Architecture of tolerance/intolerance

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Architecture of tolerance/intolerance

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture

Major: Architecture

Program of Study Committee:
Clare Cardinal-Pett, Major Professor
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This is to certify that the master's thesis of

Simon Micubu Kalweo

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
Dedication

To my Father, and mother:
Love begets love.
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ABSTRACT

The idea for this thesis came to me gradually during my graduate studies. It is largely based on my adjustment to a new and foreign environment and my experience with the "cultural wall" that most, if not all, foreign students encounter. These adjustments can occur on multiple levels, from the most basic daily changes, like an altered diet, to more significant changes, such as those involving spiritual and religious inclinations.

The thesis proposes an Afrocentric community center located on Cottage Grove and 24th Street in Des Moines, Iowa. The community center houses refugees from Africa and acts as an outreach center for citizens in need. The center gives a pan-African identity to the refugees while at the same time fostering a sense of community among diverse groups of individuals.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The first thing I did after I settled in my apartment in the United States was paste photographs of important moments on my refrigerator door and bedroom walls. This urge to post the photos originated out of nostalgia and a desire to connect with my roots—where I am from and who I am. Pasting the photos on the wall was a reaction to the physical, mental and spiritual changes I was going through as I was introduced into a new, hostile environment. I felt a sudden need to be identified with something familiar. This need was fueled because I come from a community-based society, which I had taken for granted until I contrasted it to the individual-based society I was now living in. The sudden change in surroundings resulted in self-reflection and an eventual desire to rise above the stereotypes and be "seen" in new light. Often, that desire results in an effort to redefine one's image. The process of redefinition includes mimicry, adaptation, mutation, and metamorphosis: a natural process witnessed so clearly in the animal kingdom to ensure survival.

Although my transition to living in America was tumultuous, my experiences were not nearly as difficult as those of Sudanese refugees who flee for their lives from war torn Sudan. Peter Deng James is one such refugee. He now lives in a Boston suburb where he earns a living as a cashier in a local store. He has long settled in his new surrounding with good reason. His life has been turmoil from the date he was born.

Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, came under Islamic law or “sharia” (which translates to the law) in the early 1980s. Ever since, a brutal civil war has been fought between the Arab/Islamic north and the Christian south. The war is over 20 years old and has claimed over 2 million lives. Once again religion has been used for selfish interests since Sudan sits under enormous amounts of oil deposits. A similar situation exists in Nigeria where there is a civil war being fought between Christians and Muslims over control of the multi-billion dollar oil deposits. The war claims lives daily.
As a result, orphaned children number over 20,000, and the number is still growing because Christian parents are being killed by the repressive Islamic Sudanese government. Most of these orphans trek across the land to the neighboring country, Ethiopia, to a refugee camp. When they arrive at the refugee camp, the orphans’ ordeal is far from over because a number of them are killed by disease, ravages of weather, wild animal attacks, and the Islamic government who follow them across the border. Refugees eventually make their way to North Kenya where many survivors live today. They are then flown to the United States by relief organizations and the Catholic Church.

Figure 1. Deng at work.

In response to the situation of Sudanese refugees, this thesis proposes a community center for Des Moines, Iowa, one of the traditional receivers of refugees in the United States.

This project has also been inspired by the example of Simon Estes whose foundation promotes activities that bridge gaps between mainstream white culture, African-Americans and African refugees. Simon Estes, the first African-American ever to sing the part of Wotan in the ring of Bayreuth, had a humble beginning. Estes was born in Centerville, Iowa, the grandson of a former slave. He grew up in a large family that was loving and very poor. A central focus of his life there was the second Baptist church, in whose choir he became a prominent member. His diligence helped him get financial aid to help him attend the University of Iowa and become an expert in bass-baritone. He launched his
career at the Julliard School in New York where he enriched his musical knowledge.

Estes is now a distinguished worldwide figure in classical music. He specializes in opera and has sung with virtually every opera and orchestral company. Iowa State University was fortunate to have him as an artist—in-residence in the Music Department during the year 2001-2002.

The Proposal

As mentioned earlier, the community center will be designed from an Afrocentric perspective based on inspiration from African art, culture and architecture. The desired result would be two fold: identification and curiosity. An Afrocentric design would provide a familiar environment to the Sudanese refugees as they are assimilated into the community. At the same time, the design would generate curiosity in the neighborhood. The community center will be a place with three main goals: education, recreation, and identification.

Education

The community center will house exhibits, artifacts, and cultural events. This will educate visitors about African culture by creating a forum for intercultural interaction. Running parallel will be the education programs for the Sudanese refugees.

Recreation

Outdoor and indoors sporting facilities will be provided in the community center fostering a spirit of comradery amongst the inhabitants for the center.

Identification

The community center will also seek to establish an identity for the Sudanese refugees known as the Lost Boys (APPENDIX A). The community center will use architectural symbolism for spiritual, intellectual, or political commentary.
**symbolism** [sɪmˈbɒlɪzəm]

1. Use of symbols: the use of symbols to invest things with a representative meaning or to represent something abstracts by something concrete.

2. Artistic use of symbols: the artistic method of revealing ideas or truths through the use of symbols.

Similar efforts to use public art to engage citizens in urban history took place in the case of Cincinnati’s pigs. “In the nineteenth century, Cincinnati was known as ‘porkopolis’ because the first American assembly line for turning pigs into ham was developed there. The landscape suffered while the local economy prospered. The canal ran red with blood from slaughterhouses, and German American immigrant workers came home spattered with blood and smelling of offal. For the celebration of the city’s bicentennial in 1989, the artist Andrew Leicester proposed a new gateway for Sawyer Point Park that climaxed with a tribute to porkopolis in the form of four winged pigs atop of a suspension bridge.”

![Figure 2. Pigsus (detail).](image)

“This undisguised bricolage delighted many viewers, while other citizens erupted, crying that the pigs represented the smelly industries of the past. Some angry citizens also said pigs represented sloth and greed. Architectural symbolism is very powerful, which can be legible or illegible at times. No image is naïve; the gateway was rife with implicit commentaries on community. It hinted
at who belonged there and who did not.”

Figure 3. The Cincinnati gateway.

Precedent

A precedent for the Des Moines community center project is the 1970s era alley paintings in the Fredrick Douglass Court neighborhood in Washington, DC. These Ndebele style decorations were painted on alley buildings behind the Fredrick Douglas house, a museum, to celebrate the African roots of black Washingtonians.
"The paintings were a response, a reclaiming of alley space, but the choice of decoration was telling. The Ndebele are a southern African group, not historically among the enslaved peoples brought to north American, but their distinctive graphic designs, so strange in an American urban setting, were called on to assert pan-African pride and identity in a hostile environment."4

Similarly, the community center I am proposing will be a place of dialogue and education. It will attempt to create a forum for interaction among different individuals, groups and races. Its form and function, like the Ndebele murals, will be informed by Afrocentric architecture.
Figure 5. The street façade of the C.G Presbyterian Church looking southeast.

The site for the community center project will act as an entryway to the Drake neighborhood. The center will be located next to Interstate 235, which cuts through downtown Des Moines. The actual site is located between 25th Street and 24th Street. Cottage Avenue and University Way connect both streets. A Presbyterian Church greets as drivers exit from Interstate 235, introducing the visitor to the neighborhood fabric: strips of residential houses and patches of institutional buildings, with commercial buildings threading them together.

The neighborhood consists of two distinctive entities:

- Drake University
- The Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church

Drake University, the driving force in the neighborhood, is the dominant entity among the three. The Presbyterian Church is an old establishment; it has notably helped a lot of refugees from various countries, especially Sudan. It also acts as the local church for the neighborhood.

Walking down 25th Street, one notices heavy police presence, which may be because there are a lot of commercial premises open on that street and many students' apartments. The neighborhood changes dramatically when one crosses the street onto 24th Street. A mere alley creates a separation of surroundings as different as day and night. On 24th Street the houses are run down and roadblocks are set up all over because of increased drug trafficking.
CHAPTER 2. AFROCENTRIC ARCHITECTURE

Af•ro
1. Of Africa: of African origin or style.
2. Hairstyle with tight curls: a hairstyle with rounded thick curls.

Cen•tric or cen•tri•cal
1. At or as the middle: at or constituting the middle of something
2. Anatomy of or from nerve center: issuing from or relating to a nerve center.

BACKGROUND

“Afrocentric architecture has a broad referential category, with its base being the entire continent of Africa. However, the term has inexhaustible subdivisions based on distinct locations (West Africa, the Sahel, or Senegal), distinct ethnic and cultural groupings (Bantu, Nilotic, Cushite), societal structure (rural, urban, tribal, kingdom), or religious association (Islamic, Christian, Coptic).” Utilizing observed empirical data based on three principle pre-existing elements:

- Cultural elements: crafts, customs, materials and diversity
- Environmental/ecological elements: climate and geologic/geographical conditions
- Historical references: indigenous communities and ancient civilizations
CULTURAL ELEMENTS

Community

Figure 6. South Africa, communal Dwelling (Kraals early 19th century).

"The nucleus of any society is the family. While in Western society the idea of family is based on the nuclear family that shapes individualistic acquisition and possession. African society bases the ideas of family on the basic perception of space, its use, and its design. Distinct attributes include the 'outside/inside' relationship of the Compound (entire dwelling place) and the unitary cell (private/functional space). Individual spaces are structured within the communal (outside) space and are serviced by the secondary functional space (inside) which results in a cluster of units."6

Africans' view of the world and surroundings is primarily governed by the impact of nature and nurture. The African family is the source of livelihood and survival for the children. Order also exists, as the eldest child should be the first to leave the household, after marriage of course. The eldest sibling becomes an
example to the rest, who wait for their turn leave the nest when they are ready to fly. This family structure creates interdependence, which continues throughout an African's life. It is common that the parents, in their old age, live with one of their children, usually a son because women are considered to have totally changed households and homesteads after marriage.

**Customs, Crafts, and Materials**

Necessity is the mother of all invention, and necessity prompted Africans to create very unique ways to deal with nature to ensure survival and continuity. Using available resources, their habitats were a direct response to the tropical weather in the continent. Day to day life also provided numerous needs reflected in Africans' craft. Apart from daily upkeep, the crafts (APPENDIX C) were also used to produce items for other rituals or rites. Each event demanded special attention and skill in order to come up with the appropriate design. Division of labor ensured that the right individuals were assigned to appropriate tasks. Skills were primarily passed on from generation to generation, from father to son, and mother to daughter.

Customs, rules, and methods are used by the society to structure its day-to-day activities. Weddings, funerals, rites of passages, and births take greater significance to the upper strata of society and Cultural symbols that surround these events. Cultural symbols are viewed in an analytical/evaluative foundation. The cultural artifacts were a way the indigenous people recorded their existence, telling stories and myths of their gods, origin, and the spiritual realm. Day-to-day activities were also depicted, providing a physical recording that can be a source or inspiration informing architectural theory or design. Architecture can be the vehicle that connects the vernacular to reality, transforming the African culture and heritage from oblivion to volume and space. This transformation is fueled by the very practice of architecture, a dynamic field perpetually seeking new avenues to breathe and inhabit.

From the Sahara (North Africa) to Cape Town (South Africa) and the horn of Africa (East Africa) to the Gold coast (West Africa), each community had their
own unique methodology for designing their surroundings. The common thread that tied them together was the use of readily available materials: grass or straw, used mostly for roofing; mud and dung, used primarily for walls; and fences of sticks and branches used for reinforcement of the walls and the super structure for the roof. Though there was evidence of masonry use in ancient Great Zimbabwe, dating back to the 19th century, the choice of materials and numerous patterns from indigenous African architecture presents a palette of choices which can be incorporated into modern technologies and architecture. Using indigenous materials will add another dimension to the ever-changing architectural canvas.

![Figure 7. South Africa, Kraals, patterns similar to basket weaving.](image)

**Diversity**

Africans are fully accustomed to diversity and multicultural coexistence, a belief which seems at odds at the many civil wars occurring in African nations today, but “the impact of the influx and influences of other cultures has transformed even the most secluded cultural groups in Africa. This has brought new dimensions to existing elements of African society and either modified or replaced them.”

African has triple heritage namely indigenous, Islamic, Christianity and western legacies. Long before the Muslim, Christian and Western ideals
infiltrated the African continent, Africans had a social system in place. In the broadest terms the African continent is divided into three major tribal groups: Bantu, Nilotic, and Cushitic. Within each major division there are similarities in the social structure, ideology and crafts. The closest bond each division has is language; for example, it is very easy for different tribes within the same group to have similar nomenclature, though the same words might have different interpretations. The more familiar with the tribesmen one is, the easier it is to identify or classify them, but on the surface they each have similar mannerisms, physical attributes, and accents.

The family unit is the nucleus of the African society. At the family level cooperation and interaction is most intense. This spilled over to the clan or lineage, followed by the village, and ultimately the tribe. From youth, children are tuned to have a communal sense. Hence, one’s identity is not based on oneself but one’s family. Each family identifies itself with the village, and the village is identified with the tribe. Each tribe has its own characteristics unique in some respects but also similar to other tribes in some practices. For instance, two tribes may have similar funeral rites but totally different marriage arrangements.

"From this vantage point, the tribe is divided into concentric circles of kith and kin: the household in central position, a circle of lineage kinsmen surrounding it, a wider circle of village relations, and on out to tribal and inter-tribal spheres. Each sphere, otherwise a level of organization, becomes in perspective a sector of social relations, relations increasingly broad and dilute as one moves outward from the familial navel."
“Africa is a cultural bazaar. A wide variety of ideas and values, drawn from different civilizations, compete for the attention of potential African buyers. The marketing of cultures in Africa has been going on for centuries especially from the ‘Semitic’ (especially Arabs and Jews) and the ‘Caucasians’ (especially western Europeans).”

“Europe especially awakened Africans to the fact that they were Africans. This Africanization of Africans was accomplished in four stages: first, through cartography; second, through Europe racism and racial classifications; third, through the impact of colonization and imperialism; and forth, through the fragmentation of Africa and the resulting quest for transcending continental or racial identification. When we say that Europe Africanized the identity of the inhabitants of the continent, we mean that this is inspired of the wishes of Europe. Europe’s greatest service to the people of Africa was not western civilization, which is under siege, or even Christianity, which is now on the defensive. Europe’s supreme gift was the gift of African identity, bequeathed without grace and without design, but in reality all the same.”
"The best embodiments of the ancient triple heritage (Indigenous, Semitic, and Greco-Romans) are North Africa and Ethiopia. The best embodiment of the modern triple heritage (indigenous, Islamic, and Western) is Nigeria and Sudan. The cultural history of Africa is captured in the transition from the triple ancient personality of Nigeria and Sudan. In population Ethiopia is probably the second largest African country south of the Sahara. Nigeria is the largest. Sudan is the third largest. Culturally the three countries together tell the whole story in their own way."

The numerous identities Africa has gone through have had a major impact on practically all sectors of the continent. Most notably in architecture, each era has left a scar on the face of the continent, leaving memoirs and prints which weave stories, of past glory and splendor but also stories of Diaspora and unwelcome intrusion. These are seismic shocks which still resonate today.

Figure 9. Gondar, (Ancient Ethiopia) Christian Architecture built during the Muslim Christian war.
Figure 10. Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, hotel built with concrete in the Mousgoum castle style (Muslim).

ENVIRONMENTAL/ECOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

The continental land shift placed the continents to their current positions. Africa is the only continent that has the three main latitude lines that determine the weather of any given place on the planet. The equator slices through the African continent almost dividing the continent into two halves. The Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer also go through the continent, the former through North Africa and the latter through South Africa.

"While the equator is the longest line of latitude on the earth (the line where the earth is widest in an east-west direction), the tropics are based on the sun's position in relation to the earth at two points of the year. The equator is located at zero degrees latitude. The equator runs through Indonesia, Ecuador, northern Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kenya, among other countries. It is 24,901.55 miles (40,075.16 kilometers) long. On the equator, the sun is directly overhead at noon on the two equinoxes - near March 21 and September 21. The equator divides the planet into the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

The Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn each lie at 23.5 degrees latitude. The Tropic of Cancer is located at 23.5° north of the equator and runs through Mexico, the Bahamas, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, India, and
southern China. The Tropic of Capricorn lies at 23.5°. The tropics are the two lines where the sun is directly overhead at noon on the two solstices - near June 21 and December 21. The sun is directly overhead at noon on the Tropic of Cancer on June 21 (the beginning of summer in the Northern Hemisphere and the beginning of winter in the Southern Hemisphere) and the sun is directly overhead at noon on the Tropic of Capricorn on December 21 (the beginning of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and the beginning of summer in the Southern Hemisphere). The area bounded by the Tropic of Cancer on the north and Tropic of Capricorn on the south is known as the 'tropics.' This area does not experience seasons because the sun is always high in the sky. Only higher latitudes, north of the Tropic of Cancer and south of the Tropic of Capricorn, experience significant seasonal variation in climate.

While the equator divides the earth into Northern and Southern Hemispheres; it is the Prime Meridian at zero degrees longitude and the line of longitude opposite the Prime Meridian (near the International Date Line) at 180 degrees longitude that divides the earth into the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. The Eastern Hemisphere consists of Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia while the Western Hemisphere includes North and South American. Some place the boundaries between the hemispheres at 20° West and 160° East so as to not run through Europe and Africa.¹²

The further one is away from the Equator the colder it gets and more drastic the seasonal changes. The equator brings with it tropical weather throughout the year. This might explain the shelters found all over Africa because they did not have to deal with the harsh weather conditions. The dormant volcanoes all over the African land are evidence of volcanic activity, which has further sculpted the continent. The Great Rift Valley, which should be one of the eight wonders, "is a geological fault system of SW Asia and E Africa. It extends c.3, 000 miles (4,830 kilometers) from northern Syria to central Mozambique. The northernmost extension runs south through Syria and Lebanon, the Jordan valley, the Dead Sea, and the Gulf of Aqaba. It continues into the trough of the Red Sea and at the southern end branches into the Gulf of
Aden, where it continues as part of the Mid-Oceanic Ridge of the Indian Ocean. The main section of the valley in Africa continues from the Red Sea southwest across Ethiopia and south across Kenya, Tanzania, and Malawi to the lower Zambezi River valley in Mozambique. The valley produces mountain ranges, hills, valleys, lakes and rivers. The continent has many small lakes and rivers, with Lake Victoria (East Africa) as the largest, and the Nile, Zambezi, and Niger rivers are the among the bigger water masses. The Mediterranean Ocean in the north, the Indian Ocean and Red Sea in the east, and the Atlantic Ocean in the west and South Africa surround the continent.¹³

With this array of environments comes an enormous range of ecology from desert to rain forest, Savannah to mountain ranges, and broad plains to wetlands. The shelters and way of life in Africa mirrored this diversity of ecology. For those living by the water masses, fishing was their means of livelihood. Their shelters were usually raised from the ground due frequent flooding. In contrast, the people on the mountain ranges were farmers and built more permanent dwellings. Residents of the plains and savannah were hunters and gatherers and thus had fortified communal homesteads like the kraals (South Africa). Finally, Africans in the desert were pastoralist, moving from place to place looking for greener pastures. Therefore, they lived in temporal dwellings that could be folded up easily and they relied heavily on animals for food and transport. Furthermore, one tends to find structures thatched with palm trees on the coast, which helps by providing ventilation due to the humid climate. While rammed earth buildings are found in extremely dry places because they provide protection from extreme high temperatures (insulation) during the day and extreme low temperatures during the night (thermal heat gain).
Figure 11. Nigeria, An indigenous farming community.

Figure 12. Tunisia, Adobe construction.
HISTORICAL REFERENCE

Contribution to architecture began at the dawn of civilization from the great pyramids of Egypt to the thatched mud huts in Tonga land in Zambia. The architecture was possibly shaped by reactions to the demands of the rulers of the land, the Pharaohs and the priests, and to the environment: the great Sahara desert, the grandeur of the Nile River, and the surrounding mountains. The reaction to these forces developed a culture that was sophisticated in great beauty and luxury. The Egyptians gave lessons in monumentality, axially/symmetry, frontally, principle of planning, construction, orientation, transportation and communal cooperative labor. More importantly, the indigenous African architecture (APPENDIX C) gave us lessons in sustainability and organic architecture, respecting the environment, and living as one within it. The use of available green materials was an innovative way of recycling and leaving the environment intact. Reduced cost and labor were also a benefit of this type of architecture, but one must not overlook that the techniques used were intricate and ornamentally beautiful.

Figure 13. Sidamo, West Africa, bamboo house, showing porch.

"Egypt shares with Mesopotamia the distinction of having produced the first great civilization. As a monumental style, its architecture has never been surpassed, arousing wonder from antiquity to present. Even before architecture was the land, so Egypt's architecture, more than any other architecture, cannot be understood without accounting for its setting. The Nile River, its valley, and its
delta are the guiding force of the Egyptian civilization. The Nile not only provided transportation but the sustenance and plenty of its more than 900 miles of fertile bottom land, enriched annually by the flooding of the beneficent river. The rocky highlands and the Red Sea to the east, and the desert stretching to the west, served to protect the river valley from invasion and disruption. In this valley crucible in the late Fourth millennium there emerged a stable political entity in a rich culture whose essential principles and style of life and art would remain intact during some 3000 years. Protected and secure, Egypt developed a sophisticated culture and enduring art of great beauty and luxury.”

“Life in the Nile valley provided more for the architecture than a supportive sociopolitical system. From the cliffs that lined the valley residents quarried an extensive range of building stone—from ordinary sandstone to the densest granites and other ordinary metamorphic rock, as well as alluvial clay for the less splendid but highly useful brick. Ultimately, however, it was the visual rather than the material character of the valley that mattered. It provided sites to the Egyptian architect's -driven by the limitless ambitions of the monarchy and priesthood-posed compelling challenge: to create architecture that would match the scale and grandeur of the river, the mountains, and the desert.”

“Before the eye of the Egyptian builder there was a challenging set of realities, behind it was a singular manner of regarding the world: the Egyptian had a once the most materialistic and the most otherworldly of minds. His complex religion evolved from elaborate rituals concerning life, death, and afterlife. Even more than Neolithic man he was obsessed with the cult of the dead. In his mind, life was a brief, transient joy of his first existence. Success in the afterlife depended on both the physical remains of the dead and their comfortable maintenance in the next world.”

Egyptian architecture was monolithic in nature despite being endowed with an extensive range of building stone. It must have been intentional insofar as to reinforce a certain standard, continuity, and culture of the day. The buildings were grandeur unsurpassed to date to mimic the Nile River or the over inflated egos of the pharaoh and priests or to appease their gods.
“The Egyptian architecture reflected many qualities that ancient Rome stood for, and the Romans came up with their own styles by mixing the Greek architecture with the Egyptian architecture. It was frontal, axial, ornamental, and monumental. The architecture established a sophisticated principle of planning and construction: orientation, geometry, statics, transportation and communal cooperative labor.”

Figure 14. Luxor, Egypt, avenue of Sphinxes.

**Saqqara**

“The site chosen by the great pharaoh Zoser for his entrance into internal kingdom (afterlife) was near the administrative center of Egypt-Memphis and near the mighty river Nile. Here he sought to build an entire temple complex for his intercession with the deity and required an extraordinary place. He commissioned the world’s first recorded and most noted architect of antiquity-Imhotep, the son of Kanofer. Zoser’s complex was a multi-faceted development, which enclosed 35 acres within a rectilinear wall of limestone 30 feet high. This was the first example of architecture built out of stone, the eternal material. The
great step pyramid was the first “high-rise” in architecture, ascending more than twenty stories.

This monumental African complex established many precedents in architecture including the delimitation of space, the great courtyard (precedent to the universal African of space as an outside/inside dominant relationship), hierarchy of space (public/private-secular/sacred) and many details of design and construction: the column, pilaster, capitals, and moldings. The extensive labyrinth of passages and spaces, above and below grade, exhibited the full mastery of space and established the beginnings of monumental architecture.”

Figure 15. Saqqara, Plan of funerary complexes of king Zoser. 2750B.C.

Figure 16. Model funerary complex of king Zoser.
Abyssinia

“The land of high priests, Ethiopia (Abyssinia), known as the ‘divine land’ of a virtuous city, was an integral part of growth and development of Nubia and the Egyptian Empire. The elevation of the warrior king to the status of deity could only be achieved through the priesthood and the rites and rituals they invoked. Axum, Gondar and Lalibela, These cities served at varying periods as the capital of Ethiopia and retain remnants of their greatness. At Axum we find the great Stellae, also referred to as Ethiopian Obelisks. Indeed many aspects of the Stellae share strong typological features to the obelisks. First, the sheer scale is similar: the largest Egyptian obelisk rises nearly 100 feet, just as the largest at Axum. Another similarity is found in the use of monolithic stone, hewed and crafted at the site of quarry like Egyptian methodology. Of equal importance, the inscription that gave light and life to the stone, conveying the essence of men and the making of their civilizations, culture, and kingdoms is similar in both structures.”

The ancient world has continued to amaze, and we know so much yet so little about how the ancient civilizations came about, carried on, and declined. Historical architecture has continued to be an inspiration to the modern movement due to its mystic nature, richness, and timeliness.
Figure 17. Aksum, Ethiopia, obelisks.300B.C-300A.D.
Figure 18. Ethiopia, Aerial view of Beta Giyorgis (Saint George’s church).

Figure 19. Entrance, showing how it was carved from the surrounding living rock.
Case Studies

Figure 20. Yamoussoukro, Cote d' Ivoire. Golf resort, aerial view, 1983.

The organic forms accentuate rhythm and synchrony within the project. The symmetrical domes subtly incorporate Afrocentric principles of design, like crafts, where they resemble inverted gourds or defensive shields protecting the golfers from the harsh rays of the African sun.

The Kasuma cathedral below design mirrors the African spatial philosophy. Different chambers are aligned along the same axis yet open to incoming or outgoing procession making them shared spaces within a central space, the altar. Thus there is a visual connection within the building at the same time union of the congregation is achieved in the cathedral.

Figure 21. Lusaka, Zambia, Kasuma Cathedral, front elevation, 1964.
The pilgrims’ shrine was dedicated to the martyrs that were persecuted during the reign of the last monarchy in Buganda under Kabaka Mutesa II. The program consists of different chambers unified by a central space. The forms call out for attention perhaps mirroring the surrounding mountain ranges or hills. They could also resemble the flame tongues that claimed the martyrs’ lives or an open eggshell, end of an era and beginning of a new era.
Figure 24. Uganda, Mityana pilgrims shrine, floor plan.

Figure 25. Uganda, Mityana pilgrims shrine, Aerial view.
Conclusion

African influences are rarely acknowledged because of social implications and political ramifications of a Euro-centric hegemony that has limited honest intellectual review. In recent decades, however, architecture throughout the world has been critically reassessed and redefined. This is due to the vast changes resulting from globalization. The global village demands that all the members be recognized along with their views of the world and their contributions to the mechanisms that will impact the changing world.

Afrocentrism in architecture is an attempt to provide a bridge between the modern built environment and the cultural heritage of the continent of Africa. Itself, a cauldron of untold stories, unsung heroes, fallen soldiers, unheard voices, conspiracies, hidden tears, undiscovered splendor and potential. The richness of the culture is inexhaustible from the dawn of civilization to the present.
CHAPTER 3. AFROCENTRIC INFLUENCES

This chapter narrows down specific design principles drawn from the wide definition of Afrocentric architecture dealt with in the previous chapter. They will then in turn be used to inform the design of the community center. Function and form of the community will be cast according to the following design principles;

- Community
- Historical precedents
- Masks and sculptures

Community

The family is the nucleus of any society. Nature and nurture theory tells us that we have in-built traits and characteristics, which in combination with our environment, produce the individual. Our upbringing has a lot to do with how we view our surroundings; it affects the way we adjust to the society or vice versa. The African family embraces the extended, pluralist outlook, which creates a sense of communal belonging. Ideally the communal belonging fosters respect for elders, enabling a transmission of knowledge which reinforces continuity of customs and survival. The continuity, thus, positively impacts the society as a whole.

The ideology and physical structure of the African homestead enables voluntary and involuntary interaction between family members whom could be immediate family members or other relatives. At an early age, one is exposed to different “mentors” with one's parents being the central figures. Thus, there is a sense of shared responsibility towards everyday tasks, such that the burden is equally on everyone's shoulders within the family homestead. Therefore, in a sense, each individual is assigned a role accordingly.
Figure 26. Ghana, site plan of an indigenous family compound.

Figure 27. Interior view of the compound.
Historical Precedents

Mortuary Temples of Mentuhotep and Hashepsut, Dier El Bahari

"Following the decline of the pyramid and the concealment of the burial chambers in the depths of the cliffs, those mortuary temples developed into Egypt's most important monumental form. The most forward-looking prototypes for the great later new kingdom temples were the funerary temple complexes set before the old kingdom pyramids."^20

"Five hundred years later, when the pyramid complex had declined, middle kingdom pharaoh Mentuhotep II chose the base of the cliff at Deir El Bahari for the location of his mortuary temple, and, for the first time in Egyptian architecture, placed a monumental structure against the lofty palisade walls. It is not clear whether he retained the pyramid form or whether he constructed a simple flat-roofed superstructure. According to some modern reconstruction of his complex, he may have retained it in a revised role and reduced dimension. The hypothetical pyramid of Mentuhotep II did not dominate the precinct; it was merely one element in an elaborate ensemble of ramps, terraces, courts, and galleries that rose from flat plane of the valley to the craggy upland heights and into the depths of the cliff. Aligned roughly on an east-west axis, the site began with a broad ramp that led through a ceremonial gateway in the massive outer wall, finally leading into a large courtyard. At the western end of the court, an elevated terrace, approached by a ramp, would have been surmounted by the pyramid, beneath which lay a false burial chamber with an empty sarcophagus; the pyramid was framed on all sides by pillared galleries and these led to a rectangular court carved into the base of the cliff. Opening off the west side of this court was an aisled hall, and beyond it finally the sacrosanct tomb of mentuhotep, hidden within the rock. A novel combination of open architectural elements rhythmically arranged in a dramatic natural setting"^21

"In the funerary temples at Giza and Deir El Bahari many elements are found that would appear in the new kingdom temples at Thebes and elsewhere:
long approaches, guardian sphinxes, colonnaded vestibules and inner courts, darkening shrines, and the intricate linear progression of constructed spaces."

Figure 28. Dier El Bahari, view from Northwest, Mortuary Temples of Mentuhotep and Hashepsut.

**Temple of Khons, Karnak**

"The temple of Khons, son of Amun, within the temple precinct dedicated to his father at Karnak. At the temple of Khons, the essential components and patterns of the great temples were found in the elementary form. The imposing facades of western architecture-higher first- met worshipper wider than the temple behind it. Bilaterally symmetrical, with the stress on the central axis that ran throughout the temple, the pylon comprised two immense, battered walls flanking a lower, single portal at the center. The walls of the pylon were edged with torus moldings, crowned by the characteristic cavetto cornice, and were decorated with complex programs of relief, colossal statues, masts for royal and religious banners. The façade was thus more than an imposing, if penetrable, barrier to the interior; it also carried a striking set of messages.

The cult of the dead and the gods dominated Egyptian monumental architecture, but it did not prevent Egyptian life from attaining a richness and vitality that left suggestive, if enigmatic, evidence of itself in secular construction and cities. Egyptian architecture was not all the soberness and gloom of gigantic temples and tombs but, on the contrary, also an affirmation of life busy with trading, farming, administration, crafts, and pleasure. Even the tombs were filled
with gay, colorful depictions of Egyptian life, and the temple columns celebrated the vital, living forces of nature.\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure29.png}
\caption{Karnak, Temple of Khons, C.1100 BC (Isometric section).}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure30.png}
\caption{Karnak, showing Pylons, Temple of Khons.}
\end{figure}

**Masks and Sculptures**

"Long before the religion of the crescent or the religion of the cross arrived on the African continent, Africa was at worship; its sons and daughters were at prayer. Indigenous religions had a concept of divinity, which was decentralized. God is not in heaven, or on a throne, or necessarily in the shape
of man but is the essence of universal power, which inheres in life as a force in its own right. In indigenous religion, man was not created in the image of God; nor must God be conceived in the image of man. The universe and the force of life are all manifestations of God.

Totemism in Africa led to groups identifying themselves with objects or other animals. Clans among communities, such as the Baganda, adopted totemic symbols, which established a sense of continuity between nature and man. Indeed, many African belief systems still include the so-called animistic tendencies, which blur the distinction between the divine and the human, between nature and the supernatural. All different elements in nature can be expressions of God—the sunrise can be God's smile, the drought the wrath of the ancestors.”

Mask:
Face covering that, in ritual and theater, disguises the wearer and usually communicates an alternate identity; also a type of portrait, and a protective screen for the face.

Masks can be physical, mental, or spiritual. As we grow older our brains begins to “unmask” new interpretations of our environment and ourselves, though this is all relative and differs from person to person. For example we put on “mental masks” when we prepare ourselves to meet strangers or are carrying on our day-to-day tasks. We put on a face that reflects our current surroundings and circumstances.

Back then the masks were a part of the African lives as were their domesticated animals. Masks, together with the costumes and body paint, provided an escape from the norm by giving the person adorning the mask a new identity. Wearing a mask allowed an altered identity, freeing the individual from any physical, mental, or spiritual constraints. In turn, the audiences of mask wearers tuned into the festivities altogether and experienced a break from the norm, giving them temporary solace with the ultimate excuse of fantasy. The ceremonies also enhanced cohesiveness of the community as a whole.
Art was another medium, which was used to reflect their customs and beliefs, sculpture, paintings (on walls, body painting, scarring, or tattoos), Much like the way the Egyptians used hieroglyphics (though they appeared Mostly on tombs). One of the depictions that came through from the artwork was that animal husbandry was central to their livelihood.

Figure 31. Yoruba, Nigeria, Carved door.
Figure 32. West Africa, a Batetela dance mask.
CHAPTER 4. SITE INFORMATION

The Site

The community center project site includes the two lots directly behind the Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church (APPENDIX B). The site is nested between 24th and 25th street in Des Moines, a block north of Cottage Grove Avenue. Apartment buildings line the west side of the site, on 25th street, which is the main access to the Drake University. From the east the site overlooks Drake Park, infamous for rampant drug dealing. Victorian style, single-family housing is found just north of the site.

The selected site is significant because it acts like a no man’s land and it is coveted by opposing forces at play in the neighborhood. It marks a transition point between the city and the college, the higher class and the lower class, and the minority and majority race residents.

Drake University

Drake University is the primary driving force in the neighborhood. The area around Des Moines west of 31st Street was once called Cottage Grove and then was changed to University Place and now is known as the Drake neighborhood. Drake’s role in the neighborhood started when the disciples of the church of Christ, which was attached to Drake University, settled at Cottage Grove. From the beginning, a visible connection between the church and community existed; evidenced by the fact the campus aided church members and other fortunate individuals in acquiring parcels of land. This relationship ended as the university altered the then on-going cooperation. This ultimately created a gap between the players in the neighborhood, and the old saying “whoever has the gold makes the rules” applies here. The university has since taken charge in reclaiming the neighborhood by buying property and giving large financial incentives to faculty to settle there. However, the neighborhood has continued to deteriorate. As the largest property owner, Drake University's
influence continues to grow through the neighborhood leading some to believe that the neighborhood church is the last front hold.

Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church

The Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church is closest to the community center site. The church was built in 1910. Currently, the Cottage Grove Church has concentrated its efforts on social work, partly inspired by the changing social fabric in the area. It has also received support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious groups, and various governmental departments such as the Iowa Department of Social Services. The church's outreach efforts extends worldwide: they assist economic refuges from Christian Bosnian Serbs, to Yugoslavians, to Haitians, and now over 35 Sudanese Lost Boys (APPENDIX A) fleeing from persecution and war from their home land.
CHAPTER 5. THE DESIGN PROPOSAL

OVERVIEW

Community
The design of the community center aims to stir curiosity that will create a forum for education, assimilation, and a sense of community within the neighborhood. Situated on the intersection of Interstate 235 and Cottage Grove, the community center will act as a gateway to the Drake neighborhood. This location will be an ideal spot to expose visitors and local residents about programs going on in the community center. The ideals from the African community served as a model for the program of the community center. The African model is to nurture a communal spirit and sense of belonging between the visitors and the inhabitants of the center.

Ancient Influence
The project seeks to sink its roots in the ancient Egyptian architecture to bring about a presence and order in the center. This presence and order will be achieved by some of the principles mentioned in chapter 3 (Historical Precedents). For instance monumentalism and axially will make the design of the community center conspicuous among traditional Victorian residential houses. The monolithic construction spreads itself in between the lots, annexing every available space. The alley is not spared either; the community center will seek to eradicate the alley, creating a hub of pedestrian human traffic instead.

Masks and Sculpture
The “mask” is an installation I propose to be on the front street façade of the community center. Confronting passersby as they drive by Cottage Grove, it incorporates two opposing principles: authenticity and commercialism, mirroring other adverse relationships intentionally interwoven within the program of the community center. The mask is a commissioned piece that will act as piece of
art work with symbols originating from African artifacts that will appear strange to the Western taste. The mask will also act as an advertising spot, like a billboard, so it will be purely commercial and open not only for the center but for the public too.

"Magnetization" and "polarity" are expected to take place in the community center as different people from varying nature/nature theories meet and interact and some might attract or repel each other.

The totality of the design is geared to indulge the touch, smell, sight and auditory senses.

The Proposed Center

Figure 33. Site strategy.
The following is a summary of the programs:

- Short-term housing for six families (with a maximum 6 individuals per apartment)
- Student housing (refugees, summer students) for about 30-70 individuals
- Auditorium
- Restaurant
- Dining hall
- Moot courtroom
- Consultation spaces (law, health offices)
- Social services offices
- Meditation space (philosophy classes, quiet time)
- Day care space
- Commercial rental space
- Gallery
- Classrooms
- Library
- Parking spaces
Figure 34. Axonometric view of the proposed community center.
The second floor reflects the idea of mix and match as contrasting programs are in direct interaction with each other. The classrooms are right next to the commercial space, which in turn is next to the social services offices. This is carried on throughout the project. The library is on the same floor with the restaurant, auditorium, meditation center and gymnasium. As earlier mentioned, placing contrasting programs head to head is designed to bring about intentional "accidents" so a willing and unwilling mix of diverse groups is created. The mix and match design is also aimed to creating a community sense, mimicking the communal family structure, whereby all is encompassed in one compound. The idea is to ensure the refugees get all the education they need in one compound at the same time, while intermingling with other residents. The moot courtroom
instills a sense of security, justice, and order in the center, with the additional purpose of sensitizing the refugees to the American legal system.

Figure 36. Aerial view from 24th street showing family housing (right) and moot courtroom (left).

Next to the moot courtroom is family housing. Refugees with families will be accommodated in these self-contained apartments able to house up to six individuals. Program participants will live in the apartments on a temporary basis because all community center efforts are geared at teaching refugees to adjust and earn a living in their new environment. The philosophy behind the location of the family house is that there will be an intended collision between individuals in various stages of their lives amalgamating within the spaces between and within. Exposing residents to each other will create open-ended results.
The family housing is a formidable construction. With the over exaggerated concrete columns and beams wrapping the façade heavily. Giving it a feeling of grandeur: It has a stable look, mimicking the solidity achieved by the temple of Khons and Mortuary Temples at Dier El Bahari. Which was achieved by the use of huge columns and thickened walls, creating a presence on the desert terrain. African sculpture has also served as inspiration as the columns and beams can be viewed as facial profiles if you will, depending on what side viewed from. The idea that it houses families signifies the importance of stability in the family within the society.
The aerial view above shows the installation and the V.I.P apartments. The apartments are asymmetrical—at the same time axial and frontal, again borrowing from the historical precedents of the Temple of Khons (Pylons) mentioned in chapter 3. This part of the community center is the face of the project because it faces the Drake Park and creates a six-story presence in the neighborhood. On the image above, in the top right corner, is a small area of the rooftop of the moot courtroom, which displays patterns adorning it much like the body scarring of indigenous Africans.
Figure 39. Aerial view showing student housing.

The student housing areas are also asymmetrical and facing each other but separated by a glass corridor, with their backs opening up. The backs of the student housing structure is designed partly for allowing illumination, framing views, and announcing themselves like a trumpet call. The student housing area will house summer students or exchange students from all over the world and orphaned refugees who will stay in student housing before they relocate, perhaps finding foster parents along the way.

Before the community center is built, the roofline was the monotonous, made up of only the Victorian houses and apartment buildings. The roofline will be broken up with the introduction of the center, which disrupts the line causing ripples on the surface.
The student housing is connected to the rest of the project by walkways, stairs, and the gymnasium. It also right next to the gallery and the meditation center. The location of the gymnasium is supposed to encourage physical fitness; it though might result in people using the walkways instead. The funerary homes of Giza also employed the use of ramps, which eased access to and from the temple.
The meditation center is a designated place for a quiet time, meditation, or even philosophical debates. The openings in the center are suggestive of the type of atmosphere that should occur in the room. Up from the meditation center is the open rooftop, which is a high traffic area and possibly a place to relax too. Down the stairs from the meditation center is the entrance to the dining area, which can double up as a small lobby with games and large plasma screen television. The gallery is next to the center, its inscribed façade shown on the top right corner. They also share pillars, which support the upper gallery by connecting it to the center, keeping with the idea of continuity. Hieroglyphics were found in the interiors of all the Egyptian monuments which were like timeless journals used by the Egyptians to record their existence. They were also used to indicate the buildings’ use, at the same time introducing an element of ornamentation.
One can capture the skyline of the project sitting and relaxing or commuting in between buildings or programs. From here one can view the surrounding neighborhood and also the cityscape downtown Des Moines. This spot can be a potential outdoor stage as the top of the auditorium can be used as seating for the audience.
Figure 43. Outdoor restaurant.

This multi purpose area, which offers many advantages, is the transition point for most of the program. Apart for its use as an outdoor restaurant, it can be used for other events, such as small performances and open-air film shows that use the rooftop of the commercial space as a screen.
The restaurant is another place of intercultural exchange and a money-generating venture for the center. It ties the apartments, offices, and the shops with the rest of the programs, making it a major node of traffic.
Figure 45. Restaurant, looking west at the student housing.

Its orientation and axial features are geared at making the traffic to channel in and out of the spaces. Visual contact is another added advantage, as described in (community) chapter 3, where everyone is watching everyone else. The blue windows give the project a touch of calm pitted against the bees hive of activities within. Just like the Temple of Khons, son of Amun, it is bilaterally symmetrical as well as long and oriented in a central axis.
Figure 46. Looking south showing lower restaurant on the left and dining area on the right.

The inside/outside relationship within the program is highlighted by the glazed facades of the dining lower right, the library top right and of course the restaurant. Contrasting the darkened interiors that dominated the Egyptian monuments. The courtyard will be a shared territory as the day care center (not shown) will use part of it as a playground. The day care will be a converted preexisting apartment within the site, as a gesture of solidarity with the neighborhood built fabric. The raised buildings allow the people to trickle through or hang out within the shaded zones.
The increased drug trafficking that is on the rise in the neighborhood played a big part of including the moot courtroom in the program of the center. The refugees will also be sensitized to the legal set up of their new home enabling them to align themselves to the social framework of the society. It can also be a source of revenue as it will be open to the public for legal services. Visiting summer students could also be exposed too as they will be allowed to sit in some of the legal proceeding in the courtroom.

The face of the family housing is on the back of the moot courtroom. Its façade is actually a 'skin' that surrounds the inner shell (see first floor plans). The skin is adorned with patterns that are directly extracted from the African crafts / artifacts like basket weaving. It can also be an abstraction of the practice by indigenous folks of body scarring or tattoos. The purpose was not only for body ornamentation but also to distinguish between age groups and tribes.
Figure 48. Looking at the moot courtroom and courtyard.

The courtyard as mentioned will be a compromised zone shared by the day care center shown on the middle right. The west end of the moot courtroom pays attention to the student housing but it does so by fanning inwards towards its central space (lobby) and fans out towards Drake Park almost acting as medium. It also mirrors the cross section of the student housing, thus maintains the rhythmic flow of spaces and volumes of the center. Mimicking the novel spaces of the Temples of Mentuhotep and Hashepsut arranged against natural settings of huge cliffs, in this case the center is against a suburban setting.
Figure 50. Second Floor Plans scale 1/32"-1'-0".
Figure 51. Third Floor Plans scale 1/32"=1'-0".
Figure 52. Fourth Floor Plans scale 1/32"=1'-0".
Figure 53. Fifth Floor Plans scale 1/32"=1'-0".
Figure 54. Sixth Floor Plans scale 1/32"-1'-0".
Figure 55. Section A-A scale 1/32"-1'-0".
Each street (APPENDIX C) presents a different audience; thus, the building facades respond to that stimuli. Each edge of the community center, with its own characteristics, is aimed to create a sense of familiarity and nostalgia for the refugees as they go through the programs offered in the center, assimilating them to the society or enabling the society to accommodate the refugees. The gallery, in particular, will exhibit art work from different countries of Africa, predominately Sudanese art. The art will be displayed in an effort of fostering an exchange program between the two continents. The form of the gallery continues monumentalism. Its exterior is adorned with inscriptions, which are abstraction from African art, and will give it its own unique characteristic. The lower floor, which will exhibit sculptures, will have glass on all four sides walls.
giving the illusion that the huge limestone upper floor is floating. The upper floor gallery will display wall hangings and two-dimensional pieces.

Figure 59. Looking south at the gallery.

The gallery is in the form of an inverted topless pyramid. It is a way to contrast yet is inspired by the ancient Egyptian precedents. Signifying that the center is a place of high energy and activity as opposed to the cult of the dead and gods that dominated Mortuary Temples of Mentuhotep and Hashepsut and the temple of Khons evidence of priests and rulers working together to control the masses. The glazed facades connects the inside and outside maintaining a visual connection within and without the center.
It can also be seen as advertisement as it draws attention and visitors to the sculpture garden shown above, another place of multi dimensional cultural exchange. Its spiral stair whirls its way up to the upper gallery. It will mostly showcase two-dimensional pieces although installation could easily be accommodated too.

In residence invited artists from Africa will carry out workshops and exhibitions at the same time the native Iowan artist will be provided with the opportunity to reciprocate the gesture.
The street façade of the student housing aligns with the north—south axis, the main access to the Drake Campus mimicking the frontal presence achieved by the aisled halls of the funerary temples at Deir El Bahari which were roughly on an east-west axis.

A strange sense of ‘deja vu’ is intended to occur to the Sudanese refugees in the center, reinforced with ties Sudan long has had with Egypt. At one point the extension of the old kingdom was located in Nubia, Sudan. Geographically they share borders, the Nile River and most significantly they speak the same language.
The community center announces itself on all facets of the site creating curiosity and increase awareness about the community center. The auditorium is characteristically designed with colossal over exaggerated columns and beams. Inspired partly by the guardian Sphinxes found in the funerary homes. It is raised from the ground by pillars as a gesture to pedestrian traffic, opening the center up to the neighborhood. The array of pillars used in the project reflects the fluidity the ancient architecture had in incorporating different types of columns according to use and period of the buildings. The use of limestone as the primary material is a way to instill a sense of standard, reflecting uniformity and synchrony. The idea of frontality asymmetry and axially is also interwoven in the program, ensuring free and orderly movement through the project. Also consistent with monumentalism, the center represents the idea of frontality as a way to add character to each building and creates affiliation to Afrocentric
origins. This can be viewed from another dimension, it could have animal characteristics with legs and fins, which can be linked animal to inspired forms.

The “Mask”

Figure 63. View from Drake Park looking west.

The above installation consists of two permanent relief sculptures and a billboard (middle). One sculpture will be located on the left and right of the billboard. On the left the sculpture represents chaos, heightened by the bullet-like holes on the piece. It represents ruin through war or social ills. It’s partly bronze and fiberglass. The fiberglass represents transparency; we are allowed to see through, but the “bullet holes” further expose the piece, revealing details not intended to be seen (vulnerability). On the other hand, the installation on the right shows the relief sculpture intact without "bullet holes" with order restored and we are allowed to see through the intended parts. The middle piece is a
bonafide billboard used by the center for advertising but will also is rented out to the public.

The entire project is a mask. It uses its existence to lure its “victims” and grant them alternate personas by temporally putting their old selves aside. The project also give visitors and residents a green light to venture to the freeway of exchange, and it also creates awareness of African architecture and heritage. The installation’s primary goal is to mask the street façade of the community center from the onlookers and passersby. This is done to spark curiosity, leading community members to venture beyond their usual routes. The other advantage is that the “mask” (billboard) would be changing periodically, and with it would create alternate identities by killing the monotony of having the same appearance day in day out.

Behind the monolithic structure, flow is directed inward and outward within the site leading the curious pedestrian through shops, restaurants serving exotic food, meditation spaces, and performance spaces.
Figure 64. View from Drake Park looking west. (Without the installation).

Conclusion

John Mill wrote in the book *On Liberty* that in order for the republic to function properly it is essential that all voices be heard, no matter how good or outrageous they are. Wrong arguments make the right argument look good. Opposing views and reasons strengthens the truth. Lastly repressed minority views may be laced with some truths—thus understanding your own views by getting contrasting views.

The cumulus cloud of uncertainty, instability, isolation and misconception surrounding the African continent makes African architecture hard to digest. African influences have been with us in various fields, affecting us in one way or another, but this has been overlooked as a whisper in the wind not to be heard.
In this thesis the intent was to guide the reader through time: to lay a foundation on which one could stand and start analyzing the African built environment.

The African philosophy and way of life differs from the first world though some African ideas could bring another dimension to the modern architectural table. The proposed community center’s goal is to incorporate some of the principles listed in chapter 3: a space with African feel to it and the visual and spirit of the center. The form of the center is intentionally aggressive, calling for attention like a child with attention deficit disorder (A.D.D). The invitation is to all, but to the venture through is entirely up to the individual.
APPENDIX A. THE LOST BOYS: SUDANESE REFUGEES

Mentoring:

There is a need for a mentoring programs for the Lost Boys which:
* Links one man who is a professional in the Pasco County area with each guy
* That the mentor makes a three-year commitment
* That the mentors work weekly on helping their charges with tools on working through the systems of education, career, work, finances, dating, community relationships, social relationships, spirituality, health, exercise, nutrition, etc.
* That the mentors need to be screened for psychological soundness
* That the mentors need intensive training
* That the mentors be provided weekly supervision and guidance
* That the mentors be seen as "appropriate role models of success" for the Lost Boys to emulate

Health Needs of Refugees
* To insure that any refugee who goes on to Full Time College or technical training has the money to purchase the medical insurance needed during this time
* That there be monies available to supplement the purchasing of expanded medical insurance for those refugees who are currently marginally employed and have none or close to no adequate medical insurance for themselves or their families

Housing
* That Stepping Stone proceed to find funding to establish a community of apartments or homes, which will become the residences of choice of newly arrived refugees to Pasco County
* That this housing be established as the STEP 1 community placement in which newly arrive refugees can receive communal support as they are mastering their working through the American Systems of education, training, employment, socialization, community involvement, health, nutrition, etc...
* That all refugees be shown equal respect when it comes to housing so that no one group is made to feel disrespected, discriminated against or ignored in the initial selection of housing opportunities for them
That there be monies found which will cover all of the utility deposits for newly arrived refugees to spare them the need to have to cover such expenses on their arrival to this community

Racial and Ethic Tolerance and Sensitivity Programming
* There is a need to have refugees interfacing with American citizens of similar racial and ethnic backgrounds to learn more about the American interracial and inter-ethnic relations
* That in such interface issues of racial and ethnic discrimination is address to help the refugees recognize that they have joined a community already present in America who has long suffered from the debilitating impact of discrimination, prejudice, and hatred
* That church of specific racial and ethnic composition is recruited to provide such an interface program

APPENDIX B. MAPS AND IMAGES OF THE SITE, DES MOINES

Figure 65. Aerial photograph of the West central Des Moines, with the actual site highlighted. Source: http://www.terraserver.com/ Cited 13 June, 2004.
Figure 66. Site plan map.
Figure 67. Site plan close up.
Figure 68. Close up of the Site.
Figure 69. Looking north on 25th Street.

Figure 70. Looking north intersection of Cottage Grove and 25th Street.
Figure 71. Entrance to Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church.

Figure 72. Looking east, facing Drake Park.
Figure 73. Ganvie, West Africa showing a roof structure.

Figure 74. Toposa, East Sudan, millet store.
Figure 75. West Africa, a Bushongo dancer.

Figure 76. West Africa, a costumed Bapende man.
Figure 77. A Moorish cushion.

Figure 78. Central Africa, a Senufo door (detail).
Figure 79. Sudan, Untitled, by Adil Hassan.

Figure 80. Sudan, Untitled, by Aizzeldin Kojor.

ENDNOTES

3 Dell, 99.
4 Dell, 86.
6 David, 40.
7 David, 76.
10 Mazrui, 113.
11 Mazrui, 81.
15 Trachtenberg, 53.
16 Trachtenberg, 59.
17 Trachtenberg, 62.
18 David, 6.
19 David, 10.
20 David, 17.
21 Trachtenberg, 63.
22 Trachtenberg, 65.
23 Trachtenberg, 66.
24 Mazrui, 135.
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