family Garden.
(Pictured also is project designer William S. Seaman)



Figure 7. Arbor Structure Viewed from Below Water Course.

By extending the arbor over the sidewalk, a structure was created through which everybody must walk rather than by which everybody must walk. “It puts you at the front porch of the structure. It could have been shifted downhill, but we felt that it was important to span the walkway so that people would feel like it was more inviting to come in” (interview, 1998). Once inside the structure, it is unusual enough that it leads to critical thinking as an attempt to understand the structure.



Figure 8. Photograph of Walk Passing through the Arbor Structure.



Figure 9. Plaque Describing Regional Elements in the Garden.

The source of the stone that was used to construct the columns is described in one of two bronze plaques featured in the garden. The text of the plaque featured in figure 5 reads:

The Ben III and Martha Munson Memorial Garden is constructed of pieces of history from the Munson Family and the birth of Denison, Texas.

Stone Pillars and the Pergola.

The stones used to create the pillars were the foundation stones of St. Francis Xavier Academy built 1900-1901 by the Sister of St. Mary of Namur, Belgium. Initial letters in The Sister of St. Mary's motto "Ad Majorem Del Gloriam" (For the Greater Glory of God) are among the inscriptions on the stone. St. Francis Xavier Academy was founded in Denison in 1876 by the Belgian Sisters who came to the United States in 1819 following the Napoleonic Era. Each stone weighs approximately 4,000 lb. and was cut in half by hand to form the columns for this pergola.

Water Fall.

The source of water coming from underneath the pergola has been copied from an original railroad bed culvert that still exists in perfect condition just north of Denison. These culverts were approximately 20-30-feet long and built by stacking huge boulders to make the walls of the culvert and laying large solid rocks on top to support the railroad above it. This occurred in 1875 just as the nuns were beginning construction of St. Xavier.

Grape Vines.

In 1876, W. B. Munson's Brother T.V. Munson brought his nursery business to Denison and established one of the most famous vineyards in the south. Several of the vines that he introduced into the American Grape Culture are planted at the base of the Columns under the pergola. Also, the garden contains flowering plum trees, a variety developed by T.V. Munson and still found thriving in areas around Denison.

Brick Pavers.

The brick pavers that make up the floor of the pergola were the pavers used in the original streets of Denison. Thanks to Mr. Wilcox who captured these pavers as they were resurfacing Grandy and Sears streets. These pavers were probably laid in Denison during its development in 1876 and 1877.

The arrangement of the wires that will fill out the canopy of the arbor structure are taken from a trellis design developed by T.V. Munson. It is a system of wires that in section forms a T-shape with two wires above and one wire below. As of the writing of this research, the cables that represent the Munson arbor system had not yet been installed on the large cedar posts on top of the columns and thus do not show up in the photographs.

The main program for the garden beyond the connection to the Munson family is the creation of an interim destination between the main buildings of the Texoma Medical Center hospital complex and "Reba's House." Reba's House is a residence for family members of cancer patients at the hospital and is named for the singer Reba MacIntire who is a major benefactor of the center.

The overall design for the Munson Garden is laid out to provide multiple conversational niches for small groups of people. These niches provide a measure of privacy in a time of stress when multiple groups of people are utilizing the garden. The areas appear both in the upper terrace and in the stone work along the stream where both the steps and the stone slabs provide niches for conversation.

As described in the memorial plaque, the brick decking is paving brick that came from the demolition of old city streets in the downtown Denison area. Some of the bricks are turned bottom side up so that people visiting the area can read the name of the manufacturer and know that these were paver bricks from the downtown Denison area. This was done at the suggestion of the Munson Family. The edge between the brick pavers and the stone is planted with creeping thyme which provides a pleasant aroma when crushed underfoot and has a long association with medicine.

The water source is linked to W. Ben Munson (T. V. Munson's brother) who also settled in the area. The railroad culvert mentioned in the dedication plaque was on a Munson property. The Munson children, through the generations, played around it, and it thus developed a special meaning for the family as well as to the Denison area in general.

Throughout the stream bed, fossils were mortared to the stone work. The fossils from the North Texas area were gathered by Munson children to help link the next generation of Munsons to the garden. However, at the time of this critique, the fossils have all been broken off. Stones for the stream were left over from recent development within a mile or two of the

hospital. The stream followed the existing grade and accentuated the turns to get as much stream into as small an area as possible.

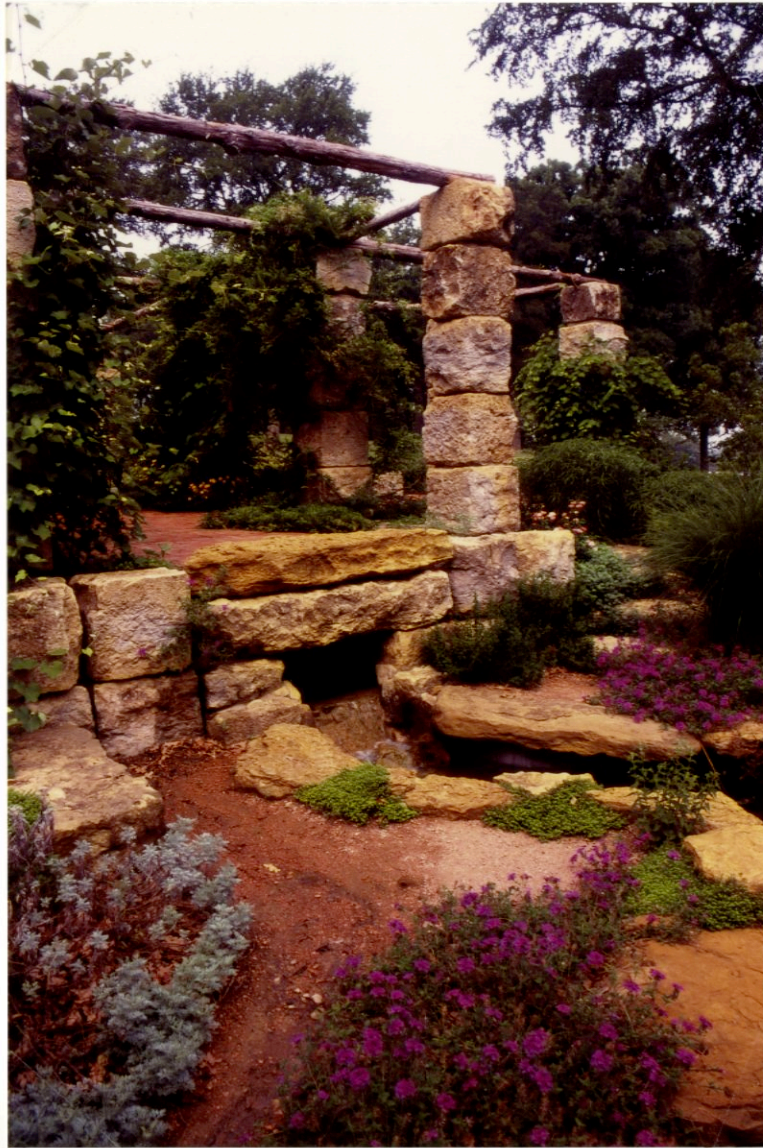


Figure 10. Photograph of Water Source Inspired by Stone Railroad Culvert.



Figure 11. Photograph of Water Course.

Planting Scheme

The columns of the arbor have grape vines growing on them that were obtained from the T. V. Munson Memorial Vineyard & Viticulture (cultivation of grapevines) and Enology (winemaking) Center at Grayson County College.

The columns that have wisteria on them at the present time will have it removed as the grapevines mature. At the edge of the garden are four plum trees that represent the family nursery business. The plums are varieties that were developed by T. V. Munson. The majority of the plant material are herbaceous perennials with the exception of a few trees, a few woody shrubs and the vines and grasses. It is a mixture of native and non-native material. The plants

are zoned according to ecological niches. An appropriate plant, which might or might not be a plant native to Grayson county, is placed into each niche. There is a hot dry zone, water and bog plant zones, full sun, part sun, and full shade zones. As a result, there is wide variety of plant material. Ease of maintenance was an important criteria for plant selection since the garden skill level of the maintenance people was expected to be low by the designer. Another criteria was plants that are disease and insect resistant in keeping with the organic gardening practices that are followed. For example, rose varieties were chosen that do not need to be sprayed for insects or diseases. An extended bloom period was also a priority. For Spring bloom there are bog sage, Coreopsis, daisies, roses and verbena. Later blooms feature Rudbekia, Gloriosa daisies, Eupatorium, and Swamp Coneflower. Horsetail, Beauty Berry, Miscanthus grass, and Iris pseudacorus add winter interest. The plants in pockets along the stream are mostly native and include the Southern Wax Myrtle which would appear in the wild along stream banks.

Elements of Critical Regionalism

As stated in the definitions of Critical Regionalism, it is a process and not a product. Since Critical Regionalism is not a style, there will necessarily be areas of ambiguity in defining a design as critically regional. Most designs will have some elements of Critical Regionalism and a few, such as the Munson Garden, may have most of the elements and can reasonably be referred to as Critical Regionalism.

The outline below summarizes the elements of Critical Regionalism found in the Munson Garden.

I. Regional form generators

- A. Agrarian
 - 1. The overall design of the pergola as a grape arbor structure
 - 2. The use of the actual grape species developed by T.V. Munson
 - 3. The small plum orchard using plant varieties developed by T.V. Munson
- B. Ecological
 - 1. The division of the garden into ecological niches found in North Texas
 - 2. The use of some native plant species from those niches
 - 3. The naturalistic form of the stream and stone work to blend into a naturalistic site plan along the "stream" and pond
- C. Client personal history and aesthetics
 - 1. The overall character of the design was determined by the wishes of a prominent regional family
 - a) The rustic nature of the project
 - b) The grape arbor
 - 2. Many of the site detail elements evolved from the family's connection to the community
- D. Historic/great monument
 - 1. Some of the site details have historic interest to the community
 - 2. The use of the stone railroad culvert as a form generator for the spillway of the "stream"

II. Elements of Critical Regionalism

- A. Regional detail elements
 - 1. Hardscape
 - a) The stone for the columns
 - b) The brick pavers from the streets of Denison
 - c) The local stone used for the boulders and the stream
 - d) The use of locally cut cedar posts for the beams of the arbor
 - 2. Plant materials and ecology
 - a) The use of native plants
 - b) Local ecological niches
 - c) Naturalistic stonework that is an interpretation of local geology
- B. Mediation of regional components with Universal Civilization
 - 1. Universal civilization defined as modern technology and process
 - a) Uses a plant palette that is at the cutting edge of late twentieth century planting design with a mixture of well adapted exotic species and native plants that have only very recently appeared in the nursery trade
 - b) The overall project reflects the relatively recent trend towards therapeutic gardens designed for hospital settings
 - c) Uses irrigation systems and water pumps for the stream that reflect late twentieth-century technology

2. Universal civilization defined as design concepts from other areas and/or times
 - a) Naturalistic stonework influenced by Japanese garden design (see Rosa Finsley interview)
 - b) Season long interest in use of plant materials influenced by English garden design
- C. Defamiliarization
1. Experiential
 - a) The massive scale of the arbor structure
 - b) The unusual plant palette (for the site)
 - c) The use of running water in a non traditional way for an institutional setting
 2. Intellectual
 - a) The overall appearance of the garden from a distance as an unfamiliar type of designed space that requires some thought to understand
 - b) The placement and text of the plaques that leads to a conscious study of detail elements of the garden
- D. Resistance
1. Is there a resistance to landscape as commodity?
 - a) Yes, the garden is a unique artifact and not a pre-packaged product.
 2. Does it resist megalopolitan development or “unbounded” space?
 - a) Yes, the garden is its own destination within a much larger development.
 3. Does the garden resist pure functionalism and technology?
 - a) Yes, the garden is an artistic interpretation of regional design elements that is based on the sensual and intellectual stimulation engendered by decorative regional and introduced elements.
 4. Does the garden resist generic design?
 - a) Yes, the garden is a unique design created specifically for the site and the program.
- E. Rigor
1. Understanding and use of regional elements
 - a) In the opinion of this researcher, the regional elements were used in ways appropriate to the site and the client. The appropriateness to the end users would need to be determined by further research. There is a large disconnect between the overall style of the hospital complex and the design of the garden that could be problematic to hospital patrons. The garden also represents a radical departure from the cultural norms of garden design in the Denison area. Whther this “defamiliarizes” the garden or creates a cultural barrier

- to its use and enjoyment by the local population can be assessed through future research.
2. Care with which the ideology of the designer was blended with regional elements
 - a) There was a good blending of the aesthetics of the client, the aesthetics of the designer, and the regional form systems and materials.

Solana

Introduction

The Solana office park was proposed by one of the interview subjects as a “brilliant, artistic, contemporary interpretation of a lot of regional impulses” (Interview, 1996). The following discussion shows some of the problems associated with mapping a modernist design methodology and aesthetic to a project intentioned by both the developer and the designer as a regionalist project. The following discussion focuses on the details of this large project that are most relevant to the topic of Critical Regionalism.

Background

The Solana (which means “place in the sun”) Office Park lies approximately fifteen miles northwest of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport straddling the cities of Westlake and Southlake, Texas. The IBM Regional Headquarters consists of a village and recreation center, a marketing center, and an office complex that when completed will encompass seven million square feet of office space for ten to twenty thousand employees. The two principle themes of the project are:

1. the desire by Maguire-Thomas (the developer) to connect the project with Mexico and Latin America. "The historical Mexican influence in the region was something that seemed to tie it together" (Maguire, quoted in Barna, p. 68); and
2. the desire to feature the landscape as a major influence on the overall design of the project.

History, a sense of place, regionalism, landscape restoration and conservation; all of these concerns addressed at Solana can be associated with two movements of the last twenty years, environmentalism and postmodernism ... unfortunately, neither has developed without engendering in some followers a certain sentimental or irrational aversion to modern design." The dominant concept—the traditional walled hacienda, with its compound of buildings, so familiar in Texas and the Southwest, reveals the design team's concern for history, regional character, and the native landscape.... The native landscape is dominant, when viewed from a distance.... The buildings and roads were laid out so as to preserve the uplands and hills dotted with ancient post oaks, some three hundred acres of pasture, and the verdant flood plain (Peter Walker, quoted in Lotus International, 1995, p. 41).

Description

The buildings, gardens and parking plazas are laid out in tight compounds which are urban in density yet rural in expression, resembling haciendas of Texas and the Southwest. The parking plazas resemble orchards; canals recall irrigation ditches. As on a farm, these features respond to existing environmental conditions, and they are also composed so that the entire man-made environment can be experienced as a work of art (Bunji, #85, p. 106).

The statements above by Walker and Bunji show some of the intentionality of the design of Solana that relates specifically to the project. Additionally, Peter Walker has described elsewhere three elements which he finds most important to successful landscape design in general:



Figure 12. As Built Plan of Solana as of 1998 Showing Existing Buildings and Future Phases.



Figure 13. Aerial Photograph of Solana Taken Circa 1989.
(Maguire Thomas and Partners, Inc.)

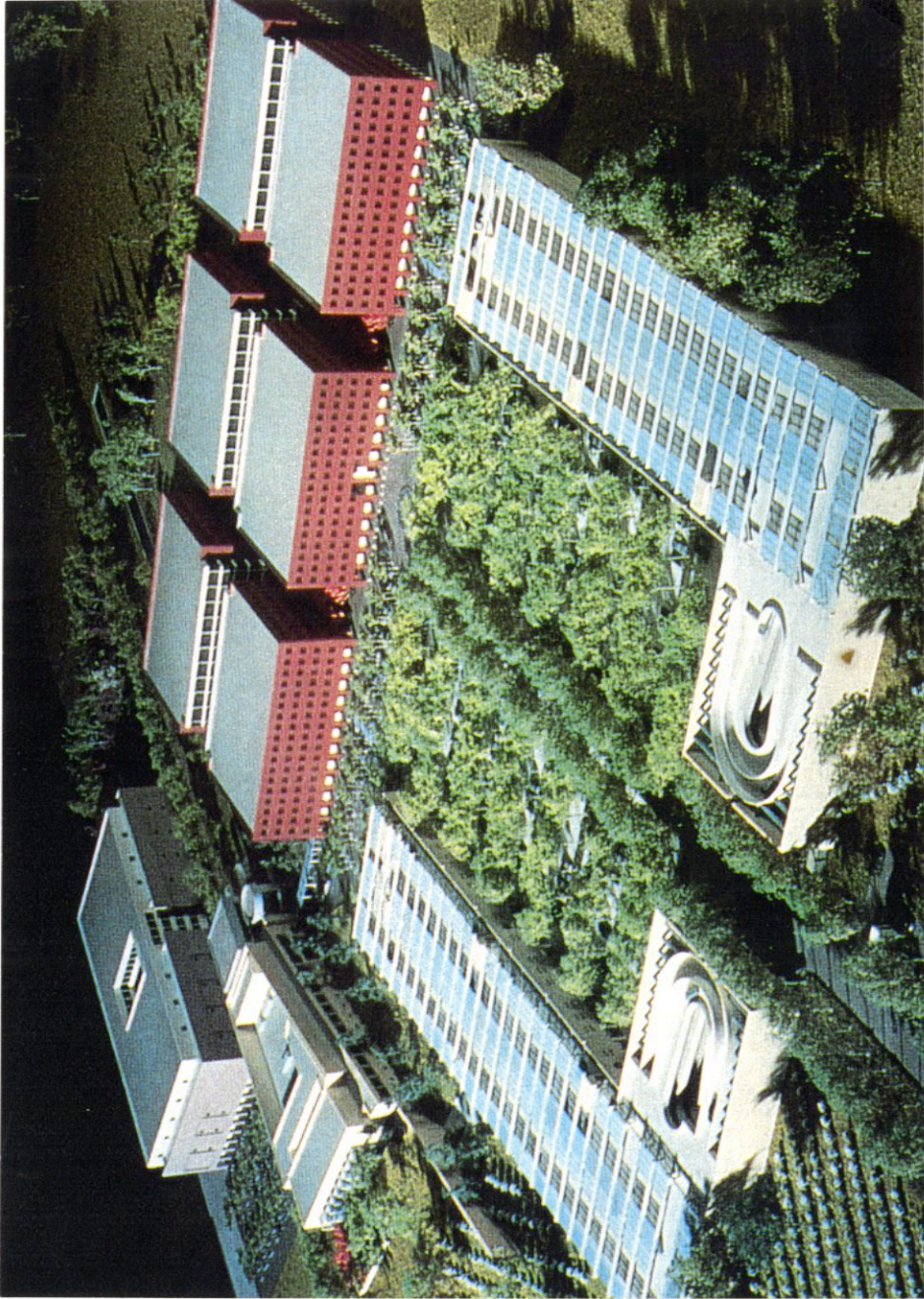


Figure 14. Model of IBM Complex.



