THE CARTOGRAPHIC MONUMENT.
WRITING THE FUTURE IN STONE
IN MEXICO, SPAIN, AND BRAZIL
(1920s-1970s)

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This dissertation picks up the humanist debate about the suitability of literature and architecture to know the past in order to reformulate it by questioning their potentialities to know—and produce—the future. It challenges the notion of monument as an artifact for collective remembrance to argue that not only literature but also monuments were used in the twentieth century as catalysts for potential futures during crucial historical transformations. Inspired by Deleuze’s notion of cartography, I have called ‘cartographic monuments’ to these transformative monuments projected towards the future.

I study three paradigmatic cases in Mexico, Spain and Brazil: instances in which the proposal of a cartographic monument produced dialectical relations of concealment and revealing, construction and destruction. My theoretical approach combines cultural, literary, and architectural criticism, and is based on archive material. I offer close readings of a broad range of research objects: urban and architectural plans, novels, poetry, paintings, political propaganda, newspaper articles, memoirs, archaeological reconstructions, etc.

Chapter 1 focuses on Mexican architect Francisco Mujica, a little-known figure who developed a theory of the return of the architectural repressed in the 1920s, arguing that skyscrapers should be understood as the return of the Meso-American teocallis that had been destroyed by the Spanish colonizers. He advocated for pyramidal skyscrapers inspired in teocallis as cartographic monuments to achieve future aesthetic emancipation.

Chapter 2 studies the protection of Madrid’s monuments during the Spanish Civil War, when many landmarks were buried in sand and covered in structures that resembled modernist
buildings. The notion of ‘state of exception’ is applied to monuments to analyze how their permanent exposure to destruction was counteracted by experimental protective structures, which became transient, cartographic monuments in their own right, producing a utopian landscape.

Chapter 3 addresses the construction of Brasilia as a paradigmatic cartographic city-monument, and examines how writers, artists and intellectuals from around the world produced counter-narratives offering a fantasmatic reflection on Brasilia’s underground, imagining a city in ruins even before it had been inaugurated, to challenge official conceptions of Brasilia as a tabula rasa, and to make visible the repression carried out by a cartographic monument.
For five years since I started my PhD program I have wondered every day how in the world I got here, to the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Princeton University. I would have never expected it—what I know is that I have experienced this as a gift; my passion for research and my love for teaching has grown immensely, and that has been possible because of the great people who has surrounded me during my doctoral studies, and the encouragement of those who were nearby since way, way before. If you want to read these acknowledgements, make sure you have some minutes and take a seat, because I have a lot of beautiful people to thank. I made a great effort to be concise in this dissertation; I plan to make no effort in concision for these baroque acknowledgements.

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Back to Princeton, I would like to extend warm thanks to the administrators of the Spanish and Portuguese Department and the Program in Latin American Studies, particularly Silvana Bishop and Eneida Toner. Silvana has tirelessly answered my many questions over the last five years, gave me a good number of warm hugs, and took me once for a fancy lunch in Princeton. Eneida is the sweetest and most reliable help one can ask for.
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I want to thank Princeton’s School of Architecture, where I have taken several courses and spent many hours. They welcomed me from the very first day. I particularly want to thank professors Spyros Papapetros and Beatriz Colomina, who had been early interlocutors of my research. Still today, I go back to my notes from Spyros’ class almost every week and I always find answers there; Beatriz organized the architectural tour around Brazil who convinced me I had to work on Brasilia. I particularly cherish the memories of that trip, with my dearly fellow grad students Lluís Casanovas, Victoria Bugge Oye, and Michael Faciejew, with whom I shared very special moments exploring Brasilia, Lina Bo Bardi’s architecture in São Paulo, a caipirinha at sunset in a hotel built by Oscar Niemeyer in Ouro Preto, and a dinner with samba in Santa Teresa and Lapa, Rio de Janeiro.

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INTRODUCTION

What is the best medium to know the past?

Literature or Architecture? Writing or ruins? Texts or monuments?

This was one of the core methodological questions for the first humanists. The interest in the classical times made Renaissance artists and intellectuals wondered what was the best artistic medium to have the most complete access to that long-gone era. Petrarch advocated for the superiority of textual testimonies; his followers focused so much in writing that they were more interested in textual inscriptions on monuments than in monuments themselves. Architects Filippo Brunelleschi and Leon Battista Alberti challenged this position. They sought to recover the architectural ruins of Rome as a site of learning, and found in monuments a purer channel to produce meaningful knowledge of the past.

The controversy on the different scope and potentialities of literature and architecture to approach the past has continued and transformed over time, and it is still present today in a variety of forms. However, this controversy seems to dilute when the same question is asked about how our ancestors—and ourselves—thought and created representations of potential futures. There seems to be more consensus in acknowledging that literature has been the medium par excellence where speculation about potential and desirable futures are better expressed. While literature seems to provide more temporal flexibility towards past and future, monuments have traditionally been considered more rigid in regards to the temporal dimension.

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1 At least until the development of cinema.
of the content they address: they seem to always point out to the past—they are artifacts of communal remembrance.

This dissertation calls this assumption into question by analyzing three projects of monuments in Mexico, Spain and Brazil that are paradigmatic in this regard: their temporal point of reference was not in the past, but in the future. These monuments did not mainly seek to keep alive the memory of any remarkable hero, deed or event, as a way of presenting a moral standard the community had to follow in order to preserve their identity. Instead, they pointed to uncharted future directions in order to create a new identity for the city and the country. Their purpose was not to remind the community how they should keep on being, but how they need to transform themselves in order to become something else.

Etymology shows that such projection towards the future was always at the kernel of the very idea of ‘monument.’ The term ‘monument’ comes from Latin ‘monumentum,’ meaning ‘reminder.’ However, as soon as we dig deeper into the subtleties of its meaning, its temporal dimension starts to become more flexible and ambiguous. “Monumentum” comes from the verb “monere,” which means both “to remind” and “to warn.” A monument warns about future challenges. Hence, monuments were thought to keep alive the facts of the past that the present needs to acknowledge in order to overcome the potential hardships of the future. This implies a cyclical understanding of history: monuments were built because obstacles defeated in the past will return in the future. Thus, a monument is both a communal code of conduct to apply in challenging times, and an antidote to returning threats. I suggest to call this projection towards the future the exemplary projection of monuments, since it implies to follow a moral model.
The projection studied in this dissertation is of a different kind. The monuments analyzed here did not have the main purpose of neither commemorating a past deed or hero, nor teaching any lesson from the past in order to be better equipped for the future. Instead, they were built to transform a community. These monuments made use of aesthetic forms to produce new political imaginaries and have a transformative power that simultaneously predicts and produces a new society. They were built under the premise of the preeminence of the aesthetic over the political: new aesthetic forms produce new political, economic and social forms; thus, modern monumental forms produce a distinctive kind of modernity. These monuments were thought to be a peephole through which to look at the future of a city or nation; the experience of looking through them should awake in the community the desire to look like them. Since these monuments were a proposal to chart the uncharted future, I have called this projection the cartographic projection or value of monuments.

The exemplary projection towards the future is projection as warning —monuments built as a moral mirror—; the cartographic one is projection as transformation —the emergence of new values, rules and forms, different from the original values of the community, that need to be followed in order to fulfill such transformation. The exemplary projection keeps the community rooted; the cartographic projection liberates the community from its own identity.

The disparity between these two forms of projection towards the future lays in a distinction between form and content. The commemorative value of monuments makes an exemplary projection of the content towards the future: the specific hero, deed or event that is remembered is brought to the present and future as a permanent moral standard. This is the case of the statue of any national leader. Instead, the cartographic value uses the form of the monument as a projection: a specific shape, structure, or scale that is symbolically related to a
highly desired value or regarded as new by a community that has to transform itself in order to embrace the values associated with such forms. For example, some geometrical forms associated with modern architecture became a symbol of progress.

The origins of this discussion date back to the early twenty century, when Austrian art historian Alois Riegl proposed a classification of the values of monuments in The Modern Cult of Monuments: its Character and Origin (1903). Riegl’s theories can be understood within the context of subject-object relations, since he addressed the monuments from the point of view of the affinities communities experience with them. He inquired why monuments were created and how subsequent communities related to monuments created by previous generations. One of his main contributions was the distinction between deliberate and unintentional or historical monuments: what this dissertation addressed as commemorative is what Riegl called deliberative monument —monuments created for remembrance—, while the unintentional or historical monument is the monument that is considered to epitomize a particular phase of human history whose conditions are not recoverable —monument understood as monument only a posteriori for its historical significance.

This dissertation contributes to this century-old discussion by distinguishing two values projected towards the future: the exemplary and the cartographic. The focus is on the latter, which had enormous consequences for protection and preservation, particularly —but not only— in wartime and processes of modernization. Here, monuments are understood within a broad definition: a monument is a multilayered artifact that can be either a sculpture or a building; a

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2 Riegl wrote this article as an introduction to a preservation law he was tasked to create as newly-appointed General Conservator of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The values he identified were subservient of his final goal of policy-making: he wanted to know why monuments were important to people in order to determine what to preserve and what not.
place of commemoration or a political symbol; a work of art or a historical document. This dissertation is also interested in scale, particularly in monumentality. The crucial characteristic that all of these different kinds of monuments have in common is that they have been understood as monuments by their builders and communities.

As Riegl implied, the values of monuments should be considered in dialectical relationship. All monuments, even the most commemorative ones, have a kind of projection towards the future, either exemplary or cartographic, although such projection is often subdued. The monuments studied here have the cartographic projection at the forefront, and consequently are called ‘cartographic monuments.’ The choice of the term “cartographic” is due to various reasons. ‘Cartography’ is a term often used by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to name specific methods of construction of subjectivity.3

In his book on Foucault, Deleuze assessed the role of this philosopher as a break with both how we interpret the past and how we interpret the future. Deleuze named Foucault the creator of a new archive in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and the creator of a new cartography in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). He used this contrast to address his notion of art. In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, he wrote:

To an archaeology-art, which penetrates millennia in order to reach the immemorial, is opposed a cartography-art built on “things of forgetting and places of passage.” The same thing happens when sculpture ceases to be monumental in order to become hodological: it is not enough to say that it is a landscape and that it lays out a place or territory (Deleuze 1998: 66)

3 In the case of Guattari, his ‘schizoanalytic cartographies’ were a method of de-constructing the elements of identity to reconstruct them otherwise by contrasting each of these deconstructed elements with new, external elements (Heller 7). In *Chaosmosis* (1995), he applied this model to group identity. The purpose was to construct potential identity maps by way of experimenting with the combination of internal features of identity and external ones.
Deleuze equated monumental with archaeological, and contrast it to hodological spaces, following Kurt Lewin. ‘Hodological’ refers to pathways. According to Deleuze, “Lewin’s hodological spaces, with their routes, their detours, their barriers, their agents, form a dynamic cartography” (1998: 62). For Deleuze, there was an art rooted in the past — or archaeological — and an art that looks for new paths in the future — cartographic.

Deleuze — and so Guattari — was challenging the archaeological model of the unconscious provided by Freud. He was interested in designing a sort of hodological model of the unconscious, which would produce identity not based on memory, but by contrast with which has not appeared yet. He delved into this distinction elsewhere in his Essays:

A cartographic conception is very distinct from the archaeological conception of psychoanalysis. The later establishes a profound link between the unconscious and memory: it is a memorial, commemorative, or monumental conception that pertains to persons or objects, the milieus being nothing more than terrains capable of conserving, identifying, or authenticating them. (…) Maps, on the contrary, are superimposed in such a way that each map finds itself modified in the following map, rather than finding its origin in the preceding one: from one map to the next, it is not a matter of searching for an origin, but of evaluating displacements. (Deleuze 1998: 63)

In this passage, monuments continue to be attached to notions of the static, the past, memory and commemoration. But the distinction that Deleuze makes between archaeological and cartographic art can also be applied to tem. It is a productive schema to show that monuments do not only have a commemorative value that attach a community to its roots, but a cartographic

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4 According to Deleuze, Foucault’s new archaeology consisted on acknowledging that the production of subjectivity depended on the production of statements in the context of power relations. Foucault’s new cartography entailed the corroboration that power is not owned, but exerted, opening the way to new interventions in the political realm.
value that can produce a break and a displacement, celebrate becoming and potentiality, de-center group identity and search for new paths of communal construction.

All political systems and ideologies have made use of monuments at some point in their history. The anarchists have been the most reluctant to build them, due to the authoritarian nature perceived in these artifacts and their use as state’s symbols, which explain the iconoclast attitude of anarchism towards the national heritage. However, they did often reflect on the notion of monument and made specific proposals. Besides anarchists, Catholics, socialists, militarists, capitalists, decolonialists, indigenists, republicans, Stalinists, developmentalists, Trotskyists, neo-colonialists, monarchists, and traditionalists had also crucial discussions on how monuments could serve their cause. Transnational movements such as Pan-Americanism, International Socialism, or modern architecture as an International Style did the same. Contributions from all these ideological tendencies are analyzed in this dissertation, which in a way is also a reflection on how different political beliefs thought the potentialities of monuments in modernity.

The monuments discussed here were conceived during radical political shifts that produced decisive historical transformations. The construction of a cartographic monument always entails a deliberation about the monuments inherited from the past. These inherited monuments were assessed according to their political symbolism, and decisions were taken about diverse strategies of destruction, transformation, and preservation. These decisions destabilize monolithic categories of destruction and preservation by proposing other experimenting ways of creative destruction and destructive preservation.

The focus on projects conceived in the twentieth century between the Mexican Revolution and the outbreak of the 1960s-1980s military dictatorships reveals that this
The cartographic projection towards the future is a characteristic of twentieth-century monuments for two reasons: first, during the twentieth century monuments progressively lost their authority, were constantly questioned, failed to catch people’s attention, and lost their potential to instill historical awareness in the way they have done until the nineteenth century. This is due to the ongoing process of democratization of the public space.

Second, since the commemorative value of monuments was in crisis, a new use was fostered. This time, such use entailed a projection towards the future: monuments were thought as catalysts of modernization and political utopias: they were built to provide a glimpse of what the city or the nation should become, and to eventually produce such transformation. However, this property did not entail singularity or exceptionality. The cartographic projection towards the future can be noticed in monuments from different historical periods, and should be studied in their own cultural context. Indeed, the study of cartographic monuments is highly contextual. That is why cultural studies are particularly suitable for this kind of inquiry.

The commemorative and cartographic values are not mutually exclusive. They both generally appear in the same monuments in a dialectical relationship. The commemorative affects the cartographic inasmuch as it provides a starting point and a model that is not always a contrario. The cartographic affects the commemorative inasmuch as it provides a particular interpretation of the past that amends and rearranges the community’s history, reconciling it with the new identity path proposed. This relationship appears in each chapter as ‘dialectics of concealment,’ since it manifests through a procedure of burying and unearthing, concealing and revealing, eradication and reparation.
The dialectics of concealment characteristic of cartographic monuments is the other side of Walter Benjamin’s dialectical image. For Benjamin, the present was defined by the trawling of the rubble of history. For him, the continuous defeats in building the desired futures were a consequence of this heavy load of historical rubble. Instead, the cartographic value of monuments embraced a faith that such desire to create a new future can actually overrule the historical rubble. In fact, the dialectics of concealment represents the way in which the past is re-defined in the image and likeness of the future, and not the other way around.

World’s fairs have been a machine of production of cartographic monuments, a sort of laboratory of aesthetic forms and potential futures. For example, the paradigmatic monument of modern Paris, the Eiffel Tower, was the centerpiece of the 1898 Paris World’s Fair. The transient nature of many of the projects erected for world’s fairs and their contrast with projects with other nations is an early example of what Simon Anholt has called “competitive identity” between countries. Another international event that produce cartographic monuments is the Olympic Games. Since the beginning of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, every four years the hosting country builds a stadium which is also an aesthetic statement of the forms that symbolize what the country sees itself and wants to become. For the case of Mexico, Rubén Gallo has studied José Vasconcelos’ National Stadium as a catalyst for a desired future (Gallo 208), a showcase of what the architectural production of a utopian future could be, would the myth of the cosmic race finally materialized.5

This faith in monuments to produce desired futures had two shortcomings: first, as a faith, it did not guarantee results. Cartographic monuments were meant to transform society, but

5 “The stadium was designed to give Mexicans a glimpse of what the future had in store for their country if it managed to stay on track as it advanced toward the final stage of civilization” (Gallo 2005: 209).
the cartographic value was not always implemented; such transformation got often re-directed, disrupted, interrupted; the ambiguity of aesthetic forms opened the way to appropriation, and sometimes produced opposed political forms than those desired and expected. Second, the full exploitation of the cartographic value emphasized an authoritarian side of monuments consisting on repressing the episodes of history that did not comply with the narrative of future proposed by the cartographic monument.

Monuments have been studied from a variety of perspectives. The most revealing ones for this dissertation are those addressing the crisis of monuments in the twentieth century because they explain why it took place a rearrangement of values that put the cartographic at the center. Rodríguez Gutiérrez Viñuales has studied the role of monuments in public space in Ibero-America, arguing that the nineteenth century was characterized by the industrialization of the commemorative monument, while in the twentieth century monuments stopped being venerated (2004: 19). In this same vein, in 1936, Walter Benjamin published his famous essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” where he made some suggestions that could explain this abandonment of monuments. Benjamin argued that the functional character of architecture made that, unlike other forms of art, people perceived architecture distractedly. While a person goes to a museum and concentrate to appreciate a specific painting, that same person rarely pays the same attention to a building he or she inhabits or passes by on a daily basis.

At the time of Benjamin’s publication, other authors were reflecting on how this distractive perception applied not only to architecture in general, but to monuments —sculptures or buildings— in particular. Mechtild Widrich took as a historical point of acknowledgement of such crisis a talk given by Robert Musil in 1927 and published in 1936, when he claimed that
“there is nothing in the world as invisible as monuments” and “we simply overlook traditional monumental sculpture in public space” (Widrich 2014: 1). Widrich has adduced that as the twentieth century progressed, monuments were losing the energy to attract people’s attention, to the point that creating a monument for a particular hero or deed meant a sentence to oblivion: “we throw the famous deceased, with a stone monument around their necks, into a sea of forgetting” (Widrich 2014: 1). If monuments were not looked at anymore, they lost their capacity to “instill historical consciousness” (Widrich 2014: 2) and became banal ornaments in the public space, opened to appropriation, destruction, or indifference.

This crisis aggravated particularly after the experience of totalitarian regimes. Michalski has characterized the Nazi monuments as dominated by architecture, allegory, and scenography (1998: 93-97). According to him, Hitler saw himself as the Pontifex Maximum of the Third Reich, who used architectural monuments as a stage for his liturgies, where he encountered the people face to face (Michalski 96-97). Nazis did not make many busts of Hitler, as the Communist did of Stalin. For Michalski, this is due to Stalin’s lack of charisma, which was substituted by the industrial production of monuments to his persona (1998: 96-97). One consequence of this experience was the conviction that monuments were essentially authoritarian, as Georges Bataille had noticed already in 1929: “great monuments rise up like dams, opposing a logic of majesty and authority to all unquiet elements; it is in the form of cathedrals and palaces that Church and state speak to an impose silence upon the crowds” (1995: 35).

In this regard, Gutiérrez Viñuales has added that while in nineteenth-century Latin America monuments were important tools for urbanization and nation building for countries that had recently achieved their political independence, in the twentieth century there was a concern
for democratization of the public space that often questioned the contribution of monuments to achieve such goal (Gutiérrez Viñuales 17-18). He noticed the period 1890-1940 was characterized by a “fiere monumentalist” [monumentalist fever] (2004: 21). To a great extend this monumentalist fever used the model of the Parisian Beaux-Arts, or what Sergiusz Michalski has called the French unprecedented ‘statuomania’ (1998: 9).

Gutiérrez Viñuales argued that after the 1940s this fever started to recede —Muñoz Rojas has pointed out the exception of Spain, where the dictatorship built numerous granite monuments echoing imperial architecture—. This recession took place earlier in France, and produced a number of different practices of appropriation. Michalski has studied those carried out by surrealist artists, who interpreted the hundreds of statues of Paris as ghosts populating the public space inviting to a reflection between the limits of the conscious and the oneiric (1998: 9).

For Widrich, traditional monuments “installed ‘from above’” were “intimidating, permanent, oblivious to its site, and, one might add with Musil, socially dysfunctional or ineffective” (2014: 2). Widrich has traced a genealogy of architects, sculptures, preservationists and theoreticians who since the 1930s had tried to overcome the authoritarian nature of monuments: from the historical avant-gardes to Peter Meyer to the Congrèss internacionaux d’architecture moderne to Sigfried Giedion (Widricht 2014: 7).

Recent bibliography has also addressed the crisis of the stone as construction material, and the experiment with other, more delicate materials to build monuments. Particularly, these scholars have studied the substitution of stone for the human body, the permanent for the precarious, the finished work for the repeating ritual. Widrich has coined the term “performative monument” to examine the dialectical relationship between monuments and public performance
arts (2014: 5). They have some key characteristics in common: both take place in the public space and need to catch the audience’s attention.

For Widrich, public performance art developed in the 1960s and 1970s precisely as a response to the inability of stone monuments to catch the audience’s attention anymore. However, she also has noticed an eventual reaction in the 1980s and 1990s, when many experimental performance artists of the previous decades ended up becoming designers and builders of stone monuments (2014: 6). This may be explained through the obsession with memory that defined postmodernity, but Widrich argues the explanation is not that simple: in fact, many of those stone monuments were still performative, since they needed the participation of people. For example, many war memorials have the name of the killed engraved, and invite the audience to touch those names with their hands as an act of memorialization that individualize the victims. Indeed, since the 1980s, most photographs of monuments taken for catalogues or postcards include the image of people “using” the monument.

Likewise, even though performative monuments seemed to reject the aspiration to last forever, they repeated the same dynamics they were denouncing: performative monuments developed a need for preservation, which was addressed by taking pictures and making videos of the ephemeral performances, and keeping them stored in complex and growing archives. Marina Pugliese has employed the term “ephemeral monuments” to refer to this same need for preservation in installation art (2013: 8).6

6 Germano Celant has argued that this idea of ephemerality applied to monuments — he has called it ‘spherical art’ — implies an indiscernible relation between person and object, and dates back to Futurism (Pugliese 2013: 8).
Another issue that has gotten the attention of specialists has been the effects of mass society on monuments. This has been discussed from different perspectives, interested in understanding how monuments have been adapted to a more literate society, and how they have represented the masses. A keystone in the former perspective was the creation of memorials to the unknown soldier. Laura Wittman has studied that the French, Italian and British were the first ones to invent memorials of mass killings at the end of the First World War. The solution they found was to use only one anonymous corpse to embody the thousands of soldiers killed. According to Wittman, these memorials represented a new stage in “the instrumentalization of mourning” (2011: 4). However, these monuments were eventually appropriated by opposed ideologies. For example, the French far right organized rallies in the monument to the unknown soldier in 1935, but a few years later, left-wing Parisian students demonstrated there during the Nazi occupation.

Precisely the Nazi, very keen to mass spectacles, made great use of monuments for another type of representation of mass society: according to Michalski, they used “the mythologization of industrial labor” as a cult to strength and as propaganda of their political and military power (1998: 99). However, the first experimentations with monuments to mass labor date back to the late nineteenth century, and the work of French sculptors Rodin, Dalou and eventually Bouchard.

Michalski has also studied the Soviet engagement with both precarious, transient monuments and the eventual imposition of gigantism and stone. Regarding the former, Michalski gives the example of the production of many experimental plaster, clay and plywood monuments built in the first years after the October Revolution, promoted by Lenin and Lunacharsky. People had to vote for their favorites, and only those would be built in stone. The tender was organized
hastily, and the aesthetic results were not satisfactory for anyone (Michalski 108-110). Regarding
gigantism and the return to stone, Michalski considers it a consequence of Stalin’s orientalist
taste (114-115), which assumes the human scale is characteristic of European architecture, while
the gigantic—or monumental—scale represents “the oriental other.” The two cornerstones of
Soviet’s experimentalism and official gigantism were Tatlin’s Monument to the Third
International (1919-1920), and Boris Iofan and Vladimir Shchuko’s Palace of the Soviets (1931-
1933). None of them was finally built.

In the last years, the scholarly discussion regarding monuments has addressed other kind
of issues. The boom of memory studies since the 1990s has produced a rich bibliography on
memorials. Probably the most influential contribution has been James Young’s The Texture of
Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning (1993). In Latin America, an outstanding
contribution has been Steve Stern’s books on memorials of the humans rights abuses during
Pinochet dictatorship, published between 2004 and 2010.

One of the most fertile paths of exploration of the role of monuments today is the one
interested in the imperial heritage in postcolonial nations. Ann Laura Stoler’s edited book
Imperial Debris is paradigmatic, but there has been many others: books that cover the religious
transformations of monuments during colonization (for India, see Himanshu Prabha Ray’s 2007
Monuments), the relocation, abandonment or repurposing of monuments of the colonized
civilizations under foreign imperial rule (Deborah Cherry’s 2007 The Afterlives of Monuments),
and the proliferation of indigenous monuments to create unity and resist European colonization

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7 I consider this discussion within cultural studies. For example, there is a rich bibliography on new
techniques of monument’s preservation I have not considered here.
Another field with a long tradition is the one studying monuments within an anthropological approach. It is interested in topics such as how objects that were not considered monuments before have been monumentalized (Roger Sansi Roca’s 2007 *Fetishes and Monuments: Afro-Brazilian Art and Culture in the 20th Century*), the practices of remembrance in different contemporary conflicts (Taylor Davi’s 2015 *Monuments: 276 Views of the United States-Mexico Border*), or the internet as a new platform for memory and monumentalization (Gregory Ulmer’s 2005 *Electronic Monuments*).

There has also been recent interest in the analysis of preservation of monuments during wartime, dealing with military conflicts that date back to the French Revolution and the World Wars, to more contemporary wars such as the one in Syria (see the case of Michael Greenhalgh’s 2016 *Syria’s Monuments. Their Survival and Destruction*). Particularly interesting in this regard has been the study of the institutional aspects of preservation and international collaboration, such as Lucia Allais’ dissertation “Will to War, Will to Art: Cultural Internationalism and the Modernist Aesthetics of Monuments, 1932-1964” (2008). *World Monuments. 50 Irreplaceable Sites to Discover and Champion* (2015) addresses the relation between protection, preservation and tourism, and was published to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the World Monuments Fund.

Alongside the contribution this dissertation seeks to make to the discussion of the values of monuments as posed by Alois Riegl in 1903, other specific publications have been revealing and helpful in this regard. That is the case of Françoise Choay’s *The Invention of the Historic*
Monument (2001, first published in French as L’Allégorie du patrimoine in 1992), where she dated the origin of the historic monument in the Renaissance, and criticized the narcissist approach to the national heritage. Some articles in the volume edited by Robert Nelson Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade (2003) discuss the drive to destroy monuments, sometimes in creative ways, which is also a core question in this investigation.

Other studies have been very meaningful to inquire what is the role of cartographic monuments today. For example, Hal Foster’s The Art-Architecture Complex (2011) studies the process of creation of iconic buildings and works of art that have served as centerpieces of new national, city or corporate brandings —identities for the present and future created by monumental buildings. Likewise, based on Beatriz Colomina’s Privacy and Publicity (1994), it can be argued that the full exploitation of the cartographic value of modern monuments is also a consequence of the engagement of modern architects with mass media, resulting in a new way in which architecture looks and is looked.

I have also been nourished by how contemporary art addresses the issue of monuments. For instance, Egyptian artist Iman Issa created a piece entitled Material for a sculpture proposed as an alternative to a monument that has become an embarrassment to its people (2010) referring to the construction of counter-monuments that implicitly acknowledges the kind of political value of monuments addressed in this dissertation. Likewise, in the 2014 Venice Biennale, Albanian artists Edi Hila and Adrian Paci conveyed the utopian nature of monuments in Potential Monuments of Unrealized Futures. Most specifically, the original idea of this dissertation developed after coming upon Fernando Sánchez Castillo’s Monumentos ciegos
[Blind monuments] (2011), a recreation in miniature of the protecting structures of the monuments of Madrid during the Spanish Civil War.8

The study of the cartographic value of monuments is an exploration in the origins of a compulsion towards the future that has achieved its ultimate manifestation in the post-modern architecture of the late twentieth century and the twenty-first century. Although post-modern architecture has been characterized by a return to historicism, the so-called ‘Bilbao effect’ shows that it also has a specific cult of the future. The Bilbao-effect refers to the expectancy that the construction of an avant-garde building by a starchitect9 will transform the city or country where it was created. Before the construction of the Guggenheim Museum by Frank Ghery, Bilbao was a grey, post-industrial city. After the inauguration in 1997, the rest of the city started to adapt its landscape to the museum, and became a cultural hub with a large number of tourists. Many cities in the world hired starchitects seeking to experiment a similar transformation. One of the most famous starchitects, Zaha Hadid, often said that one of her main inspirations was an architect extensively studied in this dissertation: Oscar Niemeyer. Indeed, the study of the cartographic monuments is a study of the origins in modernity of the Bilbao-effect that has characterized the use of monuments in post-modernity.

Regarding the geographical scope of this dissertation, it has similarly been used by Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales in Monumento conmemorativo y espacio público en Iberoamérica [Commemorative monument and public space in Ibero-America] (2004). In chapter 6, he argued

8 Sánchez Castillo recreated in miniatures the transient, utopian monuments that never fully materialized because of the defeat of the Republicans in Madrid. Model miniatures have also been extensively built in Germany since the end of the Second World War to the present, but in this case they recreate the lost urban landscapes of the cities that were razed to the ground during the war. Helmut Puff has extensively studied this issue.

9 An architect famous beyond the architectural circles generally because of her/his designs convey a sense of spectacle and, no doubt, monumentality.
that Spain and Latin America are united by “un vínculo monumentalizado” [a monumentalized link] (2004: 195-236) due to their colonial and post-colonial history. In my case, this choice is due to the fact that modern architecture in its broadest sense is an international movement that did not depend on political or linguistic borders. Mexico, Spain and Brazil developed paradigmatic projects of architecture and monuments that transcended national borders and had international impact.

This dissertation has three chapters, corresponding to three different monuments and countries:

Chapter I “The Return of Monumentality” studies Mexican architect and archaeologist Francisco Mujica, a little-known figure who developed a theory of the return of the architectural repressed in the 1920s, and argued that skyscrapers should be understood as the return of the Pre-Columbian pyramids that had been destroyed by the Spanish colonizers. He was a Pan-American intellectual who proposed a new architectural style to be followed in the Americas. For him, the return of monumentality in skyscrapers signified the final independence from Europe in terms of aesthetic forms. In the second part of the chapter, his pioneering work as a designer of charts for mass consumption is analyzed. His charts shed light on his understanding of scale, history and the role of monuments in what he called “planning democracy.”

Chapter II “Monuments at War” addresses the protection of Madrid’s monuments during the Spanish Civil War, when Cybele and other landmarks were buried in sand and covered in

Moreover, Sergiusz Michalski has pointed out that political monuments were first used in Europe by the Spanish to commemorate an imperial victory: a statue in the then-Spanish city of Messina, in Sicily, was built in 1572 to commemorate the victory of Don Juan de Austria in the Battle of Lepanto. Michalski argued that since the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century monuments were used by monarchs and aristocrats to assert their political and military control; in the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie will inherit this practice. In this dissertation, monuments and monumentality are studied as tools of political and aesthetic decolonization in the twentieth century.
structures that echoed modernist buildings. The notion of ‘state of exception’ is applied to monuments in order to grasp how their permanent exposure to destruction was counteracted by experimental protective structures, which became transient monuments in their own right. The concealing of monuments for their protection and creation of a futurist urban landscape produced a rich public debate in newspapers and magazines about the role of monuments in a hypothetical future post-war. In the context of these debates, a Fallas replica of Cybele was built in Valencia and sent to the Soviet Union, inviting for a conversation between the different roles of monuments as understood by Soviet and Spanish Communists.

Chapter 3 “Underneath the Monument” focuses on the construction of Brasilia as the keystone of President Kubitschek’s developmentalist policies, and examines how writers, artists and intellectuals from around the world — André Malraux, Bruno Zevi, John Dos Passos, Mário Pedrosa… — produced counter-narratives of Brasilia during the construction of this city-monument. These accounts offered a fantasmatic reflection on Brasilia’s underground, and imagined a city in ruins even before it had been inaugurated. I show that these counter-narratives challenged the official conception of the city, which, as a paradigmatic case of cartographic city-monument, produced notions of tabula rasa that meant to erase crucial episodes of Brazilian history and Brasilia’s own history of construction. Thus, the second part of the chapter analyzes the political and cultural strategies of erasure of construction workers from Brasilia’s narrative, to pose a final question: is the cartographic monument democratic or authoritarian?

These chapters represent different stages in the engagement with cartographic monuments: Mujica’s cartographic monuments consisted on pyramidal skyscrapers that were projected, but never fully materialized. Madrid’s cartographic monuments were built as transient and performative; their dismantling was planned. Brasilia is the quintessential representation of a
full construction of a cartographic monument. From different perspectives, they address the issues discussed above: the crisis of monuments in the twentieth century, the impact of mass society, the crisis of stone, the performative nature of modern monuments, the dialectics of preservation and destruction, the embracement and repudiation of monumentality, and different forms of appropriation of monuments.

These chapters are based on a thorough archival research. For chapter I, I followed Mujica’s steps from Marquand Library at Princeton University, where there is an original volume of *History of the Skyscraper*, published in 1929; to the Ethnographic Museum in Buenos Aires, which preserves a collection of his archaeological drawings, correspondence and his lecture notes; to the National Library in Mexico City, where Mujica’s main archive is held. This latter archive remains uncatalogued and had never bee studied before.

For chapter II, Fernando Sánchez Castillo’s *Monumentos ciegos* was the beginning of a search that took me to the National Photography Library in Madrid; the Photography Archive of Comunidad de Madrid; the headquarters of the Spanish Army in Madrid, where I interviewed Fernando García Mercadal’s nephew; the Goldfarb Library at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, where there is an original of the *Memory* of the protective monuments; the archives of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, to see the papers of Luis Quintanilla’s 1938 exhibition; the Spanish Academy in Rome, which holds some of García Mercadal’s papers; and Mexico City, where I interviewed the daughter of Roberto Fernandez Balbuena.

Chapter III on Brasilia presented a different challenge. While the other two were heavily based on archival research of little known projects of monuments, chapter III required a fresh look to a canonical work of modernist architecture. The perspective proposed here is based on a collection of narratives about the city’s subsoil. Research in the digital National Archive of
Brazil was crucial to understand the process of erasure of labor after the inauguration of the city. Some unstudied material has also been unearthed for this chapter.

The international trips to Mexico, Argentina, Spain and Italy were generously sponsored by various travel funds granted by the Princeton’s Program in Latin American Studies and Program in International and Regional Studies.
CHAPTER I

THE RETURN OF MONUMENTALITY

1. Francisco Mujica Díez de Bonilla

In the late 1920s, there were no skyscrapers built either in Latin America or Europe. However, a young Mexican published in Paris one of the first historical accounts of the skyscraper ever written, where he proposed an original postcolonial approach. In *History of the Skyscraper* (1929), Francisco Mujica Díez de Bonilla (1899-1979) argued that skyscrapers were a manifestation of a sense of monumentality specific of the American continent. According to him, the same sense of monumentality of Chichén Itzá could be seen in New York. In fact, he suggested skyscrapers were the return of the Pre-Columbian teocallis, or step pyramids with a temple at the top, which had been repressed during the Spanish Conquest. He contrasted specific Pre-Columbian temples with specific skyscrapers to argue that one might be the return of the other. For example, the Fisk building in New York could be the return of the Pyramid of the Niches in El Tajin, Mexico. The pyramidal form and the hundreds of symmetrical windows of the skyscraper resembled the heavy volume of the Pre-Columbian temple with hundreds of carved niches.

11 A first sample of his drawings was published in the magazine *L’Art Vivant* in Paris, 1927.

12 To refer to Mesoamerican architecture, Mujica used the term “American,” clarifying that he referred to the entire continent, not only the North American country. When I use the adjective “Pre-Columbian,” I am referring to monuments built before the Spanish Conquest, not the art and architecture produced by indigenous people after the Conquest. About how nineteenth-century nationalism was interested in the Pre-Columbian as a patrimony non connected to contemporary indigenous population, see Earle 158-160. To refer to Mujica’s term “American,” meaning a sense of building that pertain to the American continent regardless of its date of construction, I refer to “sense of building of the Americas.” I use “Pan-American,” when the architecture has this specific political purpose of uniting the Americas.
This chapter is the first systematic study of Mujica’s *History of the Skyscraper* in the context of his broader work as an architect, archaeologist, and graphic designer.\(^{13}\) Mujica wrote his book during the 1920s, at the same time as German art critic Aby Warburg was creating his Atlas Mnemosyne. Back then, the Mexican was a young architect and draftsman in his 20s, while the German was a respectable intellectual in his 60s. Their methods mirror each other. Just as Warburg was looking for the afterlives of the aesthetic forms of European Antiquity, Mujica was looking for the afterlives of the aesthetic forms of the Pre-Columbian Americas.

\[\text{[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]}\]

**Fig. 1.** Newspaper clipping showing Francisco Mujica’s photograph. *ZigZag Magazine*, date unknown. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.\(^{14}\)

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\(^{13}\) He was also a urban planner for Mexico City, Cuernavaca, Monterrey and Nuevo Laredo. His archive in the National Library of Mexico City remains uncatalogued and has never been studied before. Daniel Schávelzon has studied his archive in Buenos Aires. There are more Mujica’s archives in the University of California, in Lima, in Museo América of Madrid, and probably in the Field Museum of Chicago.

\(^{14}\) Most images of Chapter I were obtained from Mujica’s archive at the National Library of Mexico. Many are undated, and some do not include the name of the publication.
Warburg’s theories were highly influenced by his travels, famously the one he did through the Southwest of the United States, where he spent some time in Pueblo communities. Mujica’s theories were also based in his observation of the architecture of the Native inhabitants of Mesoamerica. He spent the 1920s working in archaeological sites of the Mexican South and Central America as a draftsman, where he drew reconstructed Pre-Columbian monuments based on the ruins that were being excavated at the time. The return of monumentality was twofold: Pre-Columbian temples were being unearthed and modern skyscrapers were being built. Such monumentality was impossible in Europe, he argued — in Europe, the human scale was the reference for architecture since the Ancient Greeks, while in the Americas, nature provided a monumental scale. Hence, there was an important difference between Warburg and Mujica: while the former was looking for a universal human drive to produce aesthetic forms, the latter was searching for a telluric drive with a nationalistic purpose.

Mujica saw the return to monumental forms in building as an achievement of aesthetic independence from Europe. While most of the American continent had reached political independence since the late eighteenth century, artists and architects continued copying what was produced in the former metropolis. Based on his studies on archaeological sites, Mujica saw the construction of skyscrapers as the final rupture with this artistic inertia. The architects of the Americas were finally buildings as Americans (term he used always in reference to the continent, not the country).

Mujica’s theory of the skyscraper can be thought as an attempt to overcome positivistic theories of history. To go beyond determinism, he was influenced by Henri Bergson and his theory of free will; to go beyond history as pure factuality, his theory echoed psychoanalysis, to the extent that it can be described as a ‘theory of the return of the architectural repressed.’
noted in the Introduction, a dialectics of concealment can be observed in the three cases discussed in this dissertation. In this case, it had to do with the act of destruction perpetrated by the Conquest, and the survival of the “sincere” aesthetic forms of the land despite the Spanish vandalism. That is, despite the colonial destruction, the indigenous sense of building survived latently. Mujica thought the soil of the American continent as a sort of mystic writing pad, where everything that was repressed by the colonization never fully disappeared. Instead, it left an indelible mark. He often described these repressed forms as a buried, vibrating force that finally returned to the surface after the independence, showing its own aesthetic sense, which was inherently monumental.

*History of the Skyscraper* was also a manifesto. This is where Bergson influenced him the most. Mujica believed that the architectural repressed could return both spontaneously or as an act of the architect’s free will, and consequently encouraged contemporary architects to embrace monumentality and use Pre-Columbian teocallis as a source of inspiration not only for ornamentation but specially for the skyscraper’s structure.

As a historian and theoretician of architecture, Mujica shows the tensions that took place after the Mexican Revolution to get rid of the scientifism of positivist architectural historiography. In order to do so, he used notions deeply rooted in Romantic nationalism and anti-materialism: “the manifestation of the spirit,” “the American soul,” “transcendence,” “God.” That made challenging for him to integrate his enthusiasm for the skyscraper with the actual use of this building as the paradigmatic type for business and capitalist exchanges. He addressed this paradox in two ways. First, even though not all cities had the space limitations that Manhattan had, he still insisted skyscrapers should be erected because of their aesthetic and political
meaning: the functionalist purpose was overshadowed, and the final aesthetic independence from Europe was emphasized. This would represent what he called the “American Renaissance.”

Second, Mujica was not interested at all in office space, he mainly saw skyscrapers as nationalistic symbols. Rem Koolhaas’ idea of the “lobotomy” of the skyscraper will help us understand the operation Mujica made to fit the skyscraper within his Romantic approach: to become a symbol of Romantic nationalism, he had to consider the skyscraper mainly as mass, volume, shape and façade, while celebrating its opacity and dismissing its use to a great extend. He was definitely not the first one to discredit positivist historiography in Mexico. Mujica was mentored by two of the main philosophers of history that lead this attempt in the country: the members of Ateneo de la Juventud [Youth’s Athenaeum]¹⁵ Antonio Caso and José Vasconcelos.

Mujica’s enthusiastic nationalism applied to architecture was questionable. He turned one of the most controversial themes of twentieth-century architecture into an identity mark: monumentality. He grew up and studied in Europe (Antwerp, Barcelona, Paris). He presented his theories within the framework of modern architecture, but as a criticism of the Modern Movement from a “regionalist and evolutionary” approach. He knew Fascist and Nazi architecture, which also embraced monumentality as an identity mark, a symbol of cultural superiority, and political authoritarianism.¹⁶ In fact, one of his mentors, Vasconcelos, had embraced racial theories to argue for the superiority of the people of the Americas.

¹⁵ Mexican cultural association created in 1909 as a criticism to the positivism prevailing during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz.
¹⁶ For the way the Modern Movement, particularly Le Corbusier, used monumentality, see Frampton, chapters 23-26. Indeed, Mujica’s design for a “Vertical City of the Future” (1929) seemed to have a similar sense of monumentality than Le Corbusier’s “Ville Contemporaine” (1922) or “Ville Radieuse” (1930), although Mujica gave monumentality a nationalistic meaning.
A complex set of queries should be raised: to what extend was Mujica’s notions of history and time modern? How his nationalistic approach related to the racial theories of his time? In the context of the 1920s and 1930s, was Mujica’s monumentality a symbol of authoritarianism and Pan-American superiority, or a symbol of de-coloniality and indigenous resistance to the European oppressor?

His contributions were not limited to architecture. He also had a major impact on writing, which he addressed from the field of graphic design, and as a continuation to his architectural proposals. His reform of bureaucratic communication has never been studied, but is crucial to understand his political and aesthetic positions. The second part of the chapter is devoted to the study of the graphic designs he produced from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, with particularly attention to an exhibition of charts he created for Lázaro Cárdenas on the President’s Six-Year Plan of agrarian reform, nationalization of oil, urban planning and industrial development.

Charts had been used since the early eighteenth century for intra-governmental and academic communication. But Mujia produced them also for the masses. In the late 1930s, that made him a worldwide pioneer in the infographic representation of mass data for mass consumption. He pursued a reform of bureaucratic communication by substituting text for charts, in order to make mass data accessible to a larger audience. This would not be implemented worldwide until the end of the Second World War.

Although Mujica never made it explicit, I suggest his theory of modern, bureaucratic communication might also be interpreted as a return of the logographic sense of writing of the Mesoamerican civilizations. This is another example of his understanding of modernity not as a rupture and celebration of the new, but as a continuation of the traditions interrupted or
discredited by the European colonization, an enhancement of national identity and what he called “the Pan-American soul” — he characterized his entire intellectual and artistic career as a search and representation of *el rostro de México* [Mexico’s face], whether through architecture or writing.

Moreover, Mujica used his work as a graphic designer to explore the shortcomings of one of the most emblematic institutions of the Enlightenment — the museum. His exhibition of charts was first shown in Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, but this was seen as limiting, since many Mexicans could not travelled to the capital to see it. To overcome this obstacle, this exhibition, originally called “Exposición objetiva” [Objective Exhibition], became “Exposición objetiva viajera” [Travelling Objective Exhibition]. It left the palace and was shown in a train that toured Mexico. The train became an itinerant museum. This entailed a criticism of the authoritarian nature of the enlightened museum as a fixed, centralized institution only accessible to the urban elite. Implicitly, Mujica showed his commitment to push the enlightened project of modernity towards a more democratizing way of exhibiting art and disseminating knowledge.

Mujica’s skyscrapers were cartographic because they were an avant-garde symbol of how the cities in the Americas should look liked in the future. However, that future was made out of numerous tensions. Skyscrapers should be erected to de-colonize Pan-American aesthetics, even though in most places the functionality that made them possible in New York did not apply. As can be corroborated with his engagement with charts, his quest to achieve aesthetic independence, disseminate knowledge and incorporate the masses to government was parallel to his refusal of avant-garde experimentations, because he was a firm believer in the idea of tradition as a source of any social, political or aesthetic development. I argue that Mujica’s
contribution can be understood in light of what Theodor Adorno has called “moderate modernism.”

2. The Ground as a Mystic Writing Pad: History of the Skyscraper (1929) and beyond

Francisco Mujica Díez de Bonilla started to conceive his architectural theory when drawing the archaeological remains that were being unearthed in the forests of the Mexican South. He never drew ruins, but reconstructions. Embracing positivist values, he considered to be applying “scientific methods” to his analytical drawings in order to reconstruct the original forms of the Pre-Columbian teocallis. Sometimes, he drew directly from the model, sometimes he used photographs as base for his speculative designs. He was in his 20s. Until the end of his life in the 1970s, he kept on re-drawing the same monuments with the same perspectives once and once again.

17 Mujica was a collector of photographs and postcards, as he was always “en busca de el rostro de México, de su paisaje, de su arquitectura, de todas las expresiones del ‘cono visual mexicano’, con sus infinitos puntos de vista” [searching for Mexico’s face, its landscape, architecture, all the expression of the ‘Mexican visual cone’, with its infinite perspectives].

In the manuscript of his unfinished memoirs, he told how he started a collection of postcards of Mexico when he was only five years old and lived in Antwerp, Belgium. He continued this collection for his entire life. Regarding photography, he was an enthusiast of historical photographs of Mexico City. Up to the end of his life in the 1970s, when he was an old man with serious financial struggles, he kept on spending much of his money in photographs. His favorite ones had always been those taken by Guillermo Kahlo, Frida Kahlo’s father. In the 1930s, Mujica had a close relationship with him, whom he considered a second father and a mentor. Kahlo taught him the most important things about photography Mujica got to know and offered special discounts for him, since his photographs were pricy. The other photographer he admired was also an immigrant, Hugo Brehme, particularly for his photographs of landscapes. He also collected images of Mexican embassies worldwide —he was interested in the use of architecture as national propaganda.

Mujica acquired postcards and photographs of Mexico during decades not only for a personal collection, but to exhibit the image of Mexico abroad. For example, in 1923 Secretary of Education José Vasconcelos and President of the Cultural and Artistic Board Federico Gamboa provided the funds for Mujica to purchase the complete Guillermo Kahlo’s collection to exhibit it in the Second Pan-American Congress of Architects, held in Chile. After the exhibition, the collection was donated to University of Chile. Twenty years later, when he was a professor in Argentina, he borrowed the photographs to show the Kahlo’s collection in Buenos Aires.
The core of his theory was already established in *History of the Skyscraper* (1929). Some developments of his ideas were added in the 1940s in talks, exhibitions and articles published in Peru, Chile and Argentina. This part of the chapter deals with his architectural theory as a whole, from his early archaeological work of the 1920s, to the publishing of his book, to the late additions until the 1940s.

2.1 The Re-BUILDER of Pre-COLUMBIAN Monuments

Mujica was born in Mexico City. The son of a diplomat, he had a very cosmopolitan upbringing. From very early age he lived in different countries of the Americas and Europe: Belgium, Argentina, Spain, Chile, France, Mexico. His absence from his home country and the sublimated Mexican nationalism he learned abroad from his ambassador father made his entire intellectual career to be devoted to find and reconstruct what he called *el rostro de México*.

His professional career was promising. He had graduated with honors, and won gold medals for his designs in the First and Second Pan-American Congresses of Architects, held in Montevideo (1920) and Santiago de Chile (1923), respectively. His submissions to these competitions were buildings in eclectic style, with elements of Pre-Columbian and colonial architecture. Mujica’s early projects of temples, schools and museums in what he called “Neo-American style” was another example of a trend of neocolonial styles encouraged by the Mexican government. As Enrique X. de Anda has studied, Secretary of Education José Vasconcelos, one of the most respected intellectuals in post-revolutionary Mexico, commissioned public buildings in neocolonial styles as a way of differentiating post-revolutionary architecture from the pre-revolutionary academicist constructions that
characterized Porfirio Díaz’s Francophile dictatorship (de Anda 2006: 168-170; 2008: 27). The recovery of the Hispanic architecture for a post-revolutionary Mexico was not without contradictions, since it implied the identification of the country to its colonial past. Mujica joined this preoccupation of overcoming the influence of French academicist architecture by following this neocolonial trend at the beginning of his career.

He returned to his home country in the early 1920s, where he continued his studies by attending some courses on archaeology and aesthetics taught by Hermann Bayer and Antonio Caso. Caso was, with Vasconcelos, the most important intellectual of Ateneo de la Juventud, the group who lead the overcoming of positivism after the Mexican Revolution. Mujica always named him as reference in his curricula. He may have learned about Henri Bergson from Caso. But just as his mentors, his quest to overcome positivist historiography was full of tensions, contradictions and continuities.

Mujica travelled all around Southern Mexico to draw reconstructions of the archaeological remains that were being excavated. However, despite almost a decade of thorough archaeological inquiry, his first — and only — book published in 1929 had a considerably different focus: the tall buildings of Chicago and New York. He was 30 when published History of the Skyscraper in Paris and later in New York, receiving good reviews in some important architectural and cultural journals. Mujica’s book has a privileged position in history of architecture, since it was one of the earliest histories of this modern building type ever published.

The first decades of the 20th century were characterized by intense architectural debates between the supporters of Neo-Precolumbian, Neo-colonial and Indigenist styles, all of them raised as a reaction to the dominant French academicism. In Mexico, this controversy was determined by the purpose of creating an architecture that represented the aesthetic and new social order post-Revolution. In Latin America, there were other architects pursuing similar projects than Mujica by emphasizing the modern aspect of the architecture of the Ancient Americas, such as Miquel Piqueras Cotoli in Peru and Héctor Greslebin in Argentina.
worldwide. It also proposed a very original approach, because he made a controversial connection between the unearthing of Pre-Columbians teocallis and the erection of skyscrapers.

Archaeologist David Schávelzon has comprehensively studied Mujica’s archaeological drawings held in the Ethnographic Museum of Buenos Aires. His overall assessment is that Mujica had great artistic talent, and some of his drawings made important discoveries about Pre-Columbian constructions. However, Schávelzon claimed that Mujica chose the wrong path in his career: he wanted to be an independent archaeological draftsman, when independence draftsmanship was not possible anymore in the archaeological sites of Mexico. The early 1930s were the peak of the institutionalization of archaeology in Mexico, with Ignacio Marquina and Miguel Ángel Fernández as the most influential and powerful draftsmen who benefited from funds, publications, and institutional positions.

Mujica was always an independent and solitary intellectual, and consequently often struggled to find a stable source of income. His professional failures make Schávelzon suggests he should have abandoned his pretensions as an independent archaeological draftsman, and exploited his artistic talent as illustrator of the Pre-Columbian world. Had Mujica done this — Schávelzon says—, he would have become a figure comparable to Miguel Covarrubias.

Schávelzon did not study History of the Skyscraper because he considered this book as a different intellectual enterprise than Mujica’s engagement with archaeology. However, both are closely related. History of the Skyscraper was only possible because of his observations of the archaeological sites of Southern Mexico. Indeed, Mujica’s major contribution was the way he

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19 Schávelzon states that Mujica rarely drew human figures to provide a scale. He found three sources for Mujica’s drawings: his archaeological reconstructions were inspired by archaeological remains he saw in person, knew through photographs taken by him, or inspired by bibliographical sources, often outdated (Dupaix, Charnay, Waldeck, Maler). Shávelzon suggested Mujica’s drawings may seem to be in constant conversation with those of his contemporary, Ignacio Marquina, and his theoretical inspiration migh come from Francisco Mariscal. Daniel Schávelzon. “Drawing Archaeology: Francisco Mujica and the creation of a modern mexican past.” Talk presented at Dumbarton Oaks Research Center, Washington DC. 10/10/2009: 22.
thought the unearthing of the Pre-Columbian monuments and the burgeoning erection of skyscrapers in the 1920s as the two sides of the same phenomenon: the recovery/return of the pre-colonial scale and sense of building.

Fig. 2. Mujica’s design of the restoration of the “House of the Governor”, Uxmal, Mexico. Detail of the principal front (History of the Skyscraper: plate VI).
Mujica’s approach to reconstruction of archaeological remains is rooted in a long controversy that started in the nineteenth century’s ideals of nationalism and scientifism. The two main names of such controversy were British art critic John Ruskin and French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. The former defended the no reconstruction of old buildings, while the latter was famous for his heavy hand in restoration. Ruskin celebrated the evocation of ruins, as a source of Romantic nationalism, while Viollet-le-Duc embraced a nationalist positivism: archaeology was a science auxiliary of history to reconstruct the glorious past. A more balanced position was established by Italian Camillo Boito, who established three kinds of restoration: archaeological (for Greek and Roman),

picturesque (for Gothic), and architectonic (for neoclassical and baroque)

(Choay 102). The older the building, the lighter the intervention.

Mujica was closer to Viollet-le-Duc’s postulates. He indeed thought of archaeology as a scientific discipline where he looked for evidence to propose nationalistic laws of building. However, unlike positivism, his archaeological findings made him propose a theory of history that was based neither on causality nor factuality, and was non-teleological.

Mujica’s telluric understanding of building was updated with some modern concepts that echoed psychoanalysis. During the mid 1920s, Sigmund Freud was reflecting on the mechanisms of the human memory and came out with the psychic model of the mystic writing pad. The mystic writing pad was a writing surface composed by a wax slab and a transparent sheet secured to the wax slab and composed itself by two layers: a protecting celluloid layer, and a waxed paper. Freud used this writing tool to argue that memory worked in a similar way: when the most

\[\text{Choay 102}\]

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20 Boito recommended the reconstruction of mass and volume, without interventions on ornamentation and surfaces.
21 He recommended to focused on the structure of the building.
22 He recommended full restoration.
23 Sigmund Freud. “A Note upon the ‘Mystic Writing Pad’ (1925 [1924])”.

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superficial sheet is full of traces, it can be pulled out and the next sheet is available and clear to write again. However, even though the writer may use another sheet, the traces drawn in the previous sheets can still be seen in the wax slab underneath. They never fully disappear.

Mujica’s proposal of the history of architecture resembles this Freudian theory of memory. He understood the ground of the Americas as a sort of mystic writing pad, where Spanish colonizers had pulled out and scrapped a layer of constructions, but a permanent trace had been left in the soil. Pre-Columbian architecture destroyed by the conquistadores was never fully lost or forgotten. It remained buried in the forests and the ground, repressed but beating to come out. The role of the archaeologists, such as that of the psychoanalyst, was to bring those beating traces back to the surface. Mujica’s fascination with skyscrapers had to do with the fact that he saw them as such repressed layer coming back out spontaneously.

It is unclear whether Mujica was directly inspired by Freud’s writing, or whether he even had a chance to read Freud. Rubén Gallo has studied the impact of psychoanalysis in Mexican artists, and some in Mujica’s circles were familiar with Freudian theories.²⁴ One of the earliest enthusiasts of psychoanalysis in Mexico was writer Salvador Novo, who would become a close collaborator of Mujica at the end of his life. However, there is no proof in Mujica’s archives he already had a relationship with Novo in the 1920s, much less they discussed psychoanalysis. Mujica urged architects to pursue “historical and psychological rectifications”²⁵ in order to recover for modernity what was repressed by several centuries of political and aesthetic colonization. If he never read Freud, it seems he was arriving to similar conclusions than the Viennese psychoanalyst about the functioning of —collective— memory.

²⁴ Freud had been translated into Spanish by Luis López Ballesteros and published in Spain and Latin America since 1922.
²⁵ La Nación (Chile), 8 May 1943: n p.
Since early in his career, Freud had seen the role of the psychoanalyst similar to that of the archaeologist. The unconscious made accessible only a few glimpses that are like the archaeological remains of a larger construction. The goal was to reconstruct those remains. As early as 1896, he wrote:

Imagine that an explorer arrives in a little-known region where his interest is aroused by an expanse of ruins, which remains of walls, fragments of columns, and tablets with half-effaced and unreadable inscriptions. (...) he may start upon the ruins, clear away the rubbish, and, beginning from the visible remains, uncover what is buried. If his work is crowned with success, the discoveries are self-explanatory: the ruined walls are part of the ramparts of a palace or a treasure-house; the fragments of columns can be filled out into a temple; the numerous inscriptions, which, by good luck, may be bilingual, reveal an alphabet and a language, and, when they have been deciphered and translated, yield undreamed-of information about the events of the emote past, to commemorate which the monuments were built. Saxa loquuntur! {Stones talk!} (“The Aetiology of Hysteria:” 192)

Freud used different versions of this archaeological metaphor in his writings for decades. The fact the he wrote about the mystic writing pad contemporarily to Mujica’s archeological work and development of his history of the skyscraper was not coincidence. In the 1920s, both were addressing an issue that was at the forefront of all intellectual conversations: the nature of destruction. Freud had experienced the extinction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the transformation of Vienna from an imperial capital to the capital city of a small landlocked country encased in the heart of Europe. Mujica experienced the First World War in Europe as a child and learned from abroad about the losses his aristocratic family suffered during the Mexican Revolution. Beyond their particular stories, the question of what happens with what is destroyed was at the core of many intellectual enterprises.

At the archaeological sites of Mesoamerica, Mujica made the observations that lead him to write History of the Skyscraper as a theory of the impossibility of total destruction. There were two ways in which what the Spaniards had destroyed and repressed could come back to the
surface: one was by gaining awareness of that repression, and digging to recover what was destroyed —archaeology. The other one was the spontaneous return of the architectural repressed —the skyscrapers. This way, Mujica blurred the differences between reconstructing a Pre-Columbian teocalli and building a modern skyscraper. Unknowingly, archaeologists and skyscraper architects were performing the same postcolonial enterprise.

It has been assumed that the predominance of positivist thought faded with the Mexican Revolution. But as Alexander Stehn has shown, intellectuals such as Antonio Caso were more anti-Porfiriato than anti-positivism, and some continuities in positivist thought can be found mixed with more modern approaches to history. Mujica was an example of that. He assumed the determinism of the telluric in a sense of construction that he found both in the teocalli and skyscrapers. But, as Bergson did, he also emphasized the power of free will to influence the course of art history, and rejected teleology, understanding history as open to repression, displacements, returns and deviations.

This suggests further paradoxes in Mujica’s endeavor. Before he could see many Pre-Columbian buildings reconstructed, he had seen and studied skyscrapers. Consequently, the image of the skyscrapers may have influenced the way he thought of the Pre-Columbian buildings, and not only the other way around. Cathy Gere has studied a crucial figure of twentieth-century archaeology that resembles Mujica in this regard: Sir Arthur Evans. Between 1905 and 1930, Evans unearthed and reconstructed the Palace of Knossos in Crete using concrete and following some precepts of the Modern Movement. In Gere’s words, she studied how the Concrete-Age man reconstructed the buildings of the Bronze Age. This can be applied to Mujica too: the Skyscraper-Age man was designing reconstructions of the buildings of the Mesoamerican empires, and consequently the reconstructed teocallis could have been influenced
by already-built skyscrapers. For Mujica, Mesoamerican teocallis did not necessarily precede skyscrapers. It was a dialectical relationship in which each influenced the other.

Indeed he tried to use the skyscraper as a source of inspiration for the reconstruction of Pre-Columbian teocallis. For example, see this reconstruction published in a Mexican newspaper in 1932:

[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

Fig. 3. Mujica’s article “Nuestras pirámides y los rascacielos” [Our Pyramids and the ‘Skyscrapers’]. México al día, May 1, 1932: 12. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
The article is signed by Mujica himself, and it seeks to argue that despite architects in the Americas have tried over centuries to ignore the telluric sense of building of the continent, such sense of building has returned: skyscrapers show the same structure and monumentality than Pre-Columbian teocallis. To argue that, Mujica included his drawing of the reconstruction of the “Pyramid of Teopantepec, Mexico, a demonstration of the similitude of the Pre-Cortesian pyramids and the step structure of the skyscrapers.” Some of those skyscrapers that look like teocallis referred by Mujica are the Paramount and French Buildings in New York, and the New Bell Building in Saint Louis.

However, to my knowledge, there is no place in Mexico called Teopantepec, and much less with a pyramidal Pre-Cortesian building of the characteristics of the building drawn by Mujica. He made up that building. The name “Teopantepec” can refer to a place with a step temple (teopan) built on a hill (tepec), but indeed there is not a specific place in Mexico with that name. In regards to the reconstructed building Mujica drew, the diagonal stairs are not a characteristic of Pre-Columbian teocallis. Mujica also reduced the number of steps these buildings used to have and stylized the structure in order to make it lighter and more vertical, closer to the structure of the skyscrapers. As was said above, he was an independent draftsman with little power over the official archaeological projects.²⁶ Had he more influence in the

²⁶ According to his résumé, during the 1920s he was Commissioner of the Direction of Pre-Hispanic Monuments, part of the Mexican Secretary of Public Education, under Secretary José Vasconcelos. There, he collaborated with the Carnegie Institute of Washington in the archaeological explorations of Chichén Itzá, particularly the Temple of Warriors. The collaboration of the Mexican government with the Carnegie institution was a diplomatic project of President Obregón, who sought to persuade the United States government to officially recognize the Mexican revolutionary government.

Shávelzon has studied these affiliation and could not find any documental corroboration, suggesting that they did not exist. In Mujica’s archives held in the National Library of Mexico, I found copious official documents during his time working for Cárdenas, but nothing about the Carnegie of the Direction of the Pre-Hispanic Monuments. I also tend to consider that he was an independent archeological draftsman, who might have exaggerated his institutional affiliations in his résumé.
reconstructions, the skyscraper might have served as a source of inspiration, and the reconstruction of Pre-Columbian temples as we know them today might have looked very different.

2.2. Against Teleology

In 1929, Mujica published *History of the Skyscraper* first in Paris and shortly after in New York. He wrote it in English. This was a risky decision, because he knew a book published in English would not have many readers in France. He expected that it would sell well anyways due to the quality of its many plates showing Pre-Columbian teocallis and skyscrapers, many of which had been drawn by Mujica himself.

He was wrong, and the book turned out to be a great failure in term of sales in France. Its huge size —even the book is monumental— and the fact that it was composed by many illustrations made it so expensive that most copies remained unbound in a Parisian bookstore. In fact, Mujica paid himself for the publication of his book in France, and he was saddled with debts for decades. Until very late in his life, his French editor kept asking him to pay off these debts, and complaining no one would buy a book that was so expensive and written in English.

This is not what Mujica said in his conferences on the skyscraper around Latin America. Instead, he told a successful story about how *History of the Skyscraper* was sponsored by prestigious universities. This was not true for the case of the French edition; for the publication in New York, the conditions of his publications in the United States remain unknown, but it
seems the book may have been better sold there, where the oldest universities acquired the book. That is how I could study History of the Skyscraper in his original edition of 1929: a copy is still held at Princeton University’s Marquand Library.

History of the Skyscraper consists of a theory, a history, and a manifesto. It is illustrated with explanatory charts and several series of plates of Mujica’s archaeological drawings, photographs of skyscrapers, renders of earlier drawings of buildings with neocolonial motifs, and a design of what he indistinctively called “the New-Precolombian City of the Future” or “the Vertical City of the Future,” made out of pyramidal skyscrapers. The book starts as a theoretical treatise that eventually becomes a manifesto. His rhetoric evolves from keeping a scientific tone

27 The foreword is signed by John Sloan. This Sloan is identified by both Ruth A. Philips in “Pre-Columbian Revival”: Defining and Exploring a U.S. Architectural Style, 1910-1940 and Schävelzon and Tomasi in La imagen de América as the renowned painter John French Sloan, of the Ashcan School of American Art, celebrated by his depictions of the urban life in New York City, including the radical changes in urban architecture. The foreword calls “the younger school of American artists” (n. p.) to develop an American art that is coherent with American life and the current economic Renaissance.

However, I think this attribution, although plausible, is questionable. I suggest that the John Sloan signing the foreword is not the painter, but the homonymous architect of Sloan & Robertson. There are different reasons that point out in this direction. Sloan & Robertson was a firm that designed and built skyscrapers such as the Fred F. French Building (1926-27) or the Chanin Building (1927-29) during the years Mújica was writing his book. Mujica mentioned in French Building in several articles. Two photographs and a drawing of the Chanin Building are shown in History of the Skyscraper (plate CXIV). Sloan mentions on the foreword that “my office and myself have watched with keen interest the laborious growth of this volume on the history of the skyscraper” (n. p.). Moreover, Sloan uses the first person to refer to the builders of the skyscrapers: “we apply the work of the primitive peoples on the American continent to this product which is purely American” (n. p.), although there is some ambiguity here (we, the Americans? we, the architects?). Mujica seemed to confirm this hypothesis in his résumé: “con prólogo del arquitecto John Sloan y colaboración documental de John Mead Howells, Thomas Hastings, Cass Gilbert y Corbett” [with a foreword by architect John Sloan, and images provided by John Mead Howells, Thomas Hastings, Cass Gilbert, and Corbett].

28 The plates follow an almost unbreakable order by which the Pre-Columbian drawings of set 1 are separated (with the exemptions of plate II on the evolution of the skyscraper and the drawings of the Neo-American school, temple and monuments of plates XV-XVIII, belonging to this first set) from the set 2 containing all the plates on modern architecture. This is also comparable to the text because although the introduction and the six chapters share topic and hypothesis, they could be published independently, as it actually happened. For example, the introduction was first published in French in La Revue Latine (Paris, May 1927), although that version did not please Mujica due to various errors on the text and the work of the translators who “interpreted various ideas which they should simply have limited themselves to translating” (n. p.). Later on, in 1932, the introduction was also published in Spanish, in the Mexican magazine Nuestro México.
in the initial sections to gradually leaving behind its informative and aseptic pretentions and becoming more directive and enthusiastic. This reflects his intellectual trajectory from a scientific historiography to a philosophy of history, from a kind of positivism that emphasized objectivity to a more engaged stance that sought to produce change in contemporary architects.

The book is divided into eleven chapters. It starts with a general theory of architecture and art (I. ‘Architecture’; II. ‘Factors in Producing a Work of Art. Process of the Artistic Conception’). In the next chapter he made the suggestion that these general theories should always be approached from a regionalist perspective (III. ‘Regional and Evolutionary Theory of Architecture’). The next sections are devoted to the history of architecture in the American continent (IV. ‘American Architecture Before the Conquest.’ VI. ‘American Architecture after the Conquest’). Finally, the manifesto, where Mujica encouraged fellow architects in the Americas to build monumental, following the models of the Mesoamerican buildings (V. ‘Evolution Which American Architecture Ought to Follow’). The manifesto is divided into two postulates, and closes with a “Revelation” (VII. ‘Necessary Reaction. Postulates.’ VIII. ‘First Postulate.’ IX. ‘Second Postulate. Reinforced Concrete.’ X. ‘Second Postulate. The Skyscraper.’ XI. ‘Application of Our Postulates. Revelation’). Lastly, Mujica addressed how the Pan-American architecture of the future should be, in the case the architects follow his postulates (XII. ‘American Renaissance.’ XIII. ‘Neo-American Architecture’).

The scope of History of the Skyscraper went beyond a theory of the skyscraper, architecture or art. It proposed a theory of history, which was eminently anti-teleological. It can firstly be understood for what it was not: it was not a history that followed some important paradigms created after/because of the Mexican Revolution —neither that of the Revolution as continuation of the Pre-Columbian empires, nor that of race perfectionism produced by mestizaje, as in
Vasconcelos’ 1925 *La raza cósmica*. Although there are some echoes of this in *History of the Skyscraper*, Mujica would have disagreed with both the idea of continuation after the colonial disruption (he actually found some colonial architecture to be more true to the spirit of the Americas than most architecture produced after the Independence), and the idea of a path towards race perfection (he was more concerned with aesthetic independence, but not superiority). His history was not lineal, either.

Mujica’s theory of history had some very modern elements: even though it was inspired by the Romantic ideals of the nation and the primacy of the telluric, it incorporated a notion of repression and subterranean time, and it took into account not only the events that actually happened and are registered as history, but also those events that did not happen, but could have happened, and those that might happen in the future. In this last regard, Mujica shared a similar view with another of his contemporaries interested in history and skyscrapers, Lewis Mumford.

Mumford had published *The Story of Utopias* in 1922, and after that he extensively wrote about North American architecture, particularly skyscrapers. For Mumford, just as for Mujica, history was not only the collection of events that took place. He stated that the human beings live simultaneously in two worlds: the worlds of facts and the *idolum*, or worlds of ideas (1922: 13). According to him, to focus only on facts —as positivism did— entailed to leave out half of existence. The *idolum* is where utopias are created. In this Platonic theory of history, the world of facts depends and is subservient of the world of ideas. Mumford made a distinction between two types of utopias: utopias of escape and utopias of reconstruction. He explicitly used Freudian theories to explain the former: utopias of escape reveal the desire to find refuge back in the womb (1922: 19). Instead, utopias of reconstruction seek for a better adaptation to nature (1922: 20-21).
Just as Mumford, Mujica was interested in the never-built as a point of comparison to test what actually happened, and as an archive of possibilities for what could be built in the future. But his final purpose was to find a way of modernizing positivist approaches to history by challenging teleology and factuality, while still avoiding any radical rupture with the Romantic ideals of the nation and the transcendental purposes of existence.

In Section I. Architecture, Mujica said to subscribe to the general understanding of architecture as a synthesis between artistic inspiration and functional purpose, although he tended to emphasize the former over the latter, particularly in the case of the skyscraper. He claimed for an architecture that was not just the science of good building, as asserted by the dominant industrialization and materialism, but also the product of the artist’s genius, and presented God as the first architect (“the Great Builder”, History of the Skyscraper 13) and nature as the first work of architecture.

A telling example of these tensions between positivism and modern philosophies of history is the way he represented the history of architecture of the Americas in this chart:
Fig. 4. Mujica’s “Theory of the Arts” in *History of the Skyscraper.*
Here, there is a tension between form and content. Mujica used positivist charts, generally employed to represent quantifiable mass data, to represent a non-positivist philosophy of history, based on Romantic ideals—a struggle between spirit and will—with some modernist updates—non-factual, non-teleological history. Also, his conclusion may seem paradoxical: the architecture of the colonial times was more “sincere” and “American” (in a continental sense) than that developed after the Independence Wars. Therefore, there was a disconnection between political and aesthetic forms: while the former were independent from Europe, the latter were not yet. Mujica’s purpose was to overcome such disconnection, and achieve aesthetic emancipation. The return of monumentality meant for Mujica the achievement of such aesthetic emancipation.

He did not prioritize facts over potential desirable outcomes. He represented them both together, in symmetrical, consecutive charts. In fact, he prioritized what could have happened over what actually happened by representing the potentiality before the actual fact. Mumford would have agreed with this representation. This is crucial for Mujica’s theory, based on the struggle between “sincere” architecture—the one that is loyal to the nation’s spirit—and “insincere” architecture—bent by foreign colonization. For him, there were three main reasons why architecture could separate itself from the spirit: abrupt interruption by a foreign force, moderate foreign influence, and the architect’s will. He condemned the first, celebrated the second and tried to influence the third.

In the chart at the upper right side, he showed how European and American architecture were following opposed trajectories at the moment of the Spanish Conquest. Despite their different paths, he made European and American architecture to come from the same point, suggesting the same origin of these two unconnected architectural manifestations, and extensively of all architecture. Mujica was interested in equating the achievements of European
and American art, since his theory was a theory of the spirit and the independence of aesthetic forms. Elsewhere in the book he briefly discussed the anthropological theories that pointed out to America as the continent where the human being originated. This would reinforce his nationalist approach. However, he was not fully convinced by this theory, which had not been proved at the time and legitimate claims against it had been raised. He acknowledged this. Different from racial theories in Europe and also in the Americas (see Gallo on Vasconcelos: 201-236), Mujica was not interested in a notion of racial superiority.

In the four parts of the diagram, Mujica depicted the trajectory of American architecture in bold lines to emphasize the fundamental deviations that it had suffered through history, and the need to lean back closer to its original path. Grey is the color of potentiality in Mujica’s charts. Historical facts are represented with full black ink. This was used to represent both the past and the future. The meeting point of the continuous, bold black arrow, and the discontinuous, bold grey arrow represents the present, where historical facts are open to a range of future potentialities.

The parabola made in this first chart by connecting the tips of the arrows representing European and American architecture is the longest out of the four. The influence of the Conquest and colonization shortened this parabola. Mujica’s desired outcome represented in the fourth chart was to broaden this parabola.

He did not consider these deviations detrimental per se. Instead, Mujica saw foreign influence as a positive force that could enrich the original aesthetic forms of a continent. What he decried was the idea of tabula rasa that the Spanish conquistadores tried —unsuccessfully— to apply: destruction of the Pre-Columbian architecture and substitution for European forms (see
chapter III for a further discussion on tabula rasa as applied by the Modern Movement). The chart in the upper left side represents a situation that did not happen, an alternative Conquest where the conquistadores would have respected and valued the architecture they found. In a way, this is a utopia of the past; clearly, a non-positivistic reading of history.

After the Conquest, the arrow of architecture in the Americas is not drawn in bold, black lines, but in grey. Mujica did not condemn the Conquest tout court, but the way Conquest took place and how colonization was performed afterwards. Had the colonizers understood the spirit of the architecture of the Americas and its inherent value, European influence would have been beneficial for the desired evolution of American architecture. Mujica’s philosophy of history is opened to moral possibilities: its richness laid on the representation of the contrast between what should have happened and what actually happened.

Mujica’s Romantic ideas of the nation and revolution can be traced back to Freidrich Schiller. First, in his letters to Goethe, Schiller described how the French Revolution was a great opportunity missed because of the bad quality of the people that carried it out. Mujica thought similarly about the Conquest. Second, Schiller’s understanding of aesthetics was based on a drive towards liberty determined by two kinds of irreconcilable thrusts: one towards mutations, the other towards immutability. He wrote as follows in his twelfth letter to Goethe:

The second of these impulses, which we may call the formal impulse, proceeds from Man’s absolute existence or from his rational nature, and strives to set him at liberty, to bring harmony into the diversity of his manifestation, and to maintain his person throughout every change of circumstance (The Bloomsbury Anthology 292).

For Schiller, the immutability impulse was about form and it sought to maintain the person centered and protected from the diversity of the world throughout its existence. Aesthetic form is what gives people their freedom, since it keeps them anchored to who they really are. This is
based in a transcendental notion of identity. Mujica believed this impulse existed, too. However, he highlighted that it was not merely rational, since a subterranean force always drags back to the original self.

Mujica further commented on this in chapter III. ‘Architecture of the Skyscraper’. There, he distinguished four periods in the architecture of the Americas: a) original architecture (early colonial); b) colonial; c) architecture of the Independence; d) contemporary architecture. This architectural history is structured around the dialectics of purity and that of decadence. By pure, Mujica understood an architecture that enacted the American spirit; by decadent, an architecture that yielded to foreign impositions. These were the two extremes of a continuous. For Mujica, the desirable situation would be to stay as close as possible to the forms that incarnate the spirit of the Americas, while taking advantages of some foreign influences. In these ideas of purity and decadence is where Mujica more closely approached the racial theories of the 1920s and 1930s. However, he never fully embraced this approach, and his notions of purity and decadence were reflections of his ideas of aesthetic dependency: a fully pure Pan-American architecture was not really desirable, since foreign influence could be enriching. Let’s remember that in the context of his advocacy for the indigenous artistic heritage, he even thought colonization could have been positive, had the Spaniards been able to appreciate the sophistication of Pre-Columbian architecture.

It can seem paradoxical that his nationalistic discourse is combined with a perception of history in which the architecture of (part of) the colonial times is purer and more coherent with the Pan-American spirit than post-independence architecture. But this judgment is intelligible

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29 He approved some examples of mixed style produced during the early colonial times consisting of a symbiosis between European architectural techniques and American features of ornamentation. But this assembling
in the context of Mujica’s theoretical postulates. The subterranean forces of the spirit drags toward the sincere forms, which manifested more purely before the Conquest. The Conquest resