

**NOMADOLOGY IN ARCHITECTURE**

**EPHEMERALITY, MOVEMENT AND COLLABORATION**

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**GREGORY COWAN**

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**Supervisors:**

Professor Judith Brine, The University of Adelaide, Stanislaus Fung, The University of New South Wales, Peter Scriver, The University of Adelaide (acting Principal Supervisor)

**Declaration:**

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**Signed, Gregory Cowan**

19 November 2002  
The University of Adelaide  
South Australia 5005

telephone: +61 417 902 856      e-mail: [gregory@cowan.com](mailto:gregory@cowan.com)      [www.gregory.cowan.com](http://www.gregory.cowan.com)

private:  
5 Ruth Street Perth 6000

## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv.
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	v.
ABSTRACT .....	vi.

INTRODUCTION: CHALLENGING WESTERN ARCHITECTURE .....	1
<u>Contexts</u> – Nomadism – Nomadology and Nomad Thought – <u>Applications</u> – New interest in Nomadism – <u>Strategies</u> – Diagramming – Ephemerality – Movement – Collaboration	

## CHAPTER

## SECTION I. CONTEXTS

1. DIAGRAMMING ARCHITECTURE .....	21
Diagrammatic Distinctions Between Verticality and Horizontality in Architecture – Diagramming in Recent Architectural Thought – Architects Using Diagrams – Rhizome – Epigenesis – The Primitive Hut – Fire as diagrammatic architectural agent and tool – Diagramming Performance	
2. MOVEMENT AND ARCHITECTURE .....	40
Chora and Genius Locomotionis – Static versus Moving – Military architecture	

## SECTION II. APPLICATIONS

3. TENTS AND COLLAPSIBLE ARCHITECTURE .....	50
Tent literature prior to the 1990's – Contemporary Literature about Tents – Tent as Symbol – Tent as Structure – Applications of Tents – Nineteenth Century Military use of Tents – New Developments in Tent Literature	
4. BEDOUIN NOMADOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE .....	77
Arabs, the Archetypal Nomads – Western Constructions of 'Arab' and 'Nomad' – The Black Tent – Mobility – Gender – Variations of the Bedouin tent – Politics of Space in Arab Culture	
5. NOMADIC RESISTANCE .....	102
Strategies of Occupying Contested Space – White Invasion of Australia – The Meaning of the Tent Embassy – Architecture for Reconciliation	

## SECTION III. STRATEGIES

6. ARCHITECTURE AS PERIPATETIC PRACTICE .....	118
Peripatetic Practices – Interpretive City-Walking Diagrams – Ephemerality – Movement – Possibilities for Peripatetic Practice – Activism and Agency – Machines and Latent Desire – Collaboration – Collaboration, Collectivity, Choreography – Peripatetic Reconciliation	
WORKS CITED .....	139

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Drawing of 'Tortoises' from the Stürzenacker's edition of Vitruvius.....	6
2. Main Nomadic Peoples by Region .....	10
3. Torvald Faegre's drawing of a Bedouin dwelling floor plan .....	27
4. The two pages devoted to Nomadic Architecture in Bernard Rudofsky's exhibition catalogue for Architecture Without Architects.....	51
5. Commanche Lodge.....	77
6. The Sibley Tent .....	78
7. Construction of the 'oriental' Black Tent type, left – without cross band; and occidental type, right – with cross band. ....	92
8. Drawing of plan and section of a Bedouin Tent. ....	94
9. Floor Plans, Two Pole and Three Pole Mutair Bedouin tents .....	95
10. Bedouin Tent Layout .....	96
11. Zemmour Tent Layout .....	97
12. Beni Mguild Tent Layout .....	97
13. Djebel Amour Tent Layout .....	98
14. Moor Tent Layout.....	99
15. Kurd Tent Layout .....	100
16. Baluchi Tent Layout .....	100
17. Tibetan Tent Layout .....	101
18. Construction of a Tuareg Mat Tent. ....	103
19. T-ridgepole frame Tuareg Skin Tent .....	106
20. Teda Tent Layout.....	104
21. The beginnings of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy at Provisional Parliament House, Canberra, 1972 - as an umbrella, four activists and some placards.....	113
22. Afghan Refugee Camp .....	130
23. Healing Walk Redfern, Sydney 27 September .....	136
24. Gabra Women erecting an armature tent.....	146

## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the theoretical and practical importance of nomadic ways of life for architecture. *Nomadology* is a construction of Deleuze and Guattari's 'counter-philosophy', challenging authenticity and propriety, in this case, in the context of architecture. This thesis describes how *nomadology* may serve contemporary architectural practice and criticism; challenging static, permanent, and heroically solitary ways of working and dwelling. *Nomadology in architecture* proposes ways for thinking and working temporally, dynamically, and collaboratively. The thesis suggests strategies – diagramming, ephemerality, movement, and collaboration – as ways of reconciling nomadism and architecture.

The 'Contexts' section of this thesis surveys Western and global contexts of understanding nomads and nomadology, and how these pertain to architecture. Western conceptions of architecture have inhibited the study of nomadology in architecture. A case is made for challenging biases in Western views of architecture, for critically employing the ideas of the diagram and the rhizome in architectural criticism, and for recognising the role of movement.

The 'Applications' section shows, through practical examples, that the potential of nomadology is latent in spatial and environmental practices of architectural production and architectural criticism. This section of the thesis identifies the significance of nomads as users and exponents of architecture, despite their frequent exclusion from architectural history. Tent architecture, practices of nomadic resistance and Bedouin life practices are considered as key examples.

The 'Strategies' section suggests ways of applying principles of nomadology. This final section expands on the potential for 'peripatetic' practices of architecture. Processes of reconciling settled and nomadic tendencies in architectural projects are outlined. Strategies are described by which engendering and collaborating may be the means for creating architecture. The continuing research into, and interpretation of *nomadology in architecture* are proposed as a basis for critical theorisation and reflective practice of architecture.

## INTRODUCTION

### CHALLENGING WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

There is a pressing need to challenge a certain cultural bias in Western architecture and theories of architecture. In the context of the increasing globalisation of architectural cultures, an imperative to challenge Western sedentary bias arises from the need to reaffirm the value of diversity in architectural cultures. Traditionally, nomadic cultures have been strongly affected by capitalist western culture through increasingly 'Western' globalisation. However, global culture also adopts and deploys nomadic strategies in the West. The present thesis proposes ways of approaching reconciliation of these divergent cultures that still articulate and promote the benefits of cultural difference. The conflict between increasingly globalised Western architectural cultures, and the often invisible and marginalised architectural cultures of non-Western and traditionally nomadic societies, suggests that cultural difference that might fruitfully be much better addressed by architecture in the future.

Theoretical and ideological challenges to sedentary or 'state' architecture have long been rallied from Western intellectuals outside the professional circle of architects. Such criticisms challenge the state apparatus, positing the idea that mechanisms of sedentary architecture are monuments of contemporary culture.

In the latter part of the twentieth century in particular, these social criticisms became more widespread and accessible through mass electronic communications. The nineteen sixties emerged as a decade of popular ideological revolutions in Western culture and concomitant developments in globalisation of culture. The sixties were notable also for *avant-garde* Western architectural projects emerging from these concerns. Constant Nieuwenhuys' *New Babylon* (1956-74), and Cedric Price's *Potteries Thinkbelt* (1964) are examples of architectural projects that challenged the static and sedentary tendencies of architecture from within the European

architectural discipline. Ephemeral, pneumatic and collapsible architecture of the time was a visible part of social and political activist movements. However, the seeds for these architectures had already been sown in the beginnings of modernism. In thinking about the Western and European city at the beginning of the twentieth century, as seen in the work of Walter Benjamin and Oswald Spengler, a discussion around the 'flaneur' began to emerge in increasingly internationalised Western urbanism as a symbol of a new democratic architecture.<sup>1</sup>

After the first and second world wars in the twentieth century, a broader understanding of nomads and architectural nomadology emerged. Diagrammatic architectural strategies – movement in architecture, ephemeral architecture, and the importance of collaboration in architecture all re-entered the debate and regained significance.

This introductory chapter gives an account of the main lines of argument of the three sections of the thesis; in contexts, applications and strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> Francesco Dal Co describes the *flaneur* (after Oswald Spengler) as a civilised nomad hunting for and gathering ideas in the metropolis at beginnings of modernity. Francesco Dal Co, *Figures of Architecture and Thought : German Architecture Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 13-69.

In Australian English, the *flâneur* (French) is defined as an idler or loafer. G. A. Wilkes and W. A. Krebs, *Collins English Dictionary*, 4th Australian ed. (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 1998), 585.

## Contexts

The contexts for challenging sedentarism in architecture and for considering nomadology in this thesis pertain to both the theory and the practice of architecture. The professional practices of architects have become increasingly scrutinised and commercially contested in the twentieth century. In Australia, for example, the regulation of the societal role and 'brand' identity of architects has been investigated by the Productivity Commission in a federal governmental inquiry.<sup>2</sup> In the Western world, by the middle of the twentieth century, architects had become regarded as specialists in the business of building with military-industrial capital. This thesis suggests that architects in the Western world had therefore developed a strong vested interest in sedentary settlement.

However, architects can more broadly provide leadership to societies in the development of liveable environments, whether fixed, permanent and solitary, or portable, temporary, and communal. This thesis argues that the possibilities of the latter have often been neglected, and that this imbalance may be acknowledged and rectified. It is argued here that architects may become more socially engaged by constructing environments strategically.

The *Ten Books* of Vitruvius, a work that is usually regarded as the earliest Western work of architectural theory, touches on concepts of portability, temporality and collaboration as some of the key ways of thinking about and making architecture. In inventing some of the first buildings, according to Vitruvius, humans modelled them on the way swallows built their nests.<sup>3</sup> Elements of motion are critical to Vitruvius' writing on the use of water, hoisting machines, and the machines of defence such as the 'tortoise'.<sup>4</sup> For Vitruvius, portable and temporal elements were clearly part of architecture. However, in the subsequent two millennia of Western history, these

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<sup>2</sup> Productivity Commission, "Review of Legislation Regulating the Architectural Profession," (Canberra: Productivity Commission, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Pollio Vitruvius and Morris Hicky Morgan, *Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960), 38.

<sup>4</sup> Tortoise in Chapter XIV *ibid*, 311- 315

concepts appear to have become less significant. They have been neglected by architects, or relegated to the specialist military and engineering disciplines.

Western architecture has become largely concerned with sedentary life. This preoccupation has both ecological and communication implications. The domination by humans of natural landscapes they occupy forms part of a defensive attitude to civilisation as 'settlement'. The communication of architectural knowledge as a hierarchical, finite and universal set suggests a permanent and static phenomenon. Architectural theory appears to have been generated by the invention of printing and type.<sup>5</sup> Printed information in the fifteenth century also became available on a previously unprecedented scale, while the Internet or world-wide-web has done this on a wider scale still within the technological Western elite. History has traditionally been constructed in a linear way, and this thesis argues that there has too often been a tendency to employ conceptions of architectural history as linear or 'arboric' in such big picture overviews of architecture as Patrick Nuttgens' *The Story of Architecture*.<sup>6</sup> This linear view suggests chronologically progressing from 'primitive and nomadic' towards an 'advanced' state of 'settled civilisation'. One-way directional linear concepts of the progress in architecture and history are significant. There is a danger this may be used as a justification for changing the physical natural environment, which has contributed to extensive displacement of nomads. The sedentary bias, it may be suggested, contributed to the construction and fortification of a profession of architects during the last century. The sedentary bias sets up an exclusive culture of permanent, static and heroically individualistic buildings as the sole 'civilised' works of architecture.

Vitruvius' designs for the 'tortoise' – an architectural machine designed to penetrate fortifications – clearly set out to challenge to the permanence of static architecture. (See Figure 1) The type has often been emulated in military engineering, but seems to have been largely neglected by

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<sup>5</sup> Mario Carpo's argument on this subject was recently published in: Mario Carpo *Architecture in the Age of Printing: Orality, Writing, Typography, and Printed Images in the History of Architectural Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Nuttgens, *The Story of Architecture*, 2nd. ed. ed. (Oxford: Phaidon, 1997).

architects.<sup>7</sup> There is some resemblance between the mobile tortoise and the automobile, (not to mention military armoured combat vehicles) which were invented almost 2000 years later, following the animal-drawn chariot. The automobile in the twentieth century became one of the most critical influences in contemporary developed cities. Vitruvius, in the last words of his *Ten Books on Architecture*, dismisses the power of nomadic machines over sedentary architecture in his time. He writes; "not by machines, but by the opposition to the principle of machines has the freedom of states been preserved by the cunning of architects".<sup>8</sup> Vitruvius dismisses the potential power of the machine in relation to the defensibility of architecture; a proposition that this thesis revisits.

In the present age of intelligent machines, September 11, 2001 saw the diabolical strategic victory of an ideological machine<sup>9</sup> over an indefensible sedentary establishment. This theoretical context of a perennial conflict of nomadic and sedentary is further explored in the context section, and reflected upon in the concluding chapter.

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<sup>7</sup> Manuel de Landa's work on Intelligent Machines Manuel De Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Zone Books, 1991). and Jesse Reiser and Jason Payne's work on diagrams of aircraft and combat Jesse and Payne Reiser, Jason, "Chum: Computation in a Computer Saturated Milieu," *Kenchiku Bunka* 53, no. 619 (1998). are examples of work addressing the potential of strategic machines.

<sup>8</sup> Vitruvius and Morgan, *Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture*, 318.

<sup>9</sup> The machine referred to here is in the ideological sense of a civilian guerilla movement, (the accused Al-Qaeda network), coopting a machine in the literal sense – the hijacked civilian commuter aircraft.



Fig. 1. Drawing of 'Tortoises' from the Tenth Book of Vitruvius.<sup>10</sup>

This thesis suggests that, to a greater degree than ever before in the 'developed' and 'developing' parts of the world, dwelling environments will require greater architectural attention and consideration, and their conception may have quite the opposite characteristics to those of sedentary peoples described above. Increasingly, dwelling environments will be premised upon being temporary, dynamic, portable and collaboratively produced.

The thesis considers the tendency to consider architects as specialists in a society, the opposite of nomads, as generalists and opportunists. The collaborative aspect in architecture is complex, yet significant for understanding architecture as process rather than material outcomes. This thesis argues the need for a space for collaboration between architects, designers and others. It suggests the common misconception about architects as soloists derives from a diminution of the scope of the activity of environmental design as patrons and users of architects' services understand it.

Architects and designers, as often promoted in traditional Western circles, are often characterised

as part of a demographic in the capitalist developed world as autonomous heroic white males. The architect as 'Fountainhead', as he is portrayed in Ayn Rand's novel<sup>11</sup> represents a stereotype of the modern architect as young, strong, male and 'white'<sup>12</sup>. Hence, the challenge presented to the Western tradition by Labelle Prussin's work *African Nomadic Architecture* has three important politically radical dimensions. Prussin shows that vernacular practices of so-called 'primitive' black people are significant as architecture—embodying aesthetics of dwelling. Secondly, the true architects are primarily women builders and 'home-makers'. Thirdly, African nomadic structures are not monumental or permanent.<sup>13</sup> In the Western institutions, as Francesca Hughes has noted, "the absence of women from the profession of architecture remains, despite the various theories, very slow to change and very difficult to explain."<sup>14</sup>

The long-standing Western bias in thinking about architecture, which the academy has reinforced with its increasing orientation toward industry, has led to a global bias among state powers toward sedentary forms of dwellings and settlement. As Hugh Brody has noted in his extensive anthropological studies, the settled peoples of the world have forced hunter-gatherer societies into the margins of the world.<sup>15</sup> Rene Guenon's philosophical observations on the 'solidification' of the world also highlight the problematic nature of sedentary dominance over nomadic societies.<sup>16</sup> However, the sedentary bias and its effects of subjugation need to be challenged, exposing ways in which architecture might articulate ecological and social issues. There are important reasons to

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<sup>10</sup> (*bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Erich Stuerzenacker*) Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, *Ueber Die Baukunst*, Bauwerksdienstaussgabe ed., 1 vols., vol. 1 (Essen: Bildgut Verlag Essen, 1938), n.p.

<sup>11</sup> Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (Cassel, 1953).

<sup>12</sup> Richard Dyer writes about the international 'race' of 'whites'. Whites must be seen to be white, yet whiteness as race resides in invisible properties and whiteness as power is maintained by being unseen. Richard Dyer, *White* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 45.

<sup>13</sup> Labelle Prussin, *African Nomadic Architecture : Space, Place, and Gender* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press : National Museum of African Art, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Francesca (ed) Hughes, *The Architect; Reconstructing Her Practice* (London: MIT Press, 1996), x.

<sup>15</sup> Hugh Brody, *The Other Side of Eden; Hunter Gatherers, Farmers and the Shaping of the World* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> René Guénon and Lord Northbourne, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* (London: Luzac, 1953).

defend cultural difference, and to resist state attempts to force assimilation into Western sedentarism. Understanding difference will acknowledge and help liberate the role of architecture.

In the context of what is identified as a sedentary bias, the thesis considers some of the meanings of nomads and architecture in the chapter on diagrams, and why the tension between these opposing concepts provides a useful framework for the challenge to Western architecture.

Ephemerality and movement, key features of nomadism and nomadic architecture— which challenge sedentary views— are introduced as the basis for a set of concerns which runs through the thesis.

In order to approach issues of time and movement, in the chapter on movement, the thesis addresses the concept of mapping space as a ‘performative’ humanistic activity. The potentials of human movement and ephemerality to unsettle are considered in the central part of this thesis.

The important roles of counter-cultures as activist forms of challenge to Western architecture are highlighted. Activism in architecture and literatures of nomadology provides the background for the later chapter and concluding remarks on performative agency.

## **Nomadism**

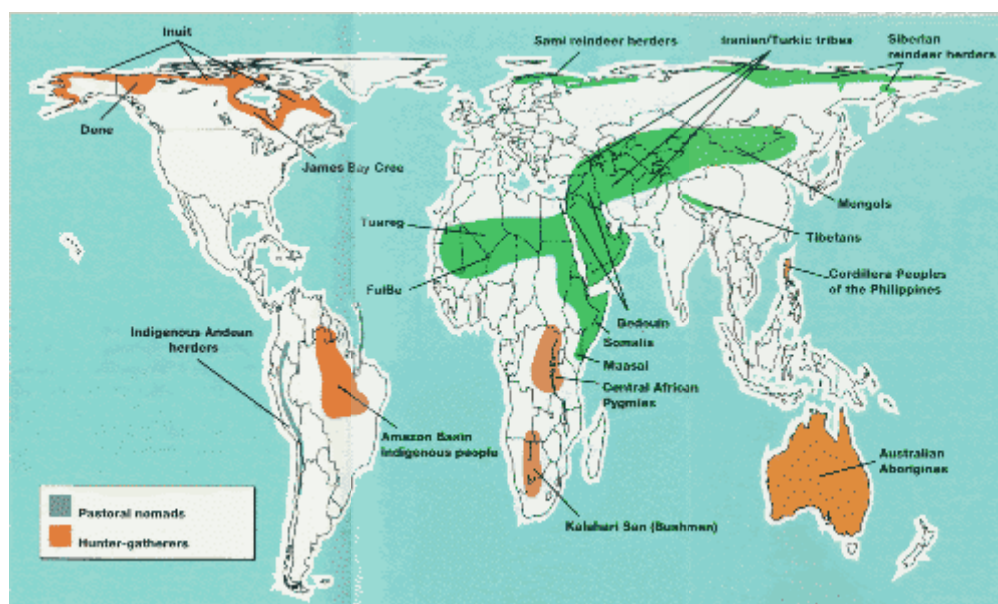
The mythology of the nomad has been created and maintained largely by sedentary peoples.<sup>17</sup> It is necessary at the outset to distinguish between sedentary and ‘unsettled’ peoples, in terms of the anthropological and philosophical dimensions of such a distinction. Hugh Brody’s *The Other Side of Eden* articulates the difference between nomads and sedentary people through the spread of Christianity and the history of interpretations of the Bible<sup>18</sup>. The alignment of ‘settlement’ with ‘civilisation’ has been developed historically, and settled is regarded as more advanced or evolved than nomadic life. The connection has been a major justification for repressing, relocating, or re-educating nomadic and hunter-gatherer societies.

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<sup>17</sup> Khaldun Ibn and Franz Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge & K. Paul in association with Secker and Warburg, 1967).

<sup>18</sup> Brody, *The Other Side of Eden; Hunter Gatherers, Farmers and the Shaping of the World*.

Based on research by UNESCO, The *Commission on Nomadic Peoples*, by Khazanov and others, *New Internationalist* magazine in 1995 produced a facts sheet on Nomads as part of a themed issue on this topic.<sup>19</sup> Three main groups of nomads were identified; pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and travelling workers. There were then estimated to be 30 to 40 million pastoral nomads in the world, moving with their households in search of pasture for their animals. Populations of hunter-gatherer groups such as Inuit, Kalahari San, Amazonian and Australian indigenous peoples are difficult to quantify, as they are difficult to 'capture' using organs such as Census surveys. Their particular 'nomadisms' are characterised performatively by their movement based on hunting or gathering food, rather than racial or biological characteristics. The third group, sometimes known generically as travellers, is the Roma, Gypsies or other travelling and seasonal workers, who are neither hunter-gathers nor pastoralists. While the Roma or Gypsies are supposed to have travelled from North India to Europe about 1000 years ago, elements of these cultures are spread globally today. The groups of nomads are indicated in the global map of main nomadic peoples. While the first two are identifiable, the *Roma* or *Rom* are too widely spread to register as a figure on the mappable zones.



<sup>19</sup> Wayne Ellwood, "Nomads," *New Internationalist*, no. 266 (1995): 18-19.

Fig. 2. Main Nomadic Peoples by Region<sup>20</sup>

While traditional pastoral nomads and hunter-gathers may still be mapped approximately as shown, other travellers, such as Roma or Gypsies are extremely dispersed and can no longer be precisely mapped.<sup>21</sup>

### Nomadology and Nomad Thought

The term *nomadology* was apparently coined in translation from Deleuze and Guattari's French term *nomadologie*.<sup>22</sup> Their later work *A Thousand Plateaus* is described by the translator in the introduction as an exercise in the positive, affirmative thought that came from Anti-Oedipus.<sup>23</sup>

Nomadism can also be usefully understood from a philosophical perspective. Deleuze used the term "*nomad thought*" in relation to the process in the philosophical work of F.W. Nietzsche, describing Nietzsche's way of thinking outside and across institutional boundaries, as decodification and recodification of thought. For example, Deleuze calls Nietzsche's thought a "machine of war— a battering ram— a nomadic force."<sup>24</sup>

Like state philosophy, nomad thought goes by many names. Spinoza called it "ethics".

Nietzsche called it "the gay science". Artaud called it "crowned anarchy". To Maurice

Blanchot, it is the "space of literature". To Foucault, "outside thought".<sup>25</sup>

Besides nomad thought, an apparently slippery construct, this thesis will be concerned, rather, with nomad performance. It is important to critically consider the problem of defining nomads,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Terrorist attacks in 2001 have added further paradox to the world understanding of surveillance and of mapping people. There was an apparent but frustrated belief, following the September 11 attacks in America, that in a search for ideology and a bookable perpetrator behind global terrorism, retaliatory violence can be focused on a specific location, for example, the labyrinthine Tora Bora Caves near Kandahar in Afghanistan.

<sup>22</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 181.

<sup>23</sup> Brian Massumi in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), xi.

<sup>24</sup> David B. Allison, *The New Nietzsche : Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, 1st MIT Press pbk. ed. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1985), 149.

who are often considered in a broad sense loosely as 'outsiders' or 'others' – those who are unfamiliar to settled Western peoples. The thesis sets out to do this by means of an outline of literature. The Western concept of architecture in the literature– as an intellectual and spiritual culture distinguishable from pragmatic building – was barely taking hold in the antipodes at the beginning of the twentieth century. Until the nineteen twenties in most states of Australia, and as late as the -fifties and -sixties in the territories, there was no regulation or qualification required for architects<sup>26</sup>. Meanwhile, in Europe, the social role of architecture was changing drastically with the effects of the industrial revolution. Georges Bataille's 1929 article on architecture criticised it as a restrictive cultural edifice. He described architecture as a structure that "smothers social life under a stone monument."<sup>27</sup>

In this protest against the complicity of architecture with industrialism and capitalism, the idea of liberating architecture from its role as a structure for reinforcing sedentary hierarchies is challenged. Bataille understood the storming of the Bastille as a revolt of the masses against the civic monument.<sup>28</sup>

This idea has existed well beyond the last centuries in the Western world. The applications section to follow considers some of the ancient and primordial challenges to sedentary architecture posed by the tent. A set of strategies is extracted which the thesis suggests will be of value to reconciling local and global practice in architecture today.

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<sup>25</sup> Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, xiii.

<sup>26</sup> A legal 'state' definition of architects in Western Australia was established only in 1929, with the act of parliament entitled 'Architects'. Like similar acts in all states and territories in Australia, it has been challenged by the Productivity Commissions 2000 *Review of legislation Regulating the Architectural Profession*. Productivity Commission, "Review of Legislation Regulating the Architectural Profession."

<sup>27</sup> Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1989), 46.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, x-xi.

## Applications

Case studies of three examples illustrating nomadology in architecture comprise the 'Applications' section of the thesis. These are tents, nomadic resistance and Bedouin nomadology. The examples address the inference that orderly structure is a suffocating imposition on a free and liberal society. The primary critiques of 'architecture' as a structure raised by French intellectuals in the 1960s were philosophical and social.<sup>29</sup> As Hollier has noted, throughout the sixties, etymology was called upon to make a connection between structuralism and architecture through the Latin verb *struere* (construct). "The student uprising of 1968 has often been described as a revolt against the structuralist establishment."<sup>30</sup> Resonances of parallel resistance began to appear also in the antipodes, for example with Black power or indigenous rights, as it is further discussed in the chapter on nomadic resistance, which follows. Again in the present turn of the century, the hierarchical and linear structures are being subverted by the rhizome and the Internet model of reality, which is suggesting an endless interconnected network.

The movement called "*architecture autre*", for example, was an "omnibus term for a range of architectural ideas of the 1960s including Biomorphism, ad *hocism*, bowellism."<sup>31</sup> In the nineteen nineties, it is widely argued in ecological, anthropological and avant garde architecture circles, that there is a need to re-balance Western conceptions of studying architecture with "other" viewpoints.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Marc Dessauce, ed., *The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 7.

<sup>30</sup> Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, ix.

<sup>31</sup> Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass, *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (London: Collins, 1977), 48-49. The European movement toward "Other architecture" was ostensibly inspired by new uses of materials, but its proponents must have been aware of a resurgence of interest in "other" cultures and "primitive" architecture as seen in Bernard Rudofsky's 1964 MOMA exhibition "Architecture without architects". See also Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1998).

<sup>32</sup> The idea of cross cultural education as a process rather than a product or a curriculum is discussed in Stanislaus Fung, "Crossings, Cultures, Histories and Architectures," *Ideas Notes Book (Institut Perakabentuk Dalaman Malaysia, IPDM)* 1, no. 1 (1994).

## New Interest in Nomadism

Accompanying deeply altered views of the world, as evident in strategies and diagrams of architects work at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been a revived interest in the model of nomadism as it relates to architecture. Vilém Flusser suggested in 1990 that nomadology – as a way of thinking about the then approaching turn of the century – marked one of the main revolutions of developed societies in history. In an essay *Zelt*, ('Tent') Flusser suggested a return of developed society to nomadism through communications, a movement that he regarded as being of similar global significance to that of the original agricultural revolution.<sup>33</sup>

This thesis suggests that nomadism and nomadology can be connected to the strong movements associated with ecology and environmental awareness today.<sup>34</sup> Interest in human connections with nature, through 'deep ecology' as a lived bodily experience, following the more empirical scientific perspective of ecology, has revived interest in low energy, low impact and ephemeral dwelling. In the Western capitalist world these movements may be seen as a reaction to the achievements of materialism and capitalist architecture in state power structures and institutions.

In the beginnings of architectural modernism in Europe in the early Twentieth Century, nomadism assumed an ideological importance, symbolically associated with freedom and democracy.

Popular interest in nomadism underwent a revival in the nineteen sixties, coinciding with the space race and increased international travel and communication. The 'architecture' of the world wars was challenged by liberated, democratic society and the hierarchical, vertical organisations of institutional authority were similarly challenged. In 1999 the Architectural League of New York held an exhibition entitled "*The Inflatable Moment: pneumatics and protest in '68.*" The exhibition suggested that there may be a contemporary movement interested in finding the contemporary relevance of the sixties' activism in challenging architecture. The Utopie Group in

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<sup>33</sup> Vilém Flusser, "Nomaden," in *Auf, Und, Davon; Eine Nomadologie Der Neunziger Jahre*, ed. Horst Gerhard Haberl, Krause Werner and Strasser, Peter (Graz, Styria, Austria: Droschl for Steirische Herbst, 1990).

1968 described two possible approaches available to architecture students: "to *avoid* architecture - perceived as a bourgeois formalist occupation – or to be *against* architecture – the image and agent of social inertia."<sup>35</sup> Recent research suggests that in the context of the early twenty-first century, with developments in globalisation and cyberspace, these interests are being revived.<sup>36</sup> Tents and nomadic architecture have, on many occasions, been regarded by sedentary peoples as unpredictable or unsettling. As architectures, these have become symbolic of cultures and peoples who seem incalculable, chaotic and hence unpredictable. Unpredictability, ephemerality, unexpected or sudden movement, and 'tribalism' – groups of people working together – all have an unsettling effect on settled peoples. Nomadology has become a tool of political and architectural resistance, by providing methods for deconstruction – challenging established control. Nomadic architecture has played a significant role in this challenge, being dynamically portable, adaptable, temporary and conducted by numbers of kin or tribe.

In the antipodean context, and for Australia in particular, nomadology provides a rich set of potentials for thinking about architecture. Stephen Muecke, for example, has been a proponent of this thinking in Australian cultural studies, especially in *Reading the Country*.<sup>37</sup> As Muecke et al. have written, of the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari applied to the concept of nomadology;

For (*Deleuze and Guattari*), nomadology is the study of nomadism, (nomadism being more than just a way of life of a people) and it is a philosophy which has been developed in recent years, by scholars looking for ways to contest the Greco-Roman philosophical traditions which have grown up with advanced Western capitalism and continue to be its support. So it is more

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<sup>34</sup> The connection of ecological nomadism in the *Wandervogel-bewegung*, a conservative German 'boy-scout' movement of the 1930s, with environmental fascism is an area which requires further investigation, as the work of Karl Wittfogel suggests. <http://www.fh-lueneburg.de/u1/gym03/homepage/chronik/wittfogel/wittfogel.htm>

<sup>35</sup> Dessauce, ed., *The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68*, 7.

<sup>36</sup> Catherine de Zegher, and Wigley, Mark, *The Activist Drawing: Retracing Situationist Architectures from Constant's New Babylon to Beyond* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Krim 1952- Benterrak, Stephen Muecke, 1951- , and Paddy Roe, 1912-, *Reading the Country : Introduction to Nomadology / Krim Benterrak, Stephen Muecke, Paddy Roe; with Ray Keogh, Butcher Joe (Nangan), E.M. Lohe* (Fremantle, W.A.: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1996), 173.

than a way of designating the 'behaviour' of a 'people', i.e. as nomadic as opposed to agricultural or sedentary-type peoples. These are the anthropological definitions of nomadism, ones that see nomadism as being a kind of second nature to a whole group of people. As long as whole races or communities can be designated or defined as being *of a certain sort*, then the grounds for racism remain intact."

The proposed counter-strategy is to "call nomadism a practice and a knowledge, potentially present in relation to any event, potentially effective in relation to any struggle for survival".<sup>38</sup>

Thus the relation of nomadology to architecture, as this thesis extrapolates, is that architecture can be a similarly responsive culture, using timing, movement and collaboration to respond to extant environments.

Nomadology refers to the study of 'ways' of thinking and living as nomads. The most authoritative and 'original' use of the term is probably that in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's work, *Mille Plateaux: Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, where they use 'nomadologie' to suggest "the opposite of a history".<sup>39</sup> The thought process of the nomad underlies the work of an unrelated group of philosophers who relate critically to the complicity of official philosophy with the state. "The critique of negativity, the cultivation of joy, the hatred of interiority, the exteriority of forces and relations, and the denunciation of power" are the forces Deleuze describes at work in *A Thousand Plateaus*, which may be applied in everyday life.<sup>40</sup> Nomadology is not usually associated with architecture. Rather, it might be considered as the antithesis of the institutions of 'civilised' architecture. Nomadology can be understood as a shifting critique of a sedentary

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>39</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Lucretius, Hume, Spinoza, Bergson and Nietzsche are examples. The description is from the rear cover, Deleuze & Guattari 1987

position often implicit in Western (occidental) architecture, a system that might be connected to what Deleuze calls an Oedipal system.<sup>41</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari published *Anti-Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrenia* as a guide to modern life- the translator's foreword calls it a user's manual for the anti-fascist life. As a protest against all forms of fascism and control, the book has been declared as a handbook for the activist. The influence of the thinking of this book is widely manifested in new readings of practices of 'nomadology' in the West and non-West— practices that connect the sixties and the present through activism. Situationist and activist idealism proposes architecture as a nomadic response to a physical and social situation.

With the publication of recent re-examinations of situationist architecture such as de Zegher and Wigley's *Activist Drawing*<sup>42</sup> the gap between architecture and activism in the sixties and the present has been closed somewhat. This and other new reviews of *New Babylon* are bringing new attention to previously neglected material. Constant Nieuwenhuys' work effectively reflects the invention of the World Wide Web in the project *New Babylon* (1956-74). The project is diagrammatic of a free and interwoven 'nomadic' space without hierarchy. It is horizontal in operation rather than vertically organised.

In the Middle East, where the Bedouin and the settled people have played out a perennial but arguably co-dependent social opposition, a notable advocate of nomadology emerged in the fourteenth century. *The Muqaddimah: an introduction to History* may be seen as an indigenous account of the background to the complementary opposition of nomads and sedentary people. Although the work has only been available in English since the nineteen fifties, it presents for Western readers an account of nomadic and sedentary life patterns in the Arab world as it is discussed in more detail in chapter 4 to follow. The historian Ibn Khaldun describes the sedentary

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<sup>41</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

<sup>42</sup> de Zegher, Catherine and Wigley, Mark (editors) *The Activist Drawing: Retracing Situationist architectures from Constant's New Babylon to beyond* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press 2001, also Sadler, Simon, and AD special Issue *New Babylonians* Ian Borden, ed.

bias deriving from the different values of Bedouins and settled people. Nomadism is a relative tendency, and as Ibn Khaldun has noted in *The Muqaddimah*, people naturally tend to oscillate between settled and nomadic life.<sup>43</sup>

### **Strategies**

Four key strategies are extrapolated in this thesis to propose ways of practising nomadology in architecture. Diagramming is a means of conveying performativity of architecture, and ephemerality, movement and collaboration are reviewed with respect to the interpretation and deployment of architecture. Nomadic value systems have played an important role on the fringes of mainstream societies in the critique and challenge to Western sedentary societies. Challenges to Western systems of architecture are presented by temporal nomadism, spatial nomadism (movement), along with the collaborative and shared experience of making spaces.

### **Diagramming**

The diagram is a visual representation of the way something works, rather than how it looks. It is an abstraction and a reduction of something. It is a mode of notation, but also a model of thought, and in this sense, nomadic architecture can be understood to share certain abstract qualities with the diagram. For designers, the diagram constitutes a form of visual thinking – a ‘thought-image’.<sup>44</sup>

### **Ephemerality**

The contingency of architecture upon variable and negotiable time frames is addressed in practice in the conclusion. Architecture’s perceived relevance, in particular to ‘users’ who are not architects, appears and fades away, dependent upon the user or beholder to find architecture within the environment. Traditions of ephemeral architecture encompasses a wide range of marginal yet

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<sup>43</sup> Ibn and Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*.

<sup>44</sup> Like Bijlsma, Dean Wouter, and Udo Garritsman, "Diagram," *OASE* 48 (1998): 1.

culturally substantial structures, environments, and scales, from traditional single women's windbreaks of Central Australia<sup>45</sup> to touring concert sets for pop music supergroups like U2.<sup>46</sup> Ephemeral architectural phenomena are discussed in this thesis in order to distinguish architectural values in the differences between permanent architecture incorporating movement, and moving or perpetually re-constructed environments.

## **Movement**

Movement in architecture has been employed consciously in Western cultures – as it has by non-Western cultures – in articulating social and physical change within architectural environments, often expressed through dynamic objects and rituals. Movement, privacy and enclosure have assumed various new architectural roles in the context of changing communications technology since the late nineteen eighties, as the changing cultural meanings of architecture and place have changed in the internet-affected Western world.

Movement and ephemerality are elusive qualities of architecture that are difficult to represent materially, so that pragmatic issues of mapping become important. Such concerns have been a fascination of many architects in the second half of the twentieth century and have required applied lateral thinking to facilitate the task of mapping. Important proponents were the architects associated with the International Situationist movement.<sup>47</sup> Mapping provides the evidence of activity and performance of humans and technology tracing the environment and its manipulations. These tracings continue to provide potentially very rich material for architectural research.

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<sup>45</sup> The Yunta (as the single women's windbreaks are called) of the Warlbiri are the subject of a PhD thesis in architecture; Cathy Keys, "Unearthing Ethno-Architectural Types," *Transition*, no. 54 (1997).

<sup>46</sup> Robert Kronenburg, *Portable Architecture, Architectural Press New Technology Series* (Oxford, Boston: Architectural Press, 1996).

<sup>47</sup> See Sadler, *The Situationist City* and also de Zegher, *The Activist Drawing: Retracing Situationist Architectures from Constant's New Babylon to Beyond*.

## Collaboration

An example of late twentieth century developments in changing theory about architectural space in the context of Western world communications and globalisation is found in Vilém Flusser's work in the 1980s and early 1990s. Flusser identified new difficulties in the visualisation and perception of distinctions between public and private. He notes that public and private are increasingly confused in the context of ubiquitous contemporary communications. Vilém Flusser was a notable commentator on the Western implications of nomadology, in particular in central Europe, until his untimely death in 1990. Opening a conference on Nomadology as part of the cultural festival of a major European Arts Festival, the Styrian Autumn, in 1990, Flusser referred to the context of the reconciliation of Eastern and Western Europe through the then recent demise of the Iron Curtain. Flusser presented some challenges to elements of architecture of the Western developed world, such as the tent and the screen, prompted by new thinking about communications. Flusser posited the suggestion that in the changing world of communications and the globalised environment, with the transparency of private life, the invasion of the public into the private would lead to a form of cultural 'homelessness'.<sup>48</sup>

For groups marginal to the settled Western world, challenge is imperative for physical and spiritual survival. Besides this, *avant gardes* challenge Western architecture voluntarily from within. It is a valuable intellectual by-product of developed societies that a surplus of ethical and critical effort remains in reserve for challenging the complexes of sedentary states, which although they are made to appear permanent and invincible, are also merely complex social constructions. The introduction has set out to suggest that this process of challenge may in fact be internal to the process of architecture.

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<sup>48</sup> Vilém Flusser, "Nomaden, Zelte," *Auf, Und, Davon: Eine Nomadologie der Neunziger Jahre*. 2 (1990).

Radical thinking about nomads and nomadology has had an understandably mixed reception from Western establishment. Yet in some institutions, the challenge to Western culture and architecture suggested by nomads has been fostered.

Architecturally considered, Hakim Bey's concept of the *T.A.Z* suggests a process rather than a canon or exemplar. Bey writes, "What we like about Palaeolithic life has been summed up by the Peoples-Without-Authority School of anthropology: the elegant laziness of hunter/gatherer society, the 2-hour workday, the obsession with art, dance, poetry & amorousness, the "democratization of shamanism," the cultivation of perception--in short, culture."<sup>49</sup> The extension of these ways of thinking about ephemerality, movement and collaboration into architectural criticism and practice is the aim of this thesis.

Architecture today need no longer be considered as a monument which smothers social life, as Bataille considered in his 1929 essay.<sup>50</sup> The notion that architecture is a means of controlling and incarcerating people in solitary and inflexible permanent structures should be challenged in today's networked and fluid societies. Tendencies for oppression through architecture must be challenged, and to be effective, resistance must remain alive and regenerative through collaboration. The challenge itself against the sedentary, static and hierarchical side of architecture is what makes it critical. This thesis takes up such a challenge by examining ways to challenge the settled, inanimate and the static in architecture through movement, ephemerality and processes of collaboration.

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<sup>49</sup> Hakim Bey, *The Temporary Autonomous Zone; Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (New York (Brooklyn): Autonomedia, 1991). also available: <http://www.t0.or.at/hakimbey/taz/taz2b.htm>

<sup>50</sup> Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, 46.