Figure 15. Aerial Photograph of IBM Complex at Solana Circa 1998.

1. Objective Visibility—[Landscape] is more like music, in that a structural base must be provided before lyric or contrapuntal moves are possible. Without this order, the work of landscape becomes invisible, blending into the continuum we call the landscape.
2. Conceptual Strength—Once visible, the work of landscape is dependent on its exhibition of conceptual strength. Being appropriate or pleasant is not sufficient to sustain interest. Thus, if it is to be seen it must have something to say or to be about, perhaps several things at once.
3. Institutional Identity—Finally, the most important works may achieve a unique identity which identifies the place as a personality that accrues to the owner and to the user, as well as being available to the viewer, extending and enhancing the non-landscape purposes of the sponsor, and as art, it is a gift to the society as a whole (Peter Walker, writing in Lotus International, 87, 1995).

The overall design of Solana is much more effective when related to the three criteria above than when analyzed in terms of the regionalist or Critical Regionalist intentionality of the design team.

Solana is very visible, even at highway speeds. The unusually colored towers, buildings, and landscape features are easily visible from the highway and office buildings. The wing walls that straddle the highway and tie the east and west campuses together, and the rigid geometric forms of the buildings, water courses and other landscape features stand in stark contrast to the surrounding, undeveloped landscape. All are very effective in creating a landscape that is defamiliarized and hence made visible.

Examples of conceptual strength include: the massive wing walls that appear throughout the project (see figures 16-17), the rigid linear geometry of the heavily shaded parking courts with pleached trees surrounding most parking bays (see figure 18), the vivid color schemes (see figure 19), the variety of landscape elements that are “signatures” of Peter Walker designs [such as the mist fountain outside of the hotel (see figure 20) and the



Figure 16. Massive Wing Walls.
(Bunji, 1989)

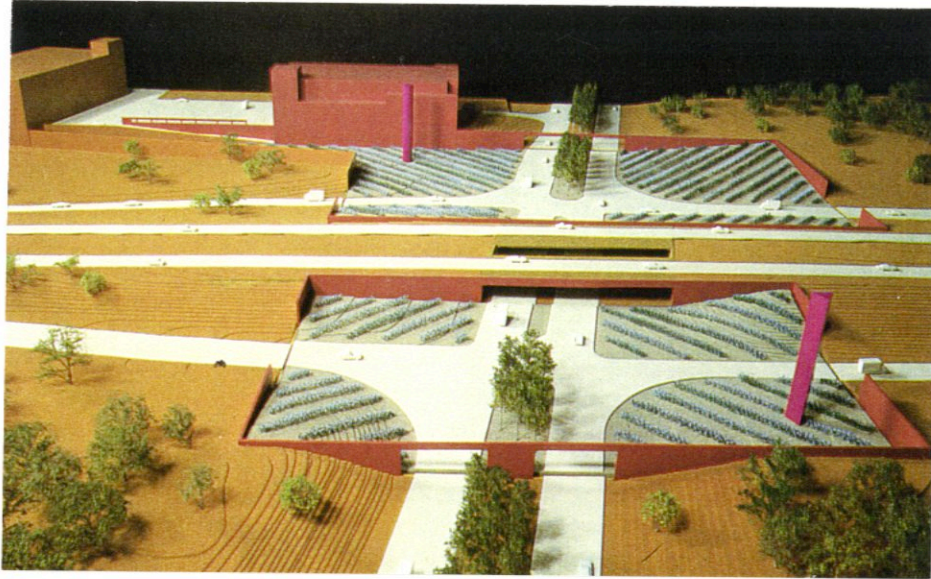


Figure 17. Model of Highway Interchange Illustrating “Rooms” Defined by Wing Walls (Bunji, 1989)



Figure 18. Parking Courts with Pleached Trees.



Figure 19. Vivid Color Schemes.

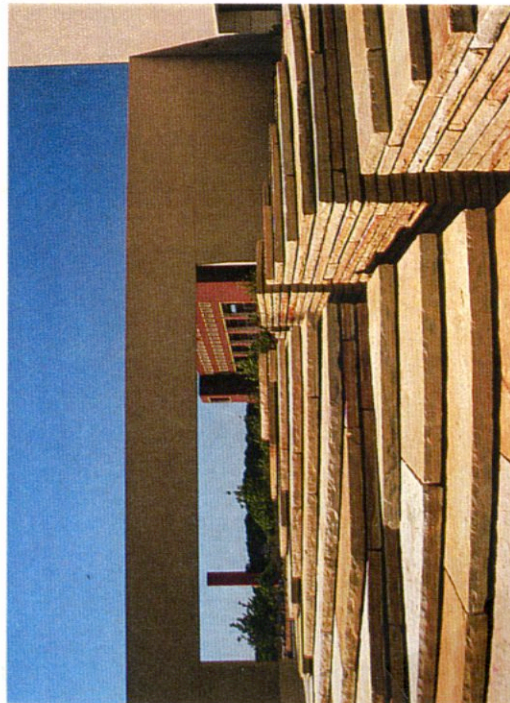
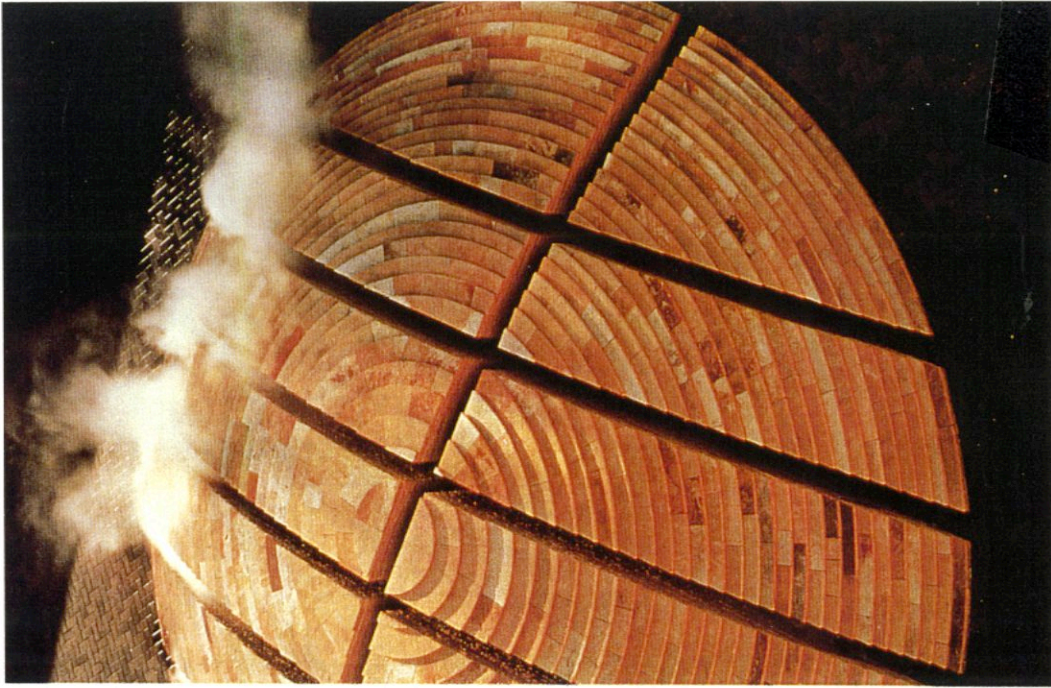


Figure 20. Mist Fountain (Bunji, 1989).



Figure 21. Mysterious Circles in Parking Court of IBM Compound Circa 1998.

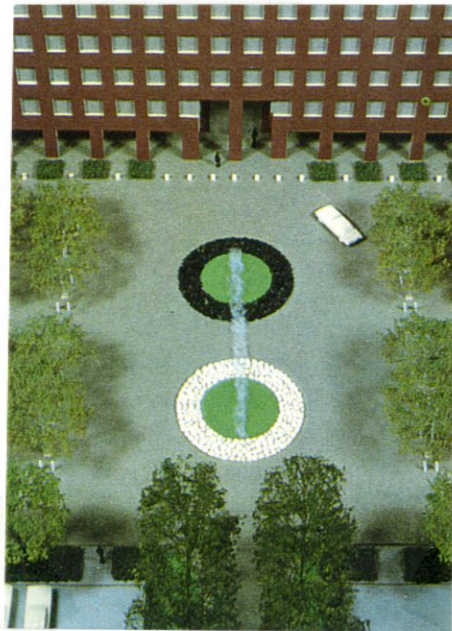


Figure 22. Model of Mysterious Circles.
(Bunji, 1989)

“mysterious” circles that appear in the parking court of the IBM compound (see figures 21-22), the bosque of Hollywood junipers in large pots at the town center that evoke baroque landscapes and the attempt to integrate the native and non-native landscapes in a way that is atypical for North Texas (see figures 23-24).

The strong objective visibility and conceptual strength of Solana create a memorable institutional identity for the companies that office there. It is significant that Mr. Walker speaks of “the viewer” when deciding if a project has been elevated to the status of “art.” The emphasis on visual identity places the project at odds with many of the regionalist theories discussed in this research.

The office park development at Solana embraces the high modernist ideal of the “single central vision.” Solana is an artifact that is frozen in time precisely at the point that the final model was constructed by the design team (refer to figure 14, Model of IBM Complex). This necessarily leads to a design that lacks many of the detail elements that would appear in a more incremental approach. The project is best viewed from a distance, either from an office building or from an automobile, where the view is similar to the view the designers would have had on drafting paper or with a model. On closer inspection, the actual experience of the landscape on an intimate scale is rather disappointing due to problems with detail elements. Some of these problems are:

1. The artificial stream near the IBM Campus has large slabs of Milsap sandstone around it (and the lake), none of which are high enough to comfortably serve as benches where one could “commune” with the water course (see figure 25).



Figure 23. "Baroque" Court Yard with Italian Cypress in Large pots, Circa 1988.
(Bunji, 1989)



Figure 24. Photograph Taken from Same Position Showing Hollywood Junipers, Circa 1998.

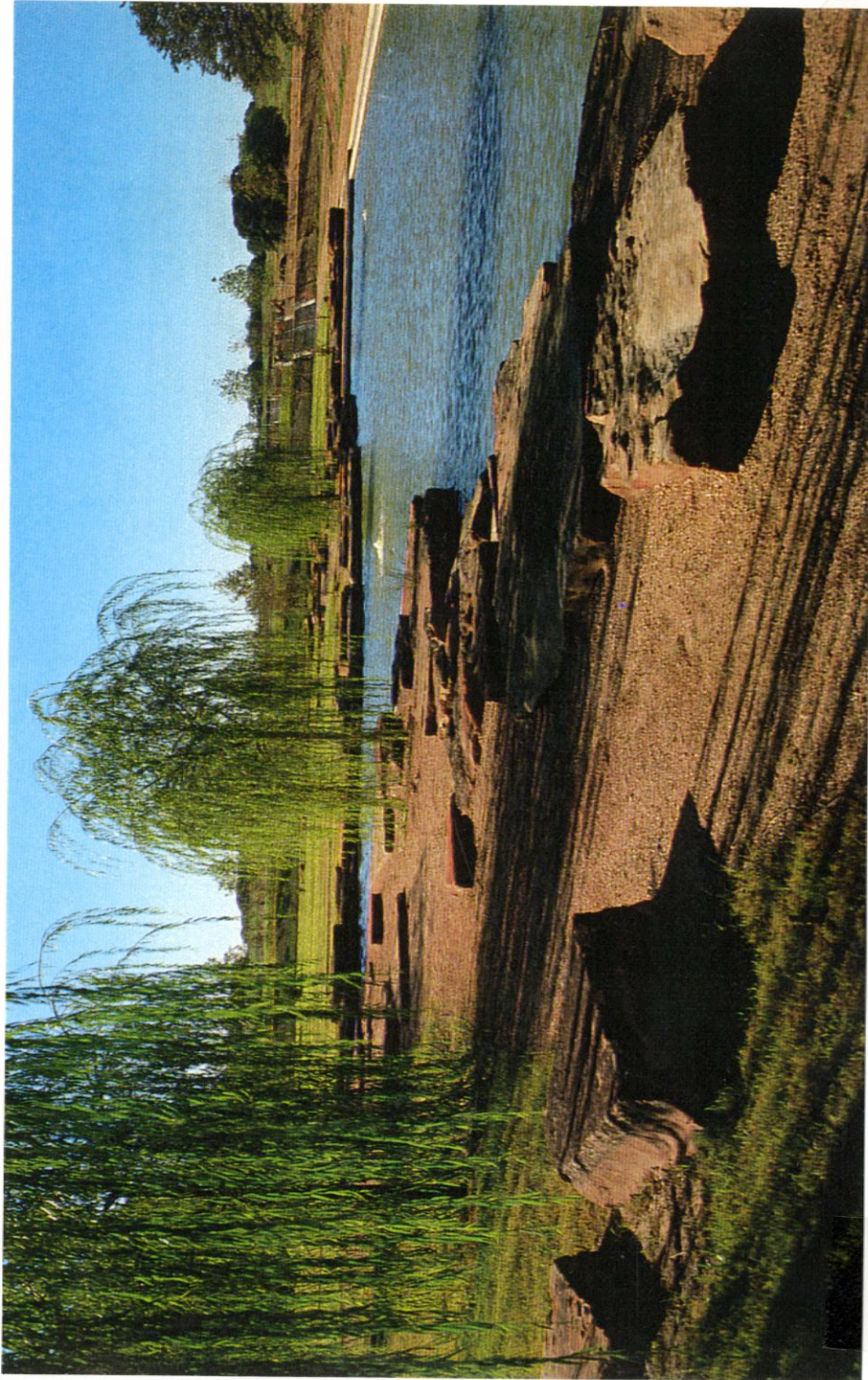


Figure 25. Milsap Slab Edge of Watercourse (Bunji, 1989).

2. Much of the landscape on the east side of Highway 114 at the Sabre center is not accessible to pedestrians, as was pointed out by a person who works there.
3. Many of the plantings feature poorly adapted species that upon close inspection are in a perpetual state of stress and decline.
4. The minimalist detailing of planting areas, water courses, and hardscape preclude sensual delight at a personal scale.

The unusual geometry, heroic scale, and lack of regional components potentially create a barrier to the “appropriation” of the site as a personally significant space for the people that office there. Peter Walker has stated:

It’s interesting that our age, which is in a way so vast, with the airplane travel and so forth, is trying to achieve intimacy. I know that every time I try to achieve grandeur, clients instinctively tighten up. They don’t want it. And I have had to fight to do things big. (Bunji, #85, 1989).

Peter Walker states above a design philosophy where he continues to embrace the heroic scale of high modernism despite his perception that people are “trying to achieve intimacy”. The postmodern emphasis on intimacy of scale and incrementalism is a paradigm that Mr. Walker had not embraced when he made the statement above. Additionally, the statement is illustrative of the visual emphasis placed on art-based, modernist designs as opposed to the experiential emphasis placed on postmodernist designs and the modernists preoccupation with space over place.

In an art-based design that is derived primarily from the aesthetics of the designer, there is a danger that the relative sophistication of the “expert” aesthetics of the designer will be imposed on the “non-expert” public. It would be as though only university-trained

musicians could decide what music radio stations play and everyone would have to listen to the classical music or jazz that is taught in music schools because that is the “art based music” that such professionally trained musicians find most personally satisfying. The ten to twenty thousand people who work at Solana were not a constituent in the design process as they would be in a more regionally oriented, design methodology. The mitigation by Critical Regionalism of the artistic impulses of a designer with elements taken from the regional context can help prevent such a disconnection between the designer and the end users.

Elements of Critical Regionalism

The following analysis of elements of Critical Regionalism at Solana will focus on the effectiveness of the design intent of the design team for Solana in creating a regionalist project.

I. Regional Form Generators

A. Agrarian:

Peter Walker has stated: “I find the agricultural landscape as beautiful as wild nature. Clearly people have put their hands on it and that is good” (Bunji, #85, 1989, p. 26). This sensibility is reflected in a number of design elements at the Solana complex.

1. The exit from Highway 114 features an interchange with stylized rows of vegetation that have an agricultural character (see Figure 26). The effect is created by mowing the area into strips rather than through a planting of taller vegetation in the raised portions. The effect is rather crude and subtle, quite apart from the landscape with its neat rows of distinct vegetation. It is, however, a very cost effective solution to the creation of agricultural patterning.
2. At the highway entrance to the large parking structures of the IBM complex are located rows of nandinas that appear more convincing as an agricultural metaphor although they have been poorly maintained and are slowly dying.
3. The pond/canal immediately west of the IBM Westlake complex (see Figure 27).
 - a) The linear water feature is intentioned to be evocative of nearby cattle ponds. An informal survey of nine people sitting outside of a building next to the pond indicated that none of them had any idea what it was supposed to represent and all referred to it as “the canal.” The huge scale of the feature has abstracted it to the point that it is very difficult for the casual observer to ascertain the conceptual meaning.



Figure 26. Mowed Strips of Agricultural Patterning.



Figure 27. Abstracted Stock Tank / Canal.

B. Ecological

1. Restored prairie (see Figure 28)
2. Meandering stream-like water course in Westlake
3. Preservation of the "savanna" character of the cross-timbers landscape

C. Client personal history and aesthetics

1. The decision to use Texas and Mexico together as a "region"

D. Historic/Great Monument

1. The marketing center is designed to evoke the image of "a rambling hacienda," according to Legorreta, with courtyards created by massive projecting walls (Barna, p. 68).
2. The purple pylon on the entry court pool, the huge wing walls, and the water flowing through those walls are evocative of Legorreta's mentor Luis Barragan, from Mexico (Barna, p. 68) and Mexican modernism in general (see Figure 29)
3. In the village center, Legorreta places brown and white office buildings, where in a traditional Mexican Plaza would be found a cathedral, city hall, and market arcade (Barna, p. 70).

II. Elements of Critical Regionalism

A. Regional detail elements

1. Hardscape

- a) Vivid colors and stucco (evocative of Mexico)
- b) Milsap (Texas) Sandstone (appropriate for the sandy soils of the cross-timbers) used for naturalistic water course and other seatwalls
- c) Decomposed granite from Texas used for pedestrian and vehicular paving

2. Plant Materials and Ecology

- a) At Solana, there is an unusual level of separation between the plant palette use in the developed areas and the palette used in the "wild areas." In general, the plants used in the designed landscape are not native and are poorly adapted to the Texas region.

(1) Examples of poorly adapted trees utilized in massive quantities include Sycamore, Lombardi Poplar, purple Leaf Plum, Bradford Pear, and Eastern Redbud,

- b) There is no attempt to define ecological regions in the landscape. Even on the banks of the naturalized stream in IBM Westlake, there are a mixture of plants with divergent cultural requirements. For example, the very drought tolerant Powis Castle Artemisia is planted next to a relatively drought intolerant Buddleia Davidi.

B. Mediation of regional components with universal civilization

1. Universal civilization defined as design concepts from other areas and/or times

- a) There is an effective melding of the minimalist aesthetic and baroque sensibilities of Peter Walker with Mexican regionalism influenced by the Mexican designers Barragan and Legoretta.



Figure 28. Restored Prairie with IBM Complex in Background.
(Bunji, 1989)

C. Defamiliarization

1. Experiential

- a) The large bold masses of colors used are a dramatic contrast to anything in the area.
- b) Some of the detail elements are unique and interesting enough to evoke a strong experiential reaction.
 - (1) The towers
 - (2) The naturalistic and the rigidly formalistic water features
 - (3) The contrast of the overall horizontality of the landscape and the buildings with the vertical plant materials such as Lombardi Poplars
 - (4) The unusual design of the highway interchange as a designed and defined space and the parking areas
 - (5) The circle rings at Westlake
 - (6) The use of large pots in geometric forms to define space
 - (7) The mist fountain at the hotel



Figure 29. Mexican Modernism.

2. Intellectual

- a) The strong contrast of the naturalized and formal landscapes provokes intellectual inquiry into both.
- b) The unique and unusual nature of the entire project requires conscious thought to understand. The overall visual appearance of the project is easily imageable as a unique, designed artifact.

D. Resistance

1. Resistance to landscape as commodity

- a) There is a very successful attempt to define the landscape as a unique product. The imageability of the project is most successful as a semiotic device that makes the project *memorable* as opposed to a *pleasurable* place⁶ in which to dwell.

2. Resistance to megapolitan development or "unbounded" space

- a) The landscape is very clearly delineated, starting with the highway interchange over Highway 114 and continuing into the various office zones. The design team has created a very effective "enclave," although the scale is extremely large.

3. Resistance to pure functionalism and technology

- a) The entire development at Solana is designed to be a part of an "artistic" statement.

4. Resistance to generic design

- a) Solana effectively resists the generic design of North Texas. The project does, however, reflect very strongly the "generic" design styles of the various members of the design team in a way that is very foreign to North Texas.

E. Rigor

1. Understanding and use of regional elements

- a) Perhaps the biggest lapse in the creation of Solana was the lack the use of a Texas-based, regionalist designer as a consultant for the architecture or the landscape. In the interview portion of this research, one respondent stated:

"It's better to work with a local consultant that can brief you on local conditions. It's nice to work with somebody that may come from another region but who recognizes our regionalism and adapts their design thinking to what is happening here. It is always a challenge to see that they do not superimpose a design here that might not be appropriate. A lot of local architects already have that [regional] feeling" (Winham).

The combination of a developer based in Los Angeles and a design team from San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles and Mexico City has led to a vision of a Southwest style that is foreign enough to the North Texas area to be considered more of a "theme park" approach to regionalism as opposed to any authentic expression that grows out of the North Texas environment. This is particularly evident in the planting palette which reflects a lack of

understanding of regional alternatives. The resultant thinning, dying, and otherwise stressed plants could easily be replaced by a palette of better adapted regional alternatives selected by a North Texas based landscape architect. The result would be a landscape that both works on the macro level as an expression (not necessarily a regional expression) of the design team, and a landscape that works more successfully on a more human scale.

2. Care with which the ideology of the designer was blended with regional elements.
 - a) It is evident that the design team utilized the most immediately visible component of the North Texas landscape (the relative horizontality of the region and the savanna ecosystem). The team stopped exploring the North Texas region at that very superficial level, however, and reverted to the familiar vocabulary of their individual design styles. While claiming to embrace the region, Peter Walker has made the statement: "There is no tradition here [in North Texas]" (Carvello, 1990). It would be worth further study to explore how he reached that conclusion and what level of regional research was undertaken.

The landscape at Solana provokes a number of questions for future research that are explored in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

One purpose of this research was to gather theory relating to Critical Regionalism from a diverse group of sources in order to provide a direction for future research. This research has developed a framework for the study of Critical Regionalism that the researcher hoped to find at the beginning of the thesis project. The failure to uncover such an existing framework necessitated a very broad study of the topic that will require verification from further research using more reductionist methodologies.

The second purpose of the study was to propose specific methodologies for extracting form generators for Critical Regionalist design in rapidly developing areas of Texas. The literature review, place research, and interviews revealed a variety of ways to approach the extraction of regional form systems from the relatively subtle regional influences found in many areas of Texas.

The literature review demonstrated that there are a wide range of design styles that can coexist successfully with a Critically Regionalist design ideology and methodology. It further demonstrated that since Critical Regionalism is a process and not a style, it is most important as a lever of resistance, embraced by the postmodern movement, to the perceived excesses of modernism, functionalism, romantic regionalism, and commercialism. It provides a framework for the creation of a personal design aesthetic that mediates the ideological

position of the architect with the ecological and cultural “anchors” of region in a way that encourages the creation of landscapes that will engender a feeling of “rootedness,” or “psychological connectedness” in the end users of the landscapes.

The literature review further revealed that some of the most important writers on landscape theory in the 1990s have embraced Critical Regionalism as a possible direction for landscape design after the modern period. At the same time, these writers have not (as of the writing of this research) undertaken a systematic study of the topic. Such a study is needed in order to understand the diverse theories surrounding Critical Regionalism, to suggest practical methodologies for its implementation, and to tie Critical Regionalism to the profession of landscape architecture as it is practiced at the present time.

The interview portion of the research was used to generate theory relating to Critical Regionalism in the contemporary practice of landscape architecture in Texas, test theory discovered in the literature review, determine the relevance of theory discovered in the literature review to contemporary practice, and enumerate examples of Critical Regionalist designs and designers in Texas.

Discussion and Implications

The interviews revealed a lack of dissemination of emerging theories of Critical Regionalism within the group of landscape architects studied. The degree to which a focused intellectual framework regarding regionalism emerged in a designer was directly related (not coincidentally) to the degree to which that designer incorporated regionalism into his or her practice. The designers with the greatest regional proclivities tended to be relatively isolated in

the profession and to not be aware of other landscape architects' experiments in regional design.

In general, the designers had very positive comments about regionalism. This was true whether or not the designer actively incorporated regionalist design methodologies into their practice. The practical demands of professional practice described by some of the subjects demonstrated the importance of the concept of resistance as a component of Critical Regionalism. The relatively inclusive, sophisticated, educated, and cross-cultural nature of Critical Regionalism was shown to be important in distinguishing this approach from provincialism and romantic regionalism, which some subjects found unappealing. All of the subjects that showed a marked interest in regionalism expressed that interest through a sophisticated understanding of regional plant materials. The interest in plants appears to have led to the regionalist ideology rather than the ideology leading to an interest in plants. Theory follows practice. The four designers who revealed themselves to be regionalist had backgrounds in the "Green Industry," the study of gardens in other cultures, the study and appreciation of natural areas, degrees in botany, the teaching of gardening, or zoo design.

The respondents also showed a marked interest in the background and sensitivities of the users of the landscapes they help to create (referred to by Pavlides as anthropological regionalism), a sensitivity to the lessons of history and concepts derived from vernacular regional design (vernacular regionalism), and a desire to evoke the spatial relationships, feelings, and details of both the farm and of wild nature, without copying the exact forms (experiential regionalism).

Two of the most difficult concepts of Critical Regionalism, defamiliarization and Universal Civilization, were explored. It was evident from the responses that none of the subjects were familiar with the terms at the start of the interviews. Defamiliarization was, however, described by five out of seven designers as an important part of their design process. The subjects understood the term to mean both a defamiliarization of a new built landscape that would cause the user to look at it differently and a defamiliarization of the existing landscape in the perceptions of the designer that allows him or her to see new possibilities for landscape design.

Universal Civilization is a term that most of the subjects found appealing and intellectually stimulating. Their interpretation of the term reflected both their design aesthetics and the ways that their design process has been acculturated into the profession of landscape architecture. The researcher focused on the “contemporary world culture” (Wilson, 1997) definition of Universal Civilization offered by Wilson rather than the earlier definition of “the scientific, technical, and political rationality that are necessary to take part in modern civilization offered by Ricoeur” (quoted in Frampton, 1982). The Wilson definition was shown to be especially appealing to the subjects as it gave them both a model to study transcendent design vocabularies derived from diverse geographic locations, and the license to apply a broad range of lessons learned from other cultures to their personal design aesthetic within the context of regionalism.

The interviews revealed the value of the small scale designer or design/build firm as a laboratory for experimentation with regional materials and form systems. The interaction with

local plants and hardscape elements, local artisans, and the relatively large percentage of time spent on a particular site being developed lead to a heightened awareness of the possibilities for regional design by some of the subjects. The iconoclastic nature of these same designers makes the dissemination of their regionalist ideas into the profession of landscape architecture problematic. This research and others similar in nature are possible tools to facilitate such a dissemination.

The four approaches to the generation of regional form (agrarian, ecological, historical/great monument, and the personal history approach) were not directly proposed by any of the interview subjects, but rather were extracted by the researcher from an analysis of their descriptions of regional form generators. These four approaches illustrate the broad range of regional influences that are available to Critical Regionalists in rapidly developing areas. All of the subjects listed at least one of the four form generators as an important point of departure for the design process. The four designers who were self declared regionalists all listed more than one of the four. This research focused on the four form generators in Chapter 3 in order clarify their use in the analysis of the two landscapes featured in Chapter 5. They were described in ways that related directly to rapidly developing areas of Texas.

The two projects studied for elements of Critical Regionalism are indicative both of the design aesthetics of the designers and of the type of practice that led to the creation of the landscapes. The Munson Garden is the product of a design/build company that permitted the designers an unusually long period of time both with the client and with the proposed site. This, combined with the regionalist proclivities of the design team, led to a landscape that was

deeply rooted in the history of the Dennison, Texas area and was intimately scaled, making an impact on the user in a very personal way. The Solana office development, by contrast, is the product of a multinational design team coupled with a development company's ambitious plan to tie Mexico and the United States together in a region of Texas that does not naturally have such a bond. Solana is an example of a landscape created by what Dovey and Marx refer to as "unseen forces" and "professional expertise." The result is a project that is most successful on the level of pure imageability and less successful as a regionalist design that is experienced as such within the context of rural North Texas.

Limitations

There were a number of challenges and limitations encountered in this research study, each of which should be considered when interpreting these results and in future research. The biggest challenge with the research was its broad scope. The researcher sought to arrive at a definition of the "moving target" of Critical Regionalism as an emerging design process, to tie Critical Regionalism to the profession of landscape architecture in Texas, to provide a direction for extracting regional form systems for rapidly developing areas of Texas, and to produce examples of the implementation of the theory discovered in the built landscape. The broad scope of the research made an in-depth study of the areas covered a practical impossibility. Future studies will need to focus on a single area of Critical Regionalism, as the body of research and the sophistication of theory on the topic continues to grow.

Another problem was the disconnection between the jargon and "academic expertise" of the researcher gleaned from the literature review and the understanding of the topic by the

interview subjects. Several interview subjects suggested that, in the future, it would very helpful for them to receive a one page summary of the topic in advance of the interview in order to assemble their thoughts in a more coherent manner. This may have led, for example, to the listing of a broader range of designers and built projects as examples of Critical Regionalism. On the other hand, the lack of preparation by the subjects is a better gauge of the day-to-day thinking of the designers as it relates to the topic of Critical Regionalism, and it more accurately represents the relationship of the topic to contemporary practice. This dichotomy calls for a balanced approach in which a percentage of subjects are pre-informed and a percentage are not.

A third problem with the research was the time consuming nature of the interview process. This resulted in a small percentage of the landscape architect population in Texas being sampled. Research techniques will need to be developed to confirm the validity of these findings on a broader scale. For example, questionnaires and telephone interviews could have extended the reach of the researcher, in a time and cost effective manner, after the initial theory had been extracted from the in-depth interview process.

Examples of Practical Applications

This research on Critical Regionalism has a variety of practical applications to the practitioner of landscape architecture, the landscape designer, and the teacher of landscape design. The findings of this research demonstrate that Critical Regionalism as a theory of process has applicability to a wide variety of landscape design aesthetics. The discussions in the literature review on modernism, postmodernism, vernacular design, regionalism, and

Critical Regionalism can serve as the beginnings of a framework for an aesthetic of regional design that is broader than that which can be extracted from the sensibilities of any one designer and/or that which is learned through the direct experience of designing in a regional way. Additionally, the literature review places an intellectual framework around many of the regional ideas already in use by diverse professionals in a way that makes those ideas more readily transmutable to students of landscape design, colleagues of the designers, and clients.

The four regional form generators for rapidly developing areas uncovered in the interviews are the most accessible practical application of this research to designers that may not be as theoretically oriented. An agrarian, ecological, client-history and aesthetics, or historic, regional influence can be found for virtually any project where the designer seeks to undertake a Critically Regional design. These influences are especially important in rapidly growing areas of Texas where there is lack of sensitivity to regional design elements both by many local designers and by designers designing for Texas but working from outside of the Texas area.

Finally, the two landscape designs studied illustrate the theory generated in this research in a way that makes its application more intuitive and easier to understand. The two projects represent very different types of projects that range from an intimately scaled project designed by Texas born landscape designers to a 900 acre office park designed by an international design team without a Texas representative. The divergent natures of the Munson Garden and the Solana office park help to ensure that a practicing professional will be able to relate to at least one of them as being representative of their area of practice.

Suggestions for Future Research

Critical Regionalism is an emerging theory of landscape design that has been mentioned briefly by many writers on landscape theory. The lack of published, in-depth research on the topic causes the small amount written on Critical Regionalism by the more interesting writers to raise many more questions than they answer. For example, the two contrasting statements below raise questions about both the opportunities and the dangers of creating a new regional style in a rapidly developing area.

To express the regionalism architecturally it is necessary that there be building,-preferably a lot of building-at one time. Only so can the expression be sufficiently general, sufficiently varied, sufficiently forceful to capture people's imagination and provide a friendly climate long enough for a new school of design to develop (Harris, Quoted in Frampton, 1982).

Managers of national parks ... ask what is the carrying capacity for natural environments.... But we might also ask, what is the carrying capacity of a cultural environment? How many new residents invigorate a culture and how many damage, distort, and overwhelm it (Wilson, 1997)?

Chris Wilson in The Myth of Santa Fe details the creation of the "Santa Fe Style" as it evolved in the early twentieth century in response to the imperatives of tourism. Many of the issues discussed raise important questions relating to a distinction between a romantic, economically driven regionalism and an emerging theory of Critical Regionalism for landscape architecture in Texas. Some of the questions for future research are enumerated below:

1. How broadly should a designer cast his "net" for regional design inspirations and still create a landscape that has authentic resonance with a local population in a critically Regional way?

2. To what extent should a designer embrace the “plausible fictions” engendered by a culture that is constantly reinventing its identity as a sincere expression of authentic culture and use them as a basis for regional designs?
3. How should the symbols and infrastructure of the technology that makes development possible be incorporated as a regional design element?
4. How can the history of an area be reinterpreted in the landscape in a way that will reflect the concerns and priorities of contemporary users?
5. How can regional design styles mediate the commercial needs of the tourist industry for landscapes as semiotics for advertising and the needs of local inhabitants for authentic placemaking?
6. How do the various ethnic, social, and economic groups in a given area perceive regional trends and elements? Is romantic regionalism a class-oriented aesthetic that is most appealing to the more educated and economically advantaged in Texas?
7. What is the relationship of “Texas nationalism” to form generators for regionalist design?
8. How can a resurrected “Arts and Crafts Movement” infuse regionally based designs with locally appropriate forms?
9. Which are the most appropriate professions for studying and categorizing an area to discover the typologies that form the basis for a regional style?
10. How can regionally defining elements be extracted or defined by “a reverse projection of what is repressed or underdeveloped in ... one’s culture onto the ‘Other’” (Wilson, 1997)?

11. In an era of ever increasing ethnic diversity like Texas, how can regionalist design cultivate “an appreciation of complexity, the hybrid, and the creative flux of culture-meeting-culture” and overcome the “us-them dichotomy” (Wilson, 1997)?
12. How important is it for a designer to put down “local roots” and live in an area long enough to “connect more directly with the history which surrounds us and with indigenous knowledge of the environment” (Wilson, 1997) into order to attempt a Critically Regional design?

The four regional form generators uncovered in the interview portion of this research are described sufficiently enough to illustrate their relevance as elements of Critical Regionalism and to define them as study aids for the two landscapes described in Chapter 4. All four areas need to be explored in much greater depth if they are to become more useful as models for the generation of form in a Critically Regional design methodology. Examples of areas for future research are proposed below for each of the four:

1. Agrarian form generators
 - a) What are the economic implications of an integration of suburban or exurban development with an ongoing agricultural enterprise?
 - b) What are the attitudes of the end user towards the chemicals, dust, and noise that are a feature of modern farming methods? Do these attitudes obviate a pastoral ideal that harkens back to the Renaissance and more primitive technologies?
 - c) What are examples of agricultural prototypes that are region-specific to Texas?
 - d) Is there a quantifiable effect on a sense of “well being” that comes from an integration of the residential and the agricultural landscape as was alluded to by one interview subject by the statement of his desire to embrace “the agrarian rhythm of our forefathers” (Lobdell and Weston 1995, 113)?
2. Ecological form generators
 - a) How can the sensitivity to local ecological regions that is a component of many design/build or small firms be transferred to larger firms working on projects that have an impact over much larger landscapes in more diverse locations?
 - b) How can naturalistic design methodologies from Japan, China, England or other countries be reinterpreted to express the Texas region? This is one of the

approaches discussed by one designer in her interview where she describes her travels to Japan and China and the subsequent “reinterpretation of nature here” [in Texas]. Another designer related a similar idea in his interview, focusing on the relationship between the more arid parts of the state and the form generators from arid “Islamic parts of the world.”

- c) How can natural elements in Texas be transformed into analogies, metaphors, natural histories, myths, and fictions that can make a naturalistic design a subject for reflective analysis in a critical way?
3. **Historic/Great Monument Form Generators**
 - a) What are examples of a wide variety of both historic and contemporary projects, at a variety of scales, that illustrate the successful use of elements of regionalism in Texas? Studies that use regional, or critically regional, built works as their selection criteria would show the precedents that designers need to understand in order to utilize the best historical regional design inspirations from a given area. The studies would need to illuminate whose history is being told, and how the ideology of the designer is reflected in the historical landscape. Both these elements are important in an area that has little “natural” cultural history or has yet to establish a “naturalized” history that may have been imposed by immigrants, but has not yet “played out in the landscape as a necessary fiction for establishing an identity to believe in” (Potteiger, quoted in *Landscape Architecture*, 1994).
 - b) What are examples of regional landscape styles from outside of Texas or outside of the United States that are most appropriate for reinterpretation in Texas in a critical way? The special sensitivity to region that is developed through the “shorthand” of seeing successful projects can be used to adapt the “Universal Civilization” of great historical landscapes from all over the world in a Critically Regional way. The design examples can also serve as successful precedents to create the “comfort level” necessary for clients to accept a Critically Regional based design without feeling as though they are experimenting.
 4. **Personal History Form Generators**
 - a) How do the ethnic backgrounds of the various cultural groups in a given area of Texas impact their landscape aesthetics or “mental image of what a garden ought to be” (Welch, 1995)?
 - b) What practical methodologies can heighten a designer’s understanding of a client’s personal aesthetics? The personal history approach recognizes that we are all individuals with a unique way of perceiving the landscape. These perceptions can be transmitted by the client to the designer verbally or through non verbal clues. One interview respondent stated; “I talk to the client to see what they want. I look at existing things, which tells me a lot about their taste” An understanding of the personal values of the client can be undertaken in more systematic way through a questionnaire or through an interview process as part of the traditional research and analysis phase of the design process. The personal history approach can be expanded to a larger scale of landscape architecture through an understanding of the history and cultural geography of an area. One of the interview subjects

discussed the need to understand the “history and culture of a place,” how it evolved, “the underlying stories that are there ... [so that] you can connect those stories to what you are trying to do in a contemporary setting.”

- c) How can landscape architects best utilize other professionals such as anthropologists or cultural geographers, to increase their understanding of a given population in a way that makes the process of regional design more practical for busy landscape architecture professionals?

Another area for future research that arose from the interviews was the relationship of a background in planting design and plant materials to regional sensibilities. Critical Regionalism as an academic framework evolved first in the architecture and planning professions, so it is natural that the influences of plant material and other natural systems are not found in most of the published discussions of it.

1. Have landscape architects been cut off from their regional roots by separating garden design from the profession of landscape architecture?
2. How has this separation affected their design ideology and regionalist sensibilities?
3. How effective are academic institutions in Texas at conveying a sensitivity to natural regional elements, especially among students that may not have the plant backgrounds of the designers featured in the interviews that considered themselves regionalist designers?
4. Is a focused ideology of design nurtured in an academic institution important for a postmodern designer as a counterbalance to the commercial pressures of professional practice or should the ideology be left to develop after school through years of practice?

The most important area for future research into examples of Critical Regionalism in the built landscape would involve the perceptions of the end users.

1. How should a designer balance the opposing forces of incrementalism and a desire to attend to surroundings with the desire to make a landscape more visible through defamiliarization?
2. How far can defamiliarization be taken before a design appears out of place to a user?

The uses of metaphor and transformation of regional elements in the design process should also be explored.

1. How far afield from the original inspiration can these types of design processes go before the original regional meaning is lost to the end user, even if the user approaches an understanding of the landscape in a critical way?

The interviews in this research explored the understanding, by practitioners of Landscape Architecture, of the academic jargon that is arising from theories of Critical Regionalism. An area for further research would be a pragmatic or more broadly based semiotic study of the relationship of design aesthetics, in a newly emerging design era, with the semantics of the evolving design theory. Such a study could help determine how the meanings of the words of the evolving theory of critical regionalism can effect the maturation of the design style.

Wilson spent fifteen years studying New Mexico regionalism before writing the book, The Myth of Santa Fe. His research shows the diversity and complexity of regional influences

available to the designer seeking to undertake a Critically Regionalist design. He sums up below the culmination of a process of regional reinvention begun in Santa Fe over seventy years ago. Future research into Texas regionalism may in the future demonstrate a similarly rich source of design inspiration for Critically Regionalist designers in Texas.

The images and metaphors applied to New Mexico over the years have been drawn from virtually every Native American and Latin source, from the American Southwest, Mexico, and South America, as well as from Spain, Italy, and the Holy Land. Don Quixote, Montezuma, Coronado, and Plains Indians in war bonnets have all made appearances set amid buildings patterned on California missions, the Moorish Alhambra, and Pueblo villages, accompanied by everything from Mariachi music to Peruvian panpipes, Spanish rice to Texan fajitas.... Invented traditions rework serviceable fragments from our regional, family, and ethnic traditions, mixed with borrowings from other times and peoples, and leavened by pure invention (Wilson 1997).

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

1. How important do you think having an underlying agenda is in developing a personal design aesthetic?
2. Does this agenda help balance the constraints of time and money involved in your projects?
3. To what extent does this agenda manifest in your designs and built works?
4. What is this agenda we have been talking around?
5. How has this agenda changed through your years of practice?
6. What were the primary influences in developing your aesthetic center or agenda?
7. Where do you think we should look for regional design inspiration in landscape architecture?
8. How do you balance inspiration from natural systems and materials with cultural or architectural influences?
9. In a rapidly developed area such as North Texas, is it necessary to invent certain elements of regionalism that may later evolve into a perceived regional style?
10. What do you see as the landscape architectural "hardscape" design influences for this particular area?
11. What are the regional hardscape materials?
12. Is there a regional component to spatial relationships that you incorporate into your designs?
13. Do you work with other design professionals with a sense of the Texas region in the landscape?
14. How have these designers influenced your work?
15. Have you been influenced by regional landscape tradespeople?
16. How do you reconcile these regional inspirations with the universal norms of contemporary, American, popular, landscape aesthetics particularly in an area such as Texas which has such a large net migration each year?
17. How do you define the term "Universal Civilization" or global design community?
18. One way to define Critical Regionalism is the reconciliation of regional influences with Universal Civilization. In this light, can the global design community be defined as popular landscape aesthetics with regard to the landscape of late 20th-century Texas?
19. How important is it for a designer to be intimately familiar with an area before attempting a design there?
20. How many geographical areas is it realistic for one designer to become intimately familiar with through a career?
21. How large a geographic area in the US is it reasonable for one designer to assimilate?
22. Do you consider yourself a regionalist designer?
23. What is the difference between a cultivated regionalist design and good site specific design in general?
24. What does the concept of "Defamiliarization" mean to you?

25. What are the geographical boundaries of the region you are most comfortable designing for?
26. Is a regionalist designer limited professionally by the perception of other design professionals?
27. How long have you been a landscape architect?
28. What type of projects are you involved in?
29. Who are the designers in Texas that you recognize as having a cultivated regionalist sensibility?

Interview Synopses

(items with bullets are follow up questions)

RESPONDENT #1

- Q1. How important do you think having an underlying agenda is in developing a personal design aesthetic?
Need direction to get there. Without some driving mechanism, you will never arrive. Very important!
- Q2. Does this agenda help balance the constraints of time and money involved in your projects?
Not necessarily. Time and money is not necessarily compatible with that. Most of my clients don't have a budget. If the budget becomes an issue, we will phase it or something' not let the money be the issue up-front, but rather let the directive be the issue; what I want to accomplish, first. It is a mutual blending of my agenda and program. The big idea that we are trying to achieve is always there.
- Q3. To what extent does this agenda manifest in your designs and built works?
I try to make my agenda and the clients agenda one and the same. I think the landscape architect's role is to build things for myself and the client collectively. I moved here because of this place, and I practice here because of this place, so that is regionalism. One of the first things I ask my clients up front is, "Why are you here? What is it about this place, regionalism, site specific, residential house specific that has brought you to this place?" Once I find out that, then that's how I attempt to make the two agendas come together.
- Q6. What were the primary influences in developing your aesthetic center or agenda?
My family has always been in the landscape industry. Father and brothers were in the green industry. I like the earth. We are of the earth.... I didn't feel like physically doing that type of work. I like being outside and being of the earth but want to play with it before it gets to the earth ... from a design standpoint. Got LA degree in

- Florida where the school dealt with environmental issues; traveled to Japan and saw some detailed design, and then went to LSU for Masters work in detailed design ... taking it from the big issues down to detail design, actually getting it built. I'm an environmentalist. I like being part of a bigger picture. I like the opportunity to have an impact on that. From the planning standpoint, I like to plan so that I don't infringe on the natural system. And even at the residential level, I like to deal with the environmental issues, how people interpret space and the environment. If people appreciate or understand space and the environment, then I have gained. I have been successful.*
- Q6a. How did you get to the point where environmentalism is so important to you?
My rural background--I lived on farm, and that's the relationship that I can relate to.
- Q6b. Where do you think we should look for regional design inspiration in landscape architecture?
The environment itself is quite harsh--the extremes. [The] arid southwest is very much like the Islamic part of the world and that type of approach is to live within that environment. How you play with water--you don't have broad lakes and things like that, so a little bit of water makes a big difference.... I have lived all across the South from East to West, and I find that the plant palette is similar. It just grows differently here. It is a matter of recognizing those differences and then working within that framework.
- Q8. How do you balance inspiration from natural systems and materials with cultural or architectural influences?
The first question I ask the client is 'Why are you here? If people say they are just passing through, then I can design "Georgia" here for them, but if they are going to be here for a while, then I will approach design differently
- Q10. What do you see as the architectural or "hardscape" design influences for this particular area?
Intense light colors, bold textures like agave, long overhangs, contrast of light and dark, context.
- Q13. Do you work with other design professionals with a sense of the Texas region in the landscape?
Yes, it's important ... maybe from other areas, but I can brief them as to what is really going on here. It's better to work with a local consultant that can brief you on local conditions. It's nice to work with somebody that may come from another region but who recognizes our regionalism and adapts their design thinking to what is happening here. It is always a challenge to see that they do not superimpose a design here that might not be appropriate. A lot of local architects already have that [regional] feeling. For example, Penelope Hobhouse was brought in to build an

English garden on the Bass estate. That was a case of someone being brought in for a specific design, that has nothing to do with regionalism, but we made it regional in the way we worked the soil. You had to deal with the construction issues differently.

Q11. What are the regional hardscape materials?

We experiment every day with something that we think works best ... our native flagstones.... I am having old classmates call me in search of Texas limestone. I am surprised at just how much we have--the pulverized materials where you can put an organic bonding to it and create a walkway. Concrete is another medium that we use quite a bit. How you texture the surface with native aggregates ... the palette of materials here is greater than most places I have been.

Q15. Have you been influenced by regional landscape tradespeople?

We are on the periphery of the Green Industry so we can benefit from the large palette of plant materials. Once you go a little further west it is more limited because of the harsh climate. Here the issue is how to nurture plants, rather than how to control their growth, like when I was in Florida. It makes things easier to control from a horticultural standpoint. From a construction standpoint, we have a labor force that is pretty unique. A lot of native craftsmen that are very capable of doing anything that we would want to do, from concrete to rock work, any kind of construction, the carpentry.

Q15a. Do you see any influence from the Hispanic workforce?

Oh, yes! The Mexicans are of the environment, much more so than most of us are. I always tell the rock masons, if [they] know of a better way to do this in this particular situation, in this particular environment. I appreciate the regionalism that they bring to the table. They can figure out more environmentally sensitive ways to deal with construction issues, if you give them the chance. If you are "of the environment" you want to respect anybody that is "of the environment." If they have the opportunity to offer you some insight, it is foolish not to take advantage of it.

Q16. How do you reconcile these regional inspirations with the universal norms of contemporary, American, popular, landscape aesthetics, particularly in an area such as Texas, which has such a large net migration each year?

First, I have to understand what each person's interpretation of a regional garden style is--English, Japanese, Islamic, Victorian, etc. I have taught design, so I know what each of these styles are. I, also, have had a chance to travel a bit to see these things in action. If the client is open to the feel and look of a style, but not a pure representation of the style, then it can be reinterpreted with native materials.... You deal with scale, you deal with proportions.

Q16a. How do you define the term "popular design aesthetics?"

I don't know if I have gotten myself into a position that has protected me from that or not. I have clients that have needs. I don't know that they will say to me; "I need this, and this, etc." The interview I have with them initially is to find out what they understand about space, proportions, colors, textures, and find out what their favorite colors are, what their favorite seasons are. Popular landscape aesthetics, as opposed to my clients, are promoted by the landscape industry--not by a professional. What's commercially available at a reasonable price? There have been a lot of studies about what is the best approach for tract housing--not environmentally based, not spatially oriented, not looking at the bigger picture of not only how do you use it, but why do you use it, and what it is going to look like in 20 years ... not looking at the bigger picture. They have to go beyond looking at things in a purely pictorial way.

Q17. How do you define the term "universal civilization" or global design community?

You may design differently, in a region differently, but the design process should be the same. By that I mean you collect all the data, you review all that data and you make sound decisions based on all that data. It's only as good as the data you have collected and the interpretation. If you collaborate with knowledgeable people in hydrology, climatology, etc., then you are going to interpret those issues accurately. Most countries are looking at it from a bigger scale when they start dealing with bigger issues like Ian McHarg did with his overlays. They are recognizing the need for more specialists to get involved. The architects and the landscape architects make all the pieces fit. If you just talk to transportation people, they will say: "We have this nice corridor, let's just blow everything out and run it straight down the middle and we have got it." Somebody has to make the whole design fit with other pieces that need to be considered as well, and the landscape architect is the one pulling most of that stuff together. The great landscape architecture landmarks of the past were personal and regional and time specific. For example, with the pyramids, they needed to let their people know that there is a reason for all of this. We don't need those kind of statements any more. We are moving beyond that now. We are now blending with the environment, rather than trying to dominate it.

Q18. One way to define Critical Regionalism is the reconciliation of regional influences with universal civilization. In this light, can the global design community be defined as popular culture with regard to the landscape of late twentieth century Texas?

Yes

Q19. How important is it for a designer to be intimately familiar with an area before attempting a design there?

I was under contract for Pier 1 to do some designs for New Jersey and Virginia. I built it into my contract to travel there so see what is there. I am site-specific-oriented. I like to see and feel where I am designing. It's very difficult to design in a vacuum and think that it is going to work. There are many issues that can go astray. The environment is going to suffer. We don't know what materials are available. It's

- done a lot, but I try to avoid it. Buildings are not as site-specific as plants--soil type, quality of water, type of rain etc.*
- Q20. How many geographical areas is it realistic for one designer to become intimately familiar with through a career?
If you have the time and the connections, there is no limit. Collaboration with local professions is the key.
- Q22. Do you consider yourself a regionalist designer?
Yes!
- Q25. What are the geographical boundaries of the region you are most comfortable designing for?
South, Southeast, Central South, up to Tulsa, Florida, Colorado.....
- Q26. Is a regionalist designer limited professionally by the perception of other design professionals?
No, if the other design professionals are astute, they will recognize the value in that rather than the detriment. When you see how many national offices open regional branch offices because they recognize the need to be there to establish a physical presence, and a body of people who are aware of the genius loci. You are then in some position to have an impact on that native environment.
- Q27. How long have you been a landscape architect?
30 years!
- Q28. What type of projects are you involved in?
Master planning at industrial, and institutional levels, commercial, and parks, light commercial, professional office buildings ... 30% residential, the remaining 70% is master planning.
- Q29. Who are the designers in Texas that you recognize as having a cultivated regionalist sensibility?
I am the only one! I can pick and chose the projects that I want to get involved with. I do not have to do volume work. Most companies are limited by the volume required to sustain their employees. Any company with more than three people is not purely a regionally oriented group. They have to take and they have to produce. Jim Richards was with JJR ... the lead on the Johnson Creek project. He has dealt with large companies at JJR. Bob Dejan used to be at UTA--process-oriented, very natural science oriented, planning oriented. I don't do a lot with ASLA. If you get too specialized, you must expand your market away from the regional, like Ace Torre with Zoos. It's no longer site specific, but rather it is environment specific. I enjoy having a broad range of practice because it keeps me in touch with all the little issues

that I think I need to stay in touch with--where if I just specialized in master planning, I can't just do it all here. My circle would have to be bigger.

Q29a. What is a project of yours for a Regionalist Case study?

If you want to take a project that is not necessarily unique to here, but rather [it] is a good representation of the ideology that the project was supposed to meet. The Fuller garden at Fort Worth Botanic Garden is a memorial to Adelaide Fuller. [It] makes a statement about the life of a local patron--how she progressed from being very young, very organized, middle age, and retirement. We use colors, textures, plant materials, stone, water features, pathways etc. ... to make that statement about her. Also, at the master planning scale, at Harris Methodist SW--the architects had an Italian Villa in mind, so we drew from that and said; "OK, Italian villa, what would that mean here?" Working with native plant materials that have the forms of the Italian cypress, etc.--regionalism is such an odd topic.... There is very little documentation.... Right now, it is all theory!

RESPONDENT #2

Q1. How important do you think having an underlying agenda is in developing a personal design aesthetic?

You have to have certain personal principles and beliefs. I would call it a personal design approach. It is based on very personal beliefs on what is important. You must be very specific in order to differentiate from generic design. So much of what is being done today is very homogenous, very canned ... [To] separate from a budget rationale a standard approach rationale, meeting minimum code requirements and city criteria, liability constraints, constraints of budget, time, and politics, programmatic issues, etc. Projects are driven by those factors, not principles of art, composition, environment, or personal viewpoint in the same way that an artist creates something through a personal rationale.

Q2. Does this agenda help balance the constraints of time and money involved in your projects?

It depends on the client! It's very difficult with many clients to approach a project the way you might want to approach it. The client comes to the table with a different set of criteria than the perspectives that we take for granted as landscape architects; about a better understanding of the environment, a greater appreciation for a more varied aesthetic in the environment, compositional understanding, etc. The client is more concerned with budget, time, item profit, marketability. We come to the table ... thinking that we have this shared view, that we are going to do all these exciting things and produce a great project. There is this gap between the expectations of the

client and where your thoughts are that creates difficulty in achieving projects beyond the homogenous approach.

Q2a. How does that relate to your role as an educator to bridge that gap?

The role of educating the client is something that I have run into an awful lot, though not always. It creates constraints of its own, because that must be balanced against a fixed fee devoted to the project. To bring the time to bring them along is working against you from a financial standpoint.... That has a snowballing effect because many clients then see the product of following the path of least resistance, and then that sets their perspective of what should be accomplished. We are all influenced by our surroundings.

Q4. What is this agenda we have been talking around?

I don't know that I really have a personal agenda. I try to approach a project with an open mind, find out what the client's goals, constraints, and requirements are, and from that you develop a solution that meets your client's needs. I can't say that there are certain philosophical principles that I have thought through and that I bring to the table for every project ... that I can see a pattern or that I can say this is what I am all about. I research projects and seek out other examples. I look at precedents. In my practice at HOK, my design rationale was driven by the idea of the landscape and the architecture being a unified, cohesive design.... Your sub-planning and the landscape design were based on trying to understand the functional rationale of the building, the massing. The site influenced building placement and character. This often leads to things that are counter to what landscape architects perceive to be an appropriate approach to landscape design. ... [A]gainst the Olmsteadian approach.

Q6. What were the primary influences in developing your aesthetic center or agenda?

The work environment! When I graduated from college, I did not come out with an opinion or a personal agenda on design. The idea then was that you go through college, and you learned to solve problems. At an undergraduate level you get a broad exposure to problem solving processes. A lot of my approach has been formed by the philosophy of the firm that I worked for the first 17 years. The corporate nature of the practice at HOK ... the approach of the company was to not have a design style, or signature, but rather to be able to work in any style. That was mostly coming from Obata (one of the firm's principles). He was not into a style, but rather into space, and a functional fit to a client's program and needs. You do an elaborate analysis, and out of the analysis come the answers.

Q7. Where do you think we should look for regional design inspiration in landscape architecture?

I don't know! You must understand the ecosystem of the region. What would the environment be if man were not here? It would be prairies with the intervention of the stream environments. The escarpments are there, but they are the exceptions ... what

the wildlife habitat is.... In all honesty, I don't really understand the environment. I have never really found a good source of information for local ecosystems and all the plants that would be a part of those communities. The prairie-specific, regional design approach would have to be based on an understanding of those ecosystems. I don't know where to look! I don't know who the right people are! Rosa Finsley is the sort of person you look to. Landscape architects don't have the answers! I cannot think of projects in Dallas that to me capture the essence of what I perceive to be the real natural environment of North Texas. The vastness of prairies gives it its characteristics--the horizon, the flatness, the openness, the minimalism of it.

- Q7a.** Are these characteristics ever a part of your thinking when you are designing for a subdivision or a shopping center?

It has not been a rationale, because I don't come at design from a regionalist standpoint. It would take the right kind of site, and there is so much more that I need to know to pull it off. I would have to be much more into grasses and grasslands.

- Q8.** How do you balance inspiration from natural systems and materials with cultural or architectural or hardscape influences?

Most projects I do are very urban, so they have a strong man-made influence. I really like compositions that have elements of both ... very ordered, man-made organizational forms and patterns alternating with natural components ... the juxtaposition of more organic forms cutting across an ordered grid or intervening into a well ordered space ... the ordered space accentuates the more organic forms which tend to be the plantings, etc. It creates a certain tension and dynamic between the two.

I think that what landscape architecture is all about is finding a way for the man made environments to work and preserve the natural systems. I think that is what people really like! People are drawn to suburban areas by the proximity of natural elements which are then destroyed by the development. There is an attraction to many of these areas beyond just the economic factors. People are then dismayed by either the loss of the natural environment or of the sense that it creates. I do not have the solution for how we can deal with that because regionally, as landscape architects, it is a big issue.

- Q8a.** Are you familiar with the idea of building in the envelope? Is that a methodology that ever comes up in your subdivision design?

I have not heard those terms "building in the envelope." I can imagine that sort of thing in Austin or Colorado, but in Dallas it would be hard to imagine.

- Q11.** What are the regional hardscape materials?

The white limestone, or blanco.... I am not sure that it comes exactly from this area. I think of the stone of Dallas as being the gray shale which is not strong enough to be

useful as a building stone. There is a lot of brick masonry used. The ornamental iron is a staple of the Dallas built environment. Why those particular materials? I don't understand! It's more a habit than a genesis from industry or natural material availability. Our clays are not red clays. Lighter color brick is more appropriate. Most colors are light in the landscape. The stone is very light! The grasslands are light. You get a washed-out summer look. To me, that's more of a Dallas color range. The sunbleached colors, light grays, tans, light greens--rather than so much of what is happening with the dark brick, the cast stone Georgian mansions, the European looking things. I don't see an architectural style in Dallas that captures some essence of the Dallas environment. In Austin, there is a more distinctive regional landscape design that is starting to come up into Dallas. People equate it with a Texas regional style.

Q11a. Is it valid to lump Texas together like that?

If somebody feels that way, it is okay with me. People have different ideas of what Texas is. It's one step in the right direction, because that is one step in the direction of a more regionalist approach than what I see going on. It's reflecting the Hill Country, which is so different than the Dallas area. There are small areas of Dallas which have little "veins" of the Hill Country, but the overall area is very different.

Q12. Is there a regional component to spatial relationships that you incorporate into your designs?

I have not had the opportunity to develop those kinds of thoughts further. It's very frustrating because those kinds of things are very relevant.

Q13. Do you work with other design professionals with a sense of the Texas region in the landscape?

In my interpretation, no! I have to say that both from a landscape and architecture viewpoint, very few are. For a client to go in that direction, it takes a practitioner that can make a client feel that they are not experimenting. For me to undertake a strict regionalist approach, which is the way that I would undertake it, I would need to feel that I was really on top of a regionalist methodology in a very educated way, an absolute expert. It's not the sort of thing that you just "wing" and can experiment your way into because of the nature of my practice. My clients will not allow me to experiment. I would need some type of total-immersion, educational experience in order to undertake these principles.

Q13a. Are there many people in the ASLA that are helping to get these kind of ideas into the profession?

We are in a funny stage as a profession because we have had the pioneers that have taken the practice from being this very obscure thing to the point where there are thousands of practitioners across the country doing very similar things. It's a business-based approach, and I don't know what that is a function of. The leaders

like Thomas Church developed a different suggestion of the built environment based on natural forms and patterns. Firms like SWA and Ed Stone have become these big, giant, industry leaders. Even Sasaki is more business oriented. Peter Walker and George Hargreaves are now providing the design leadership. It's all about being able to do something that people see and like and can appreciate. I think the public is yearning for something different than what we have today because our society has become so homogenous and people are seeking out some unique environment, and yet they are still not getting it on a large scale. On a large scale, it is just not going in the direction of regionalist solutions. I don't know if that is because our society is so urban or the economics are not letting it happen. I am like so many people in the ASLA, and the local design community, that would like to see things move a certain way, but the requirements of the day-to-day do not permit that. For example, we have tried to bring more public practitioners into the ASLA, but if the meetings are not specifically geared towards their interest, then they find it difficult to justify the time and expense of getting to the meetings. ASLA is just a forum for people to communicate.

- Q14. How have these designers influenced your work?
Communities like the Woodlands, that are very economically successful on a large scale, may push the profession in the direction of natural landscape.
- Q15. Have you been influenced by regional landscape tradespeople?
No!
- Q16. How do you reconcile these regional inspirations with the universal norms of contemporary American popular landscape, aesthetics, particularly in an area such as Texas which has such a large net migration each year?
I find myself searching for that in the same way that the public searches for it.
- Q17. How do you define the term "universal civilization" or global design community?
I like those terms! They are not terms that I have heard. It is the network for landscape architects worldwide, not that there is one, there are attempts at one. There are a variety of agendas ... mostly driven by American landscape architecture. Many landscape architects are US educated. The monuments are what they are. They are useful as a rationale, for putting a design idea into a framework. Let's keep looking out in front of us.
- 17a. Do you think they are valid as a point of departure for twenty-first century design?
There are many different varieties of people that take things from the past and reinterpret and amend them. Philosophically, I have a problem with trying to use monuments as a point of departure. They can be used as examples of how to develop solutions from the site and technology available and the unique aspects of a site or a region, because that is what they did back then. I've got a problem with something

pulled out of the past and transplanted into today. I don't have a problem with understanding the organization in a general sort of way of these ancient projects ... to look for examples of how problems were solved, to translate that into very general concepts ... great monuments were a response to a specific current program of their time.

- Q18. One way to define Critical Regionalism is the reconciliation of regional influences with universal civilization. In this light, can the global design community be defined as popular culture with regard to the landscape of late 20th century Texas?

I don't know! The American, popular, landscape aesthetic will be looked back upon in history as a distinct style. It was a result of some real issues of this time--as many things evolve out of the issues and the opportunities of the time. Popular landscapes may be an American phenomenon, but are not the result of any specific region.

- Q18a. Do other regions of the world have to go through the same cycle of destroying the native landscape before they learn to appreciate it?

Yes, that's what I was alluding to in other countries where they have seen environmental issues that have sensitized them to maybe taking a different look. The environment hasn't hit us in the head yet in the US, and it seems that we don't change until there is a catastrophe, or we simply run out of resources.

- Q19. How important is it for a designer to be intimately familiar with an area before attempting a design there?

Not essential, but it is very desirable. It depends on the practice that people are participating in.

- Q20. How many geographical areas is it realistic for one designer to become intimately familiar with through a career?

It depends on the person. The key is teaming with the right local professionals. Many people that are doing work on a national basis are teaming with local landscape architects.

- Q22. Do you consider yourself a regionalist designer?

No, I don't!

- Q23. What is the difference between a cultivated regionalist design and good site specific design in general?

The key word is good, and I can't say that what I am doing is good. Spiritually, I am not comfortable with all of this. I don't think that there is a difference, because I believe that design should be regionally based.

- Q24. What does the concept of defamiliarization mean to you?

It is a way of directly or indirectly accentuating something. It happens an awful lot. You may have a project where you do not have the opportunity to do everything that you want so you put it all into one statement, kind of put all your eggs into one basket.

- Q25. What are the geographical boundaries of the region you are most comfortable designing for?

Throughout middle America, into the deep South--the Midwest. I have worked in Austin and Houston. It is fun to work in a new community.

- Q26. Is a regionalist designer limited professionally by the perception of other design professionals?

It is possible. There is such a diverse world of opportunity that I don't think that a regional approach is limiting, and even if it is--so what? Ten years from now, it may be more the norm as a reaction to what is going on now. There is popular yearning for more connection with the natural environment.

- Q27. How long have you been a landscape architect?

Eighteen years, actually registered for ten years!

- Q28. What type of projects are you involved in?

Residential communities primarily, office, hotel, some park and recreational work.

- Q29. Who are the landscape designers in Texas that you recognize as having a cultivated regionalist sensibility?

I am drawing a blank. Bob Anderson, Eleanor McKinney, Jim Keeter. The garden makers.

RESPONDENT #3

- Q1. How important do you think having an underlying agenda is in developing a personal design aesthetic?

I think that all good designers have an agenda, whether they have identified it or not. How that translates into each project is another story. One example of an agenda might be the use of native plants. Everyone's agenda is a compilation of all their experiences up to that point. You can't separate that from the design process. I think that people who have gone through career changes, that have done other things, have

a clearly different way of approaching the design process because they have had other experiences and so have not been molded by a professor or two.

- Q2. Does this agenda help balance the constraints of time and money involved in your projects?

I don't understand. The agenda and the design are the same thing.

- Q3. To what extent does this agenda manifest in your designs and built works?

For me, my agenda is to be more like an anthropologist. To go in and learn about the site and the people.... Every client will have a different response on a given site. The site tells you one thing, but the site through the reactions of the client tells you something entirely different, so to raise my sensitivity to that is my agenda, and also to build on my sense of place. You can never separate yourself from the area where you live, or the era that you live in ... all the impacts that are around you. You are a part of that region.

When I was in school, it was totally for my own creativity. That was my agenda! I did not care what the professors thought. I knew I had to find that kernel of creativity inside of me on every project. Sometimes it took a long time. Now it comes quicker and quicker. Now I know when I get to that place in me.

- Q5. How has this agenda changed through your years of practice?

Building on the sensitivity... I like to do a schematic design (with a budget) and then wait until the buildings are at least framed up to finish the design, so that I can react to the spaces. The sensitivity comes from seeing it on the ground, and the client will get a better design.

For example, at the Wildflower Center, there are so many things that happened there. It was a three-year project. On the entry walk to the Wildflower Center, we had not done any major planting in the original design. After it was built, we realized that the sequence of that walk was just as important for planting as the entry court was. We realized we could have a whole series of gardens that would create interest on each side as someone walked through. Many ideas can only come from being on the site a long period of time and not just seeing a circle on paper for a tree. Seeing how that process worked on the Wildflower Center really changed me. An architect has to create an object. We are there to transition from that object into the natural landscape.

- Q5a. Do you see your role as an educational role and is it important to lead your clients?

We have to educate! There is not any choice! There is such a lack of understanding. If you don't educate, then you will never get anywhere in design. You have to be willing to lead them, to get in there and challenge their assumptions. They see something that they want, but they don't know how to get there. They typically want

you to lead them, although they may not always come gracefully. I am finding more and more that they don't want you to just design something and put it down. They want to feel that they are a part of the design team and enhance their own creativity through their association with you. If they were designers, they would do it themselves. They have ideas. They have visions, and they want you to come along and give them a hand across the water.

Q6. What were the primary influences in developing your aesthetic center or agenda?

My undergraduate degree is in botany. I was raising plants as a work study student at UT in Austin at the Rare Plant Center to bring native plants into the nursery trade twenty years ago. This was the initial focus for bringing native plants into the landscape. Then I taught gardening in Honduras for People to Nutrition. Then I trained in organic gardening in California in the late 70's. I taught gardening in Austin at The Community Garden Spot. Then I became its director and started working on fundraising and with institutions like Travis County, the City of Austin, and more fundraising, and learning how to work in those arenas, proposal writing etc. I wanted more creativity, so I went back to school to find the agenda we talked about earlier ... bringing the art into it through giving myself the gift of design training is what brought it all together.

Q7. Where do you think we should look for regional design inspiration in landscape architecture?

Central Texas is easy! We have the Hill Country! We have the rock ledges; we have water pools. Look to natural systems! I think it would be much more difficult in Dallas or areas that don't have the natural aesthetic of the Hill Country. I do a blend of native and old fashioned adapted plants, "pass-along" plants. They are a part of the cultural heritage of the area, the regional character. I can't separate hardscape and softscape.

I did my Masters Thesis on the ten spaces in Texas that most contribute to the quality of life. I videotaped them and did all the historical documentation on them. I felt that if I was to become a Texas landscape architect, then I needed to know what the best spaces are and to study them. I needed to find out the great icons of landscape in Texas because in school we only looked at landscapes in other parts of the country and the world. I needed to understand Texas and to celebrate it. That was also part of my agenda. Landscape architects are the artists of the landscape. Even if a natural landscape is left untouched, it has more art. Are we going to put down St. Augustine grass or plant petunias?

Q10. What do you see as the landscape architectural "hardscape" design influences for this particular area?

The general character of the Hill Country! The Elgin butler brick company! They have old used brick that is part of the cultural heritage. The limestone block from

quarries around Austin! I am of the notion of not to import too much stone. It's a more sustainable approach. Our region for the Wildflower Center is Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico. Importing blue stone from Pennsylvania (or Arkansas) is not my idea of being very regional. When I first moved to Texas in 1972, they were always looking to New York and California. There was a magazine then called Third Coast that said that Texas is what it is ... and [there's] pride in that!

- Q12. Is there a regional component to spatial relationships that you incorporate into your designs?

There is not enough intimacy of scale ... [considering] the wide open spaces. If you have a view, that's great. You can open up the landscape to that view. However, to have wide open spaces without definition doesn't invite you into the landscape. At the Wildflower Center, there was a debate as to the height of the wall separating the entrance court from the demonstration beds. The whole idea of closing that down so that you can experience the two spaces separately is foreign to Texas. In the last two years I have seen a big change in the way people perceive exterior space, based on the Wildflower Center. More institutional places are wanting exterior space. The Center is becoming a cultural icon. We had nothing in Austin before this. Now we also have the State Cemetery. Now there are more exterior spaces where it's not just a hard plaza to walk through like for a commercial project. They are looking at it as more of a people place. When they see the Wildflower Center and experience it, they then want something different.

- Q13. Do you work with other design professionals with a sense of the Texas region in the landscape?

Yes! Some architects and one other landscape architect!

- Q14. How have these designers influenced your work?

Architects have a much broader understanding of hardscape materials ... what's out there on the market. One design/build firm brought huge slabs of patio stone to a site. We ended up using the stone as the form generator, just refining it a little bit, being able to do that on the site. Builders have seen a lot of different stones. I try to use the builder for the hardscape and then bring in the landscape contractor for the planting and irrigation. The builder knows all the connections and systems and may have had experience with materials that I may not have had ... more influence from design materials than design approach. I was definitely influenced by Jim Keeter. I have seen his slides, and his work, and was an intern in his office. I don't think that many architects have a good sense of Critical Regionalism in the landscape. Why should they, because they have not had the training.

- Q16. How do you reconcile these regional inspirations with the universal norms of contemporary American popular landscape, aesthetics, particularly in an area such as Texas which has such a large net migration each year?

On a project by project basis! There are projects that I have not pursued because of the style of the house. I find that if I am not attuned to the house, then I don't do a good job. If I do not respond to the building in at least a neutral way, then it is probably not the project for me.

- Q16a. So you feel that you cannot get past an “ugly” building, even if the client is attuned to your agenda?

It's difficult for me! I see the whole visual picture. It cuts out the inspiration.

- Q17. How do you define the term “universal civilization” or global design community?

I have never heard of either term. Before I went back to school in landscape architecture, I went to England for six weeks, and I studied gardens. I went out every day and photographed gardens. All those images are in my head “big time.” The combination of living and studying gardens in England and the Hill country are my main influences, and that is the enclosure of space and understanding passing through the garden room, the transitions. There are many things that are still now just filtering in, that will be with me for a long time.

- Q18. One way to define Critical Regionalism is the reconciliation of regional influences with universal civilization. In this light, can the global design community be defined as popular culture with regard to the landscape of late twentieth century Texas?

Once a place like the Wildflower Center opens up, it becomes popular culture. Once you get the masses of people going to public places like that, then the culture shifts.

- Q21. How large a geographic area in the US is it reasonable for one designer to assimilate?

You do the best work in the landscape that you live in. It depends on the length of time you are given to understand that place. We might really get good in our nineties. Your process has to develop to the point that you can tune in quickly to the nuances of natural and cultural systems. Maybe there is a methodology that you could develop like asking people to take them to the most beautiful natural place that everyone loves to go to, or to different cultural icons. So you could start to understand that place as the people there see it.

- Q22. Do you consider yourself a regionalist designer?

Sure, I am of my region!

- Q23. What is the difference between a cultivated regionalist design and good site specific design in general?

Night and day! There could be very good solutions that are site specific and adapted that have nothing to do with the region. Use of the materials--some designers are more corporate than others in their approach. They may bring the corporate design down to the residential scale.

Q24. What does the concept of defamiliarization mean to you?

I don't know that word.

Q26. Is a regionalist designer limited professionally by the perception of other design professionals?

There is a limitation of understanding of what we do in general and that's why we have a constant need for education. Again, I think that the Wildflower Center has made a big difference. Sure, always! I am in the room now with people that might not have considered regionalist landscape architecture previously, but they might not know how to get there. Clearly I am limited! They want that, but the gap from where they are to get to where I am is so great that they cannot get there except in the long haul. It's much more to me about how you take care of a site beyond the design. How do you minimally impact that site? That's what people are uncomfortable with. The biggest lesson of the Wildflower Center is how they took care of the site during construction. How different the approach was to a typical construction project? There are many developers and contractors that are still skeptical of that. Texas still has the mentality of cleaning out all the plants, especially the understory. We are the profession that can have the biggest influence over time if we continue to steadfastly educate. There is an art to site development using the envelope.

Q27. How long have you been a landscape architect?

On my own for two years. I graduated with my MLA in 1989 and have been working ever since.

Q29. Who are the landscape designers in Texas that you recognize as having a cultivated regionalist sensibility?

Jim Keeter, Bob Anderson, Rosa Finsley.

RESPONDENT #4

Q1. How important do you think having an underlying agenda is in developing a personal design aesthetic?

I like to keep a landscape ecologically sound. It's very important to fit the agenda to your client, but I don't think you can go against what you think is right in the process. I impose my agenda more than I used to because of a real interest in working a landscape into something that could have been there, without being too didactic about it, because fitting the landscape into the ecology of the area is useful to the client.

Q1a. Do you feel that you know the client's best interests better than the client does?

You have to listen to the client very carefully to find out what they want, but you also have to listen for the holes in their information. In theory, you should know more than they do because you are the professional, but they are the ones that are going to have to live there, so it is a combined effort.

Q1b. Do you see your role as an educator?

Yes, absolutely!

Q2. Does this agenda help balance the constraints of time and money involved in your projects?

It helps create something that will last even though it may not be the quickest and easiest in the short term. You are not giving the client a really good deal if you allow them to build something that is cheap and fast but may not last in the long run. Sometimes, like when you are using rock in the Dallas area, Milsap is the cheapest rock, and it also happens to be one my favorite rocks.

Q3. To what extent does this agenda manifest in your designs and built works?

I always try to do something that has a sense of place to it--that you know where you are when you see it--that if you walked into it blindfolded you would at least have some idea of what state you are in, or what ecological niche you are interpreting. It [the agenda] is about 30 to 40% in terms of factors. After you have been doing it a while, it is just something you naturally think of. Like you think of native plants and well adapted plants. It's the most natural thing because you know it is going to work, that it is going to be successful in the long term.

Q6. What were the primary influences in developing your aesthetic center or agenda?

I started at the Dallas Zoo designing habitats for animals and trying to do things that would be very aesthetic for the public and yet feel very good to the animals. I looked at which factors would make an animal thrive, feel at home, reproduce, etc. I then started to look at some of those same factors for landscapes for people, still trying to keep that habitat feeling, by being in an area that it felt good to be in, with a bit of a natural feel. From there, going to Japan and China to see how they had translated natural areas into the landscape, I found this reinforcing to what I was doing. I realized that China and Japan had different interpretations of nature, although they were both very naturalistic, because they were reflecting different interpretations of nature. Then I came back to Texas to attempt a reinterpretation of nature here.

When I go to a new area, one of the first things I do is to prowl around and study plants to see how they naturally arrange themselves, how the light plays on different aspects of the landscape, what the massing and open spaces are. I also prowl back alleys, cemeteries etc. to see which plants planted by man have lasted a long time. It gives you a real feel for what else might grow there when you see what conditions

plants will grow in, and then you know which other plants will probably grow well there also.

Q6a. How much are your designs focused on plant materials?

Quite a bit! I am very interested in plants because that is the thing that is always changing in the landscape. It's fun to both discover the niches plants will thrive in and to create the microcosms, microclimates, that will create the niches you need for your designs. I love to discover a really neat place in the wild that makes me feel really good to be there and then try to find out the factors that make me feel that way and how that might be reproduced in the landscape, whether it is the massing of the rock, the plant materials, the lighting, the water. The shapes of things can be very soothing or very exciting.

Q6b. Do you do that same thing with cultural landscapes?

Yes! Part of the real art of designing is to get ideas from everywhere and then recombine them to fit the situation you are working with. Observing and combinin! I believe that what works for me will work for other people, if you can figure out why.

Q6c. Do you feel that there is a universal reaction to space or that people are conditioned by the part of the country they live in?

A little of both! What you grew up with gets a certain response and a beautiful area that you have never been before can illicit a certain response. It's both cultural and something more universal. I have known people from open country who get very claustrophobic in woods, and yet I grew up in a big wooded area and feel totally at peace in a wooded setting.

Q6d. Do you have a preference for either a closed forest or a more open landscape?

Yes! Give me the closed forest anytime!

Q6e. Do you think there is a difference between men and women in preferences for levels of enclosure?

I have never really noticed it. Chuck [the interviewee's husband] likes open space more. For gardens, I like the people space to be in shade and the growing space to be more in the sun.

Q7. Where do you think we should look for regional design inspiration in landscape architecture?

I look first to nature. What the natural systems are! What the biotic provinces are! What grows there; how it grows; how it paces itself; the arrangements that plants make naturally. For cultural modifiers, I look at what local resources were used before it was possible to ship everything in. What kind of aesthetics evolved from using the local materials? Also, what's the heritage of the people you are working with? I wouldn't build an adobe house in Dallas because we do not have the climate

for it, whereas if you go into a more arid region, they make a lot of sense. Doing hardscape that ties in with both the local climate and the native materials!

- Q8. How do you balance inspiration from natural systems and materials with cultural or architectural or hardscape influences?

I don't know that I do. I basically try to get as much natural into an area as I can, although if you check the layout of plant materials, there is more formality there than you might think. Many times, in a perennial bed, the plans will be very formal; but then, when you let plants grow to their natural shapes, things loosen up quite a bit. I rarely use clipped plants, but I do think that you need to have control. It's one of the things that rocks do. If you don't have some hardscape to give you some "bones" to the garden, then it's not as solid as it could be.

- Q9. Do you think is it desirable to invent a design aesthetic in an area such as North Texas that has relatively few cultural modifiers due to its relatively recent colonization?

I think we are in the process of doing it right now. A lot of plant material is coming in from Mexico that has never been used before in gardens ... a lot of different textures and shapes. We are developing a new style of gardening different from the South-West style. It will be a lot freer because of the wider choices of plant material, the textures with the agaves and yuccas and some of the more tropical things that will work in this area. A big plant palette and a big rock palette is more fun to play with.

- Q10. What do you see as the landscape architectural "hardscape" design influences for this particular area?

Right now the biggest influence is the copying of the eastern US. When I travel to the eastern United States I am surprised how much it looks like Highland Park. A lot of people came from the East so it is understandable why that would be. We have been looking backward for a long time, but we are now beginning to look ahead to a newer style for this area. There is a melding of influences such as the German mixed with the Spanish in the Hill Country. The walls are built with local rock. Using cedar and mesquite wood for construction in areas where those woods are native can give a very regional feel.

- Q10a. Do you think that there is a cultural center of Texas from a design standpoint?

No, because the regions in Texas are so different! For instance, in Houston people prefer big, massive, single trunk trees, while in the Hill Country people prefer multi-trunk trees. The plant materials are very different in West Texas, South Texas, North Texas, East Texas, etc.

- Q10b. What about the differences is the hardscape?

There are many differences there as well! Houston has the most Eastern and Southern influence in hardscape--the "gardens of the old South" feel. You have the moisture for it. Dallas tends to look further north for inspiration. It is not such a Southern

plantation-type feel. Also Eastern! Williamsburg comes to mind! Highland Park is like Colonial Williamsburg with paved streets ... very Spanish in San Antonio and West Texas. Fort Worth feels very western! Western influence gets into native materials, the stones and woods that are available.

- Q10c Do you see the Spanish and Western influences as being important in the Dallas area?
Only marginal! I do not see Dallas as having a major Western influence because it was surrounded primarily by cropland, not by grazing. I see Western and Spanish influences primarily in grazing areas. It is changing in recent years because as the farmland around Dallas has been worn out; it has been replaced more and more by grazing. At this point, if Dallas tries to play cowboy it will be faking it as opposed to Fort Worth which really was a "Cowtown." It really was where the cows came to market, and it's also drier there which makes it feel more western.
- Q10d. Where do you look for inspiration in Dallas?
Two things! You have the river bottom areas, areas like Turtle Creek, where you have deeper soil, and in those I tend to use plant materials that are a little lush and a little more Eastern influenced because that is the western edge of the eastern biotic provinces. In Cedar Hill, and areas that are more rocky, I will tend to use more arid type plant material. Plant material that is looking west, more than east. I don't think that an arid Western look would be appropriate in the Highland Park area because of all the big shade trees and the deeper soils.
- Q11. What are the regional hardscape materials?
The stone we have to work with ... the gravels and decomposed granites!
- Q11a. Is there anything regional about the way that concrete or brick is used?
Not on the concrete! A Spanish influence on the brick, perhaps! A Spanish influence on the stone work that makes it look a little bit different from the east.
- Q13. Do you work with other design professionals with a sense of the Texas region in the landscape?
Yes, with architects, particularly Lake Flato who have a good sense of place, use native materials, stones etc. ... also Overland Partners ... with Antoine Predock on the Rose residence which is very site-oriented.
- Q13a. Is the Rose house site oriented or is it regional?
If you are site-oriented, you are going to be regional in some respects. It's a very modern house that could be anywhere, but it could not be anywhere and relate to the site the way that it does.
- Q14. How have these designers influenced your work?

From Lake Flato, it has been very interesting to see their use of materials ... the bold uses of rock--not the same scale of rock that you are used to seeing--the creation of open spaces and court yards and dividing the gardens up. They are site specific, but they also impose a certain discipline on the site. It's also interesting to see how they perceive a site; where they think the orientations are and the views--whether they reveal them sparingly or flaunt it ... there are cases for both.

Q15. Have you been influenced by regional landscape tradespeople?

More by plantsman than anything--now by Pat MacNeil, who is one of the leading plantsman around. In the past, by Benny Simpson and Lyn Lowry. I have also been influenced by clients. I have been fortunate to have creative and talented clients that have been partners on projects. It's interesting to see how they think about their landscapes. It gives a whole different perspective. You teach your clients, but you also listen to them and see things through their eyes which changes your viewpoint.

Q16. How do you reconcile these regional inspirations with the universal norms of contemporary American popular landscape, aesthetics, particularly in an area such as Texas which has such a large net migration each year?

I borrow what I like and leave the rest of it alone. For instance, many of our clients who have come from the Northeast are into perennial gardening. I love perennial gardening, so I incorporate it. I will introduce them to native perennials, plants of the Southwest, and Northern Mexico.

Q16a. Do you think that perennial gardening is a popular landscape aesthetic?

I don't ever really focus on the more mundane, popular landscapes, or what is normal. I do my thing, and anybody who wants to join me is welcome.

Q17. How do you define the term "universal civilization" or global design community?

I don't! It's basically what I have been trying to keep out of! I work pretty much by myself all of the time.

Q17a. What about the Chinese, Mexican, German and Japanese influences that you discussed earlier?

I have been influenced by older landscapes, not necessarily what is happening today. As designers, we always look to Sissinghurst. I have learned more from seeing things than from talking to people [or reading about them]. I get a little bored with landscape architecture meetings sometimes, when there is an agenda that somebody is pushing that doesn't necessarily match mine. That's one of the reasons that I am not very active in the landscape architecture things. Maybe if I got involved with them, I would like it more; but from what I have seen on the edges, I would not necessarily want to be a part of it.

- Q18. One way to define Critical Regionalism is the reconciliation of regional influences with universal civilization. In this light, can the global design community be defined as popular culture with regard to the landscape of late twentieth-century Texas?
There is what designers do; and there is what non designers do, which is the majority of what is done. The general public may be looking to the norm, while designers are looking to the best.
- Q19. How important is it for a designer to be intimately familiar with an area before attempting a design there?
It depends on where he is going to have that design. You need to know the factors to be successful with plant material. He needs to have a "feel for the area" to do work that really seems to fit in. You can do something very different from the region or from what is natural around (you) if you understand the growing requirements of the plant material. You can have some interesting work that may not be regional. The best work, day-in and day-out is going to be done by people that pay attention to what the region is all about.
- Q20. How many geographical areas can one designer become intimately familiar with through a career?
It depends on how hard he wants to work. The second region you work in is the hardest. By the third region, you already have a skill at picking out what is important. It depends on how much time you spend in an area. I don't think you can hop on a plane and pop into an area and pop back out and develop a garden that will do very well for the area. You need to do your homework as to what will actually work there both aesthetically and biologically. I don't think you can impose the same landscape on a lot of different regions.
- Q21. How large a geographic area in the United States is it reasonable for one designer to assimilate?
The bigger the area you take in, the more careful you have to be. I have seen some ghastly mistakes by designers that try to do that ... gardens that didn't work after they left.
- Q22. Do you consider yourself a regionalist designer?
I never really thought about it until you started asking me these questions. I just sort of did my thing on what felt right. If you mean one that will fit into the ecosystem of the area, probably so. That can be more than one area. I do try to have a sense of place.
- Q23. What is the difference between a cultivated regionalist design and good site specific design in general?

If you are site-oriented, then you will be regional in some respects, but you can have good site-specific design that is not regional, per se. I don't know what region you would put contemporary housing in, for example.

Q24. What does the concept of Defamiliarization mean to you?

I am unfamiliar with it. We do it with little things like using bigger rock than anybody thought we could use. I try to break out of the mindlessness where everything is automatic to create things interesting enough and pretty enough to get people thinking and looking. Like using native plants in a different way than they would be in the wild, by increasing the saturation of certain species for example. I would never do it just for the sheer effect. I would rather that the landscape feel really good. I would rather "win them" a little softer. The thinking is brought on by people seeing the juxtaposition of native plant material and more traditional landscape plants. I have never been into shock landscape. The garden is such a commitment of time and money that it needs to work on several levels for a long time rather than just giving the shock. I do think it is fun to use materials in new ways. We have used tire rims for bases of fountains. Nobody knows what they are ... they just look like a wonderful metal base.

Q25. What are the geographical boundaries of the region you are most comfortable designing for?

East Texas through the Southwest with a Spanish influence and German influence. I like working both in cooler summer climates and warmer winter climates because it gives you such a wide range of plants to work with.

Q26. Is a regionalist designer limited professionally by the perception of other design professionals?

You probably get known for a style ... if someone wants a different style you would not be the person they would think of first. So I am somewhat limited by what people have seen me do before. We tend to get jobs that involve rock and water and naturalistic design and native plants. That's fine with me, because that is the kind of thing that I like to work with.

Q27. How long have you been a landscape architect?

Designer since 1969, landscape architect in 1984.

Q28. What type of projects are you involved in?

Rock, water, naturalistic design, naturalistic swimming pools, hospital projects. The hospital projects seem to be a growing trend because the naturalistic design is more peaceful for people in stressful situations. Also, a lot of residential work!

Q29. Who are the landscape designers in Texas that you recognize as having a cultivated regionalist sensibility?

James David, Heiderich, Logan Calhoun

RESPONDENT #5

- Q1. How important do you think having an underlying agenda is in developing a personal design aesthetic?
Very important! It is intuitive, developed from years of rote design, very informally. Not something I am consciously aware of.
- Q2. Does this agenda help balance the constraints of time and money involved in your projects?
They all interrelate! It cannot be separated from the design process!
- Q3. To what extent does this agenda manifest in your designs and built works?
I don't do an evaluation! It is a requirement during the preliminary design phase. I know when it is successful that it feels good. I would feel dissatisfied toward the end of the project if I did not accomplish that. If at some point I am dissatisfied, I stop the design process and reincorporate the agenda back in so I can be sure of arriving at a solution that I am happy with.
- Q5. How has this agenda changed through your years of practice?
Early, I wasn't sure what the principles where; I just knew what was right. Later on, I knew why it was right. I became more sensitive to the desires of my clients through practice ... more aware of others and their happiness. I think less of what I would want! I can interpret better what they would want.
- Q5a. Do you see your role as an educational role and is it important to lead your clients?
It all depends on the individual or group; you have to do both! That's the richness of it! You have to pick up on a person's questions and body language, whether they do or do not understand what you are explaining. I will continue to do both!
- Q6. What were the primary influences in developing your aesthetic center or agenda?
I don't know! That's a tough question! It's not cognizant for me!
- Q7. Where do you think we should look for regional design inspiration in landscape architecture?
Completed projects that people are happy with that are at or under budget. For my work, the region would be the Metroplex. I would want to see the type of project that I am involved in such as municipal parks ... what has worked ... not theory, but successful practice. Pieces of those projects could be studied to produce a guide as to what is regionalism. Seeing is believing ... I want to see finished work in the

Metroplex. Austin is as different from Dallas as Florida is. I like the wildness to the designs in Austin; it's blander up here. It's very hard to come up with wildness in designs when you have a conservative public that you have to answer to. The design models should be funded at or under budget. It's very easy to solve anything with money; if you can do it at the established budget, it is a different matter altogether.

- Q8. How do you balance inspiration from natural systems and materials with cultural or architectural or hardscape influences?

Site specific! If I get to a project and it needs the cultural explanation in the design, it will occur there. If it is highly naturalized in a flood plain, some of that will take precedence over anything else. It is an element of analysis. It all depends on the site! I don't go in with a predisposition whether it should be cultural influence or natural process. It depends not only on the site, but who is around to use it. After a few weeks I pick it up, and then for me it is back to art and less of science ... design ... molding art and science together.

- Q9. What do you see as the landscape architectural "hardscape" design influences for this particular area of Texas?

In order of use; concrete, masonry, stone. All the forms of concrete ... colored, pressed, exposed, etc.

- Q10. Is there anything regional about the way concrete is used in North Texas?

Concrete, no! Definitely more exposed aggregate here because our climate will allow it. Very little stone paving material in the Metroplex area! I have seen a lot more in walls. Stone is limited to exclusive residential projects.

- Q13. Do you work with other design professionals with a sense of the Texas region in the landscape?

HOK has influenced my projects through materials, forms, colors ... using corrugated Kinar roofing materials. If you look at it you would think of any barn between here and Austin--it's not exactly a regional material, but it is using the regional forms. Looks like farm buildings but lasts longer! This project is located on a former farm site located on former farm sites. It fits in with need for refinement in Plano but retains some of the character of a farm. The forms remind you of a refined pole barn for the picnic shelter ... incorporates the demographic use and the site. The form is rectangular and symmetrical. You don't see many barns that were laid out in a hodgepodge. The buildings are related ... convenient access to barn, pumphouse, smokehouse, main house, outhouse. The paving materials are concrete used for ease of maintenance, related to efficiency on the farm which is no different than maintaining a park. Time involved in maintenance is an expense.

- Q14. How have these designers influenced your work?

The HOK project at Hoblitzelle Park made a big impact on me. It made me more aware of old design concepts that I had in school. Stourhead in England is an example of how this whole park will work when it is built out in five years. This project was minimalistic and functional. I tend to lean towards minimalism.

- Q14a. Do you think that minimalism and clean lines are a regional style for Texas?
That makes a lot of sense! It ties in very well! You didn't see any free form, curvilinear, unrelated relationships. Everything was very symmetrical! Laid out with clean site lines ... clean finishes ... wood joining stone! What you see is what you get ... very functional! That's my design style! Some parks are very-free form and curvilinear, but that's only because the site demands that. A very rectangular and symmetrical design won't work if you have a lot of topo changes. Most of our development is on sites that will accept a rectilinear form system.
- Q15. Have you been influenced by regional landscape tradespeople?
To a certain extent! [The] biggest influence would be stone masons and less on carpentry. I was stunned at the care that was used for a gabian wall at Hoblitzelle park. You expect that kind of care in a stone wall, but not in a gabian. Maybe the biggest influence for me for regionalism is ironwork. The big cemetery near the Texas Rangers' Hall of Fame in Waco ... architectural antique stores near Fannin street in Houston ... custom iron work ... mostly Anglo-trained, elsewhere.
- Q16. How do you reconcile these regional inspirations with the universal norms of contemporary American popular landscape, aesthetics, particularly in an area such as Texas which has such a large net migration each year?
Those immigrants have accepted our design style. We have not bent to them; they have bent to us. I don't know a whole lot of outside designers that have come into Texas—big companies have been formed in the Metroplex, and their people have grown to a Texas way of thinking. The big firms are in touch with Texas LAs!
- Q17. How do you define the term “universal civilization” or global design community?
I have no working experience with those terms. I am not cognizant of projects around the world. It's not important to me! I don't want to seem provincial; for the person that is out there that does not have time to study, it's not as important to them. To be a well rounded designer, you need to look at other projects, but I don't!
- Q18. One way to define Critical Regionalism is the reconciliation of regional influences with universal civilization. In this light, can the global design community be defined as popular culture with regard to the landscape of late twentieth century Texas?
I don't think so! It is a combination of 80% local influences and 20% global. Clients and corporations have their own culture. Their culture is regional. More regional to a great extent!

- Q19. How important is it for a designer to be intimately familiar with an area before attempting a design there?
For me, it is crucial! There is no greater influence! It's not just a day's worth of thinking. In four of five visits, I can get 80% of my inspiration, and the rest I can get during construction, which might have an effect on future phases. The Chisolm Trail renovations, erosion control, planting, earthwork, bridges ... needs to be going along with more flexibility than other projects. The more natural a site becomes, the more flexible the design has to be. It depends on the project and the environment the project is constructed in.
- Q20. How many areas can one designer become intimately familiar with through a career?
There's a curve where you would drop down exponentially. Environment is number one, then engineering, social environment (users), then economics, budgets, political environment.
- Q22. Do you consider yourself a regionalist designer?
Yes! I am more influenced by what I see in Texas than any place else. I take little bits from wherever I see and put it together from my own experiences here.
- Q23. What is the difference between a cultivated regionalist design and good site specific design in general?
There is no difference, because every site is going to need some tweaking of what somebody else has done if it is to come off with any innovation. For effective great design that works, you need those little bits [of design influences gleaned from projects you have seen throughout your career].
- Q24. What does the concept of Defamiliarization mean to you?
The word I would use is a paradigm shift. My biggest attribute as a designer is to look at projects with no preconceived notions. Let's see what we have ... the words that I would use are "enhanced alternatives."
- Q25. What are the geographical boundaries of the region you are most comfortable designing for?
Most of the United States! It is only limited by the time to go to the site. If I had ten minutes, and I had fifteen photographs, I could do it--if you knew where, what climate, how far from transportation and what materials are available?
- Q26. Is a regionalist designer limited professionally by the perception of other design professionals?
It depends on the individual.
- Q27. How long have you been a landscape architect?
16 years.

Q28. What type of projects are you involved in?

Riparian revegetation and hydraulic restoration, creeks and woods, correcting erosion, large recreation and natural environments, pond dredging (mechanical solutions, we do not use vegetative solutions), million dollar park additions, pond enhancements, bridges, senior centers, neighborhood parks, trail repairs, developing databases for GIS, facilities management of all the parks in the city. "Geeky" work to boulder placement...it's cool! I have got it all!

Q29. Who are the landscape designers in Texas that you recognize as having a cultivated regionalist sensibility?

HOK, Dick Myrick (deceased), Bob Anderson in Austin, Gregory Catlow (deceased), in Houston, McDougal/Steele. I don't like to peg anybody. Doug MacDougal in Houston, Sally Wasowski ... big influence!

RESPONDENT #6

Q1. How important do you think having an underlying agenda is in developing a personal design aesthetic?

In order to do competent work, it is not a threshold consideration. In order to do superlative work, you must have a passion about certain parameters that define a project or that led you to do a certain type of project. The last six or seven years, I have seemed to go into areas that all have common threads of ... large scale rural landscapes, understanding of the history and culture of a place, a curiosity of why it evolve--what the underlying stories are? How you can connect those stories to what you are trying to do in a contemporary setting? To create places that will have a lot of emotional investment by the people that live there, you must have an emotional investment in the project, and that comes out of the values that you bring to it.

Q2. Does this agenda help balance the constraints of time and money involved in your projects?

To some extent, yes! Right now, I am directing the Johnson Creek project that Arlington is doing all the way through the middle of town. This project brings together many of the things that I feel very strongly needed to happen in the community. It was a chance to slow down some things that I felt were being done horribly in terms of how it's developing. I have been able on that project to bill about one-third of the actual hours that I have put into it. If you feel passionately about a project, you will overcome some of the financial constraints because you will work to make it happen regardless of whether or not you are being paid for all your time. It becomes a labor of love! If you work on those things that you feel most passionately about, it is like a viscous circle. You end up doing superlative work, and that brings

more work and dollars, and career goals spin out of that. If I don't have a big emotional investment in something, I typically don't even bother to submit a proposal, or join a team, because I will not put everything that I am capable of into it. It is not going to be as good a project as it could be, and there should probably be somebody else working on it, anyway.

Q6. What were the primary influences in developing your aesthetic center or agenda?

We moved about every two years when I was growing up. I have the advantage of coming into a new area and seeing it with fresh eyes, but with a background. You end up seeing patterns in places and the way people live. A lot of that was in towns of five to ten thousand people. I developed a real affinity for that kind of small town life, how these towns related to each other, and how they were different from each other. Also, living in New Orleans was important--living in a place with a sense of history, a real sense of roots. There is nothing in this community [Arlington, Texas] that compares to that. There is architecture all around you [in New Orleans]. There is a blacksmith's shop right there in the French Quarter. It gives you a sense of where you are in the flow of things. The landscape is so overwhelming! You are covered by large canopy trees all the time. You have got the moss, the water, bugs, animals, etc. It's an overwhelming influence, as opposed to here, where the most overwhelming influences are the man-made things. The freeway ramps, commercial districts, skyline, overwhelming flatness of everything. [New Orleans] instilled a love of history, culture and why things evolved the way they did, in terms settlement patterns and that sort of thing.

During my landscape architecture education period, no emphasis was placed on these elements. In those days, LSU was all about Garet Ekbo's process design, which was great because you need an appreciation of that side of things. It wasn't until many years later that it reconciled itself in my mind with all those early influences, and out of that comes something that is unique.

Q6a. Do you think that you have a unique sensibility to that or is that a pervasive aspect of the culture of New Orleans?

Most people that I grew up with there, and who I went to school with there, and who have continued to practice, have a much stronger feel for history, and a sense of the impact that landscape has on behavior than folks from places where you do not have those kind of influences. You see the same kind of thing where people come out of Michigan, where the woods, and the lakes, and the prairies come together. Or even in Kansas! It's not so much a Southern thing or a Louisiana thing, but rather anywhere where the landscape has its chance to work its magic on you over a period of time

Q6b. Did you find it difficult to sensitize yourself to this area after growing up in New Orleans?

Still do! Very much so! After almost twenty years of practicing, right here, I don't have a strong sense of how to draw things from the native landscape and the history of the place; especially, to come up with things that look like they should have always been there. Not the things like cow sculpture, or zoo rock, etc.

- Q6c. What are chances of somebody from New York or Kansas getting a feeling for North Texas?

In some ways it is easier! The outsider's perspective could be an advantage, but probably is not. I don't see many things going on around here that really speak to this area strongly--especially in a contemporary context! Peter Walker's work in Solana is a brilliant, artistic, contemporary interpretation of a lot of regional impulses.

- Q6d. What do you consider regional about that project?

The broad expanse of it! The agrarian fields, the prairie separated by drainage, and ways he found to use stone on that site that I never would have conceived of. Then you get into somebody like David Schwartz and say that the Ballpark in Arlington has got all these neat regional influences because it has got cow heads and stars. I think he was successful in terms of creating a great place that people enjoy, but it does not say anything about Texas. It says more about Camden Yards in Baltimore [or] his work in downtown Fort Worth. While a lot of it is opening a drawer of turn-of-the-century architecture and applying facades, what has been successful about it is that it has all got a uniform texture to it. It all fits, visually.

- Q6e. So he has created an identity and perhaps that's the beginnings of whole new regional element. At what point do you invent a regional style, to see what takes, that a hundred years from now may become the historic regionalism?

That's an excellent insight! When we were working with Larry Speck [noted regionalist architect and dean of the School of Architecture at The University of Texas at Austin] on the Town Lake project in Austin, we brought him in to talk to our staff at JJR about regionalism, and he had very little to say on the subject.

- Q6f. How do you balance the architectural inspiration for vernacular and historic influences with any influence from the huge amount of development that has taken place in more recent times?

Well, if it's a bunch a crap, you don't try to use the new stuff as a regional component. Whereas in Miami, the firm of Andres Duane, etc. has created a whole new regional expression with all the bright colors, etc., that I think is pretty neat.

- Q7. Where do you think we should look for regional design inspiration in landscape architecture?

There are so many different scales to think about! Most of what I do is on the scale of the Johnson Creek project in Arlington, or larger. First, take a satellite photograph

of the region and stand by and look at it and squint your eyes and see what the dominant patterns are; see how the drainage ways work; how the topography works, the underlying geology, if and when it exposes itself so you can take advantage of it. Pick up on the patterns of the agricultural fields that are defined either by drainageways or hedgerows! Use those types of elements to come up with building placement; come up with building footprints that complement that! Come into the process early, and help interpret the land to the architect in terms of building forms and placements that work well! We have routed roads to imitate the drainage patterns and tried not to have trees everywhere, but rather tried to have bold lines of trees to imitate the natural flow of riparian woodland along a creek. If you can get in touch enough with a place, you can follow the logic right down to the type of plant material, or stone coming out of the creek bottoms, etc.

- Q8. How do you balance inspiration from natural systems and materials with cultural or architectural or hardscape influences?

In the most interesting places to work, that has already been done. It's a matter of getting in touch with what exists; getting knowledge about the vernacular architecture that exists in a region. If somebody came into a place, say in 1850, and they didn't have earth movers, and they could only use the material that was at hand, it couldn't help but to speak of the region, because that is all that was there, as opposed to now where it's so much cheaper to use all these fabricated materials. If you can pick up on the vernacular architecture, it is a natural marriage because it used natural materials, it speaks to the culture already; it's got some history behind it, not necessarily to imitate but to use the lessons to emulate it in such a way that you are using the concepts rather than copying the exact forms. For example, when we were working on the Town Lake project in Austin, we put together a design manual for the Parks Department, for when they added new buildings ... office buildings, restaurant buildings, picnic pavilions, etc. We talked about use of the native limestone in the area, how there was a long tradition of ornamental iron work and vernacular farm buildings with the seamed metal roofs, dark green of the live oaks and the cedars. We put together a design palette for them of the limestone, the dark green metal, the long roof overhangs, etc. We put together some drawings so that the ideas were unmistakable, and yet it did not look like anything old. Ideas can be reinterpreted.

- Q9. What do you see as the landscape architectural "hardscape" design influences for this particular area? How would you design with stone in this area versus other areas?

Stone lends itself to being used in ways that look right. You must understand the visual quality of the stuff. How you use stone should take best advantage of the size, the weight, and the irregularity of it as opposed to all this stuff floating in mortar for walls, etc. I really enjoy dry-laid work.

- Q10. What are the regional hardscape materials?

In terms of flatwork, stone speaks the strongest to me because it has so much time and evolution. It gives a sense of timelessness to a place.

Q11. What kind of stone do you associate with this area?

I really don't! In this area, some stone [Milsap] is more associated with the area because it has been used so ubiquitously in landscaping rather than because it happens to be sticking out of outcroppings like in the Glen Rose area, where you actually have some limestone weathering out on the site, and you can kind of pick up on that.

Q12. Is there a regional component to the form systems in the stone, or how you would design with it in this area?

Working with stone has less to do with where you are than with understanding the visual qualities of stone. How you use the stone should take advantage of the size and weight of the stone, the irregularities, and the weight of one stone against another as opposed to all this stuff floating in mortar that you see, that looks like spots on a giraffe. I really enjoy people that do dry laid work, that do it well and make it look natural. It's one of the things that has always appealed to me about the work that you guys do (King's Creek Nursery).

Q13. Do you work with other design professionals with a sense of the Texas region in the landscape?

Three architects over a twenty-year period have influenced me a lot. Lately, I have enjoyed working with people involved with regional conservation training, rural tourism initiatives, that are not trained as designers, coming at it from a cultural history perspective. All of a sudden those people have discovered landscape. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has moved in the last five years from saving buildings to saving landscapes ... landscapes that are really special. It's like they are born again, saying all the same things that landscape architects have been saying since Olmstead. It's a natural marriage with landscape architects.

Landscape architects are now looking at the bigger pictures and thinking of the region in terms of rural regions and river corridors. People from different disciplines are realizing that this stuff is all important. At first, I was a little put off that those kind of folks were getting into our turf, but now I realize that they are coming at it from a different place, and you can use these people to make everything so much richer, like adding more ingredients to a gumbo. It gives it textures and levels that would not be possible otherwise.

Q15. Have you been influenced by regional landscape tradespeople?

Yes! With a few exceptions, the best regional design work has been a collaboration with those doing the installation rather than out of large offices. I don't know if that's

because they are constantly in touch with the materials and learning about them all the time, as opposed to doing a lot of writing and drawing the way I do.

- Q15a. Does the visual complexity of a project suffer because it all has to be drawn out and specified from an office as opposed to being designed or modified at the time of construction?

It depends on the individual! Probably, yes! For example, Nathan Gaspar rarely drew anything. He would lay things out with hoses and a sack of flower, etc. and let the thing evolve. When I came up in school, I liked to draw and I am facile enough that for me it is not a barrier. I have heard people say that I had this great idea, but I couldn't draw it so I did something else. To me, they are in the wrong business! Either get that vision directly out into the site, or develop your communication skills.

- Q16. How do you reconcile these regional inspirations with the universal norms of contemporary American popular landscape, aesthetics, particularly in an area such as Texas which has such a large net migration each year?

It is important to have some kind of continuity with the public face of things--the street exposure so that you don't have one hundred different kinds of expressions in a neighborhood. A project may be fascinating, but could look like hell in terms of context. Maintaining continuity, a unity with variability, for the public face of things is important for how people perceive a community and for how it nourishes your imagination. Private areas are fair game for anything. Take the next step in the public face without jumping way out in front!

- Q17. How do you define the term "universal civilization" or global design community?

I have never thought of either one of those terms; they have never occurred to me! If you look deep enough, there are universal archetypes that express simple and direct ways of responding to land and weather and forces like erosion, wind and rain that are most eloquently expressed in the most primitive cultures. Similar zones around the world have similar expressions; perhaps more so in landscape than in architecture--Mediterranean architecture popping up in California because it's responding to the same elemental forces of geology and soil conditions--going beyond recent historical influences and fashions to understand the underlying influences and building upon those universal expressions. I don't see those as an architectural style, but a deep understanding of forces in any given location.

- Q17a. How does that relate to how we become aculturated into the profession through the education process—to how we become sensitized to cultural statements throughout the world that are powerful enough to influence just about anybody?

You can instill in students basic art elements and the impact they have on perception and experience--things like scale, texture--things you might see in Istanbul, for example, that speak to you very strongly, that have all those things in perfect proportions. Not because it is in Istanbul, but rather because it expresses those things

in a way that is almost musical, and they way they all work together. Start with the foundation of art and perception, then proceed to a study of archetypes, and a hell of a lot of travel--the more you see in different areas, the more you start to see patterns of universal art elements melded to that particular site that become timeless. We had required field trips when I was in school.

- Q18. One way to define Critical Regionalism is the reconciliation of regional influences with universal civilization. In this light, can the global design community be defined as popular culture with regard to the landscape of late twentieth-century Texas?

No, I don't think so! The universal design community is defined more in its brilliant moments than in the more mundane landscape that is all around us. It's not just a matter of how much, it's a matter of getting it right. J.B. Jackson lectured on vernacular landscape at Harvard. He saw commercial strips and billboards as a beautiful expression of contemporary culture, and if we could just quit feeling guilty about it and convincing ourselves that it was ugly, we would see this fascinating new expression all around us.

- Q19. How important is it for a designer to be intimately familiar with an area before attempting a design there?

It depends on what he is designing! To do something superlative, it is absolutely indispensable. On the other hand, it is very valuable for a designer to come into a community even for a few days, and based on those impressions, to start a process of education so that the community can start thinking about design. They may be an entire group of folks that otherwise would not have any exposure to a trained designer. At least they have some exposure to design instead of none at all--rather than dismissing the project completely, because of the time constraints, or not being able stay long enough to do your best work based on the influences of the area. You balance the good you can do with the budget that you have and the time you are allowed. I may not raise their awareness to a ten, but if you can get it from one to a three you have accomplished something, and maybe in ten years they may be able to go up to a five.

- Q20. How many areas can one designer become intimately familiar with through a career?

It depends on the person and their ability to absorb the essence of a site quickly and bring your way of thinking to the project. Lawrence Halprin could go just about anywhere and assimilate conditions very quickly and bring his way of thinking to the project. It's a level of thinking that somebody like me can only aspire to. Other people are so immersed in their particular environment that they cannot imagine working anywhere else. Their most brilliant expressions are if they can really delve into a particular region

- Q21. What geographical area comes to mind when you think of a regionalist designer?

A given area that is held together by a common geology, soil type, vegetation palette, vegetation patterns, and you are lucky if there is a cultural overlay that follows that. When all those things change, then you either have to be the type of designer that can bridge those things, or you have to stay within those boundaries, regardless of any state or other political boundaries. For example, you can get a soils map of South Texas and highlight all the best soils, that's where you will find the German settlements. The political boundaries have much less relevance. You can't draw a line around West Texas, New Mexico, Southern Colorado, and Arizona and call it Southwestern. When I worked at JJR, they sent me to Phoenix to do a design because we were the JJR Southwest office, and it was like going to the moon. The culture is completely different, and how they think about things.

Q22. Do you consider yourself a regionalist designer?

No, not really! I allow myself to be influenced by regional factors more than most designers, but it is not a line that I draw in the sand and say that I will not work on this unless you allow me to bring my regionalist baggage with me, because that's what I am about. It depends on what you are trying to accomplish.

I would not be interested, for example, in designing a "Japanese" garden. However, if the purpose of the space was to produce a sense of contemplation, and oneness with nature, etc., then my inclination would be to translate them into regional materials and forms and something that made sense here. On the other hand, if the purpose of the garden was to broaden peoples' minds to Japanese culture and traditions, then I wouldn't mind working on something like that. In the proper setting, there is a lot to be learned from the way that other people do things. That's very different than creating a place that tries to produce certain universal human responses with plant materials, water, scale, etc.

Q23. What is the difference between a cultivated regionalist design and good site specific design in general?

I don't know if you can have good, site-specific design without a regional influence. Now, I am sounding more like a regionalist than I just said I was. In 99% of the cases, if you do not have something of the influence of what's going on around you, it is not good site-specific design.

Q24. What does the concept of Defamiliarization mean to you?

Not familiar with the term! Like poetry, takes common words and rearranges them in most beautiful way! If you are going to be a designer, that is the foundation! The first step in the educational process is to erase all your preconceptions.

Q26. Is a regionalist designer limited professionally by the perception of other design professionals?

Yes! It is a fraternity seen as a distinct entity by the larger mass of professionals that do not work that way. It may be my bias, but it is also my perception that they are held up as "somebody finally got it right". In the short term, yes! It might limit your being invited to participate on a broad number of teams participating in projects. In the longer term, it is more the type of thing that people are developing a sensitivity to and want to see more of. In the long term, I think it is the way to go.

Q27. How long have you been a landscape architect?

Nineteen years!

Q28. What type of projects are you involved in?

A comprehensive corridor plan for Johnson Creek in Arlington, Texas, solving flood control, creating a citywide amenity, economic development, etc.,--directing a team of nine consultants. The other major project is scenic by-ways for the State of Texas. Identifying the most scenic highways around the state so the state can put them on maps. I was hired to write aesthetic criteria for what makes a place scenic; no small order! I started in hi-end residential; then a parks department then I spent twelve years at JJR working on land use and resource conservation from Lake Burnet down to Lake Travis. I also worked on corporate headquarters.

Q29. Who are the landscape designers in Texas that you recognize as having a cultivated regionalist sensibility?

Larry Speck is a regionalist architect and Dean of the Architecture School at Austin. Jim Keeter is one of my heroes. Steve Dominic, now in California, works for EDAW. Steve Martino in Phoenix is the most gifted designer I have ever seen in terms of putting together projects that speak of a region--texture contrasts, and putting regional things together in unusual ways. Ace Torre in New Orleans! Kings Creek produces as good a work as can be found around here in terms of dealing with native materials, stone. What I have seen of theirs is all small scale.

RESPONDENT #7

Q1. How important do you think having an underlying agenda is in developing a personal design aesthetic?

I try not to have any pre-conceptions. I talk to the client to see what they want, I look at existing things which tell me a lot about their taste and financial status. I approach projects differently depending on the budget. We have the flexibility because we are a design build company, so that I can change my mind in the middle of a project, which I frequently do. I see the whole construction process as a part of the design process. I recently returned from a visit to the Tuileries Gardens in Paris where I could see some steps that had been built out of limestone. In plan, they probably looked

beautiful; in actuality, they were underscaled, very poor! You are locked into a project of that scope. They could have just changed them slightly and it would have been so much better. But I guess that is the difference. I don't work on the Tuileries Gardens. I work on peoples back yards. There are certain tradeoffs.

I am sure that there is a theme in my work; that someone sees it, but I never see it. The palette of materials that I use tends to be fairly consistent because they are readily available to me in this area; but I am not limited to them, and I am always looking for new options and choices. If there is anything regional about my work, it comes from my choice of materials. I am trying to create beauty. It is a very evasive term, it changes constantly. Visual, sensual beauty ... it is always in a state of change and flux. Seeing it against other things, reassociating, making comparisons. Design is very hard to tie down. My work tends to be very structural and very formal in nature, although it could appear organic in many peoples eyes. I think very much in terms of shape, form, color, and texture. Form and line are very important! My favorite gardens are French gardens. I am constantly influenced by the strong structure of them. I translate that constantly into my work here. I am not a naturalist!

- Q7. Where do you think we should look for regional design inspiration in landscape architecture?

I have been influenced not just physically but culturally--the cultural impact of the city, of the community, of Texas, our relationship to Mexico, our relationship to the Southwest.

- Q8. How do you balance inspiration from natural systems and materials with cultural or architectural influences?

Not consciously, but it is probably something that I do. I do not try to do Mexican or Western gardens. I try to do gardens that look and seem like here. I am fairly formal in my work. Then a term like regionalism makes no sense! What does formal mean? What does regionalism mean?

- Q10. What do you see as the landscape architectural "hardscape" design influences for this particular area?

"So much bad work is done in the name of regionalism." That's a quote from O'Neil Ford. That's not my quote, but I have always loved it! It's a word like "Provence" or "Tuscany." People say, "That's so Provence!" What does that mean? To the general public, these words have no meaning. It could mean, "Do I or do I not clip the hedges?" Regionalism has no meaning to the general public!

- Q11. What are the regional hardscape materials?

Gravel, stone, brick, concrete.

Q11a. Is there any way that concrete is used in this area that is any different from the way it is used in Houston, or New Orleans?

Probably not. Stone is used very much the same as any undeveloped area in the world that has limestone quarries.

Q13. Do you work with other design professionals with a sense of the Texas region in the landscape?

No, we generally work independently and are hired by the client. Most of our work is residential in nature and deals with older homes and established gardens. A lot of times, by the time the house is built, they are out of money and we are called ten years down the road to do for the garden what the architect did for the house. We generally find it very unsatisfactory to work hired by the architect. We find that a terrible way to work.

Q14. How have these designers influenced your work?

The big mistake is to think that I would only learn from garden designers or other landscape architects. You learn from everybody. You see things all the time! I say, "I really like that." "How do I translate that into the garden?" We also design furniture for clients and have it built for their gardens. That inspiration might come from a furniture designer. I might see a piece in wood and make it in steel, for example. I change it, or adapt it, or modify it. You can't work in a total vacuum.

Q15. Have you been influenced by regional landscape tradespeople?

Absolutely, especially the stonemasons! They have all worked for me for almost fifteen years. We view stone in a traditional way, as structural elements in the garden, not as veneer surfaces. It changes the way stone looks. It's amazing the difference of what a stone veneer looks like and a massive chunk of stone. I have had less influence on them of how they construct or build things; they know how to do it, and how it winds up looking. I still give the overall parameters of how I want it to look. It's the traditional way that stone was used ... throughout the Mediterranean and throughout the world in any developing area where the material is cheap and available. In Mexico, they are more adept at picking up a rock and making something out of it as opposed to thinking "where can I buy it?" They are much nicer to the environment in some ways than we are. Stone is very flexible! I use it because we work in a lot of difficult places where a stone can be transported more easily than a wheelbarrow of concrete.

Q15a. Do you like working with concrete?

Yes, I love concrete! I think it is a gorgeous material! I wish we worked with it more!

Q15b. Are you inspired by the concrete work in Europe?

Yes, but even industrial concrete work, I think is beautiful!

Q17. How do you define the term “universal civilization” or global design community?

I am constantly aware of what is going on around the world. I go to trade shows ... contemporary furniture shows in Paris, Cologne, etc. I see myself as a part of all that and yet I see myself terribly isolated here in Texas. It all filters down and translates down. I'm pushing for more contemporary design here in Austin. The general public is steeped in Southern traditionalism, which I find repulsive.

Q17a. How do you define southern traditionalism?

Look at magazines like Verandah and Southern Accents and you think, “Why are they living like this?” I'm always trying to be a step ahead. I'm always trying to push. Some people don't like gravel terraces or concrete retaining walls. You are constantly fighting this ignorance about materials where people assess values on materials. You have to try to open their mind and free them as much as possible. I think that's universal across the country and not just us. You are constantly trying to push people into seeing things in new ways.

Q19. How important is it for a designer to be intimately familiar with an area before attempting a design there?

I change my mind on that a lot. I used to think that a landscape designer really had to be familiar with the plants and materials and the variations in gardening that a particular area might have. I don't know if that's so important. I think that if it is a good project, who gives a damn? I'm doing more work out of Texas now, so maybe that's why I changed my mind. If I get into trouble, I go ask an engineer or find a plant expert from the community. I am very interested in plants! I am a plantsman! I use local garden designers for the hands-on work that I cannot do from a distance. I do the basic structure for the plants and then turn the project over to a local expert to change it, to edit it, and provide some of the details to really make in work. I also used the local, Italian stone masons and I learned a great deal from them. You need a local contact to deal with the day-to-day problems in a garden. There is a big distinction in my mind between landscape architects and garden designers. I think of myself more as a garden designer, because I am much more interested in plants than I think most landscape architects are. I turn over some of the planting details to local garden designers, but they frequently are not good at the architectural structure of the site. You play back and forth!

You do a lot of work just to keep the doors open and the families of the workers fed. The biggest mistake is to go into these types of projects that you don't love and do them in a very mundane way. If you can spark yourself up, you can probably make it much better than they ever dreamed and wind up doing something that you actually end up liking. It makes you come up with solutions that I normally would never have come up with.

I'm a hands-on person, not a draftsman. We do very little drawings in this office and I used to do sheets, and sheets, and sheets of drawings. Fifteen years ago, for a 150,000-residential project, we used to do ten sheets of drawings. Now they're lucky if they get one. Because we are the contractor, all I need is enough information to get the job, to show the client what we can do for them, and to get the ideas across. I give them as little information as possible! That gives me all the flexibility I want. It's not possible to work that way on a large commercial project.

Q22. Do you consider yourself a regionalist designer?

Yes, but I would hate to be labeled that; but yes, I guess so! I use natural materials from the place I work, and I respect the cultural and historical place I'm in.

Q23. What is the difference between a cultivated regionalist design and good site specific design in general?

I don't care if somebody says that a project is a good example of regionalism. I want a project that is a good solution. I want a project that I'm proud of, and that lets me use my creative abilities, and that my clients are happy with. And whether it looks like it came from Mars, I really don't care. There are hundreds and thousands of solutions to a project in so many different directions. We are in a service business! We are here to please our clients, but at the same time not prostitute our ideals.

Q24. What does the concept of Defamiliarization mean to you?

I don't know the term. We do that everyday! For example, we will come into a project where they have just taken a gash out of a hill and you know you need a retaining wall. You can make the gash into something. On a slope you can terrace the slope or go out on a long pier from the house to emphasize it. I frequently build swimming pools not parallel to the contours but across the contours.

Q25. What are the geographical boundaries of the region you are most comfortable designing for?

We are working on a project in California and one outside of Mexico City ... also New York. The biggest projects are in Texas.

Q26. Is a regionalist designer limited professionally by the perception of other design professionals?

I don't think it matters. Most people don't have any sense of what that means.

Q27. How long have you been a landscape architect?

I graduated from LSU in 1969 and started working in the Austin area when I was in graduate school.

Q28. What type of projects are you involved in ?

Mostly residential work! Some commercial and public work, arboretum etc. ... most of our work is residential in nature and deals with older homes and established homes. The homeowner may be out of money when the home is finished, and we are called on ten years down the road to do for the garden what the architect did for the house. We have found it to be very unsatisfactory to work hired by the architect. We find it a terrible way to work. I don't do much commercial work, and I don't do any state or public work because the flexibility to adapt on a moment-to-moment basis during construction is not there. On the other hand, the flexibility dictates a certain limit to the kind of projects that I can undertake. There are always certain trade-offs.

Q28a. Do you think it is possible to set up a company that can do larger scale work with the same level of flexibility and attention to detail that you bring to your project?

I don't know! I'm a terrible business man! I am a doer not a planner. I never worked in an office, so I never had the background in the way that a normal office functions. I'm very product-oriented. I like objects, and I like things for the garden. I opened this business because I was constantly buying things, hoping that I could sell them to clients. So I figured I might as well make a business out of it. I never planned it out. We are fighting very hard to stay the size we are. There are many temptations to get bigger. We are a business of between 35 and 40 people. That includes the nursery, design office and construction crews. That's where we feel like we should stay.

Q29. Who are the designers in Texas that you recognize as having a cultivated regionalist sensibility?

I don't know what other landscape architects do. I take a very individual approach that happened because of my personality. I don't really know anyone. I know Rosa Finsley, but I have never seen any of her work. It's hard to lump people into a category. They all pretty much work independently. The best designers I know of in my area are not landscape architects. They are self taught people without formal training; garden designers. They are very good horticulturally but it is rare that they get the architectural aspects of their work, but a lot of them do. Many of the English designers really get it. One of my favorite gardens is White Hill, outside of New York, it's more like what I do. The Bruce Bankroft Garden outside of Walnut Creek in California ... these are plantsman's gardens. Dan Hinckley, who owns Terenswood Nursery, has created an incredible garden for the nursery. All these gardens are created by horticulturists. These are the gardens that inspire me. It depends a lot on how sophisticated the people are. My work tends to be much more architectural than theirs. Those places can depend on plants working for them in great diversity. Where it is tough to garden, the hardscape and architectural influences became much more important. It's too hot, it's too cold, it's too rainy, it's too dry, there's a drought, the deer, the armadillos, it's one thing after another. Hardscape is more permanent.

Q29a. Project for case study?

My own garden!

Figure 30. Project Credits for The Munson Family Garden.

The Texoma Medical Center, Dennison, Texas

1. Landscape Architect: Rosa Finsley
2. Project Landscape Designer: William S. Seaman
3. Constructed by Kings Creek Landscaping, Inc. Cedar Hill, Texas
4. Date of Construction: 1995

Figure 31. Project Credits for IBM Westlake/Southlake.

1. Landscape Architect: The Office of Peter Walker Martha Schwartz. The scope of work included site analysis and planning, the criteria for development, the open space master plan, and the overall landscape design for Solana (Lyall, 1991)
2. Location: Westlake and Southlake, Texas
3. Clients: IBM Corporation and Maguire Thomas Partnership
4. Architects: Mitchell Giurgola, Ricardo Legoreta Arquitectos, HKS, Leason Pomeroy and Associates
5. Fountain Mechanical Consultant: Howard Fields and Associates, Harlen Glen and Associates
6. Date of Construction: 1986-1989 (Bunji #85, 1989, p 145)

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BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

David Hopman was born in Salzburg, Austria while his father (a United States Foreign Service Officer) was stationed there. He grew up in the Washington D. C. area and in Bilbao, Spain and Stuttgart, Germany. While in Spain he began playing the guitar, which led to a first career in Classical Guitar between 1976 and 1995. During that time he earned a Bachelors Degree in classical guitar performance from The University of Memphis (1980) and Masters Degree in classical guitar performance from Southern Methodist University (1982). He was an active performer in the Midwest as a soloist, with chamber ensembles, and on compact disc. He pursued a dual career as a teacher having taught at The University of Dallas, The University of Texas at Arlington, Tarrant County Community College, and privately.

In 1995 Mr. Hopman began his career as a Landscape Architect with the firm of Kings Creek Landscaping, Inc. This design/build firm specializes in regional landscape designs for private residences and small institutional projects. In 1998 Mr. Hopman accepted a position with Huitt-Zollars, Inc.— Dallas based Surveying, Engineering, Landscape Architecture, and Architecture firm. He received his Masters of Landscape Architecture from The University of Texas at Arlington in December, 1998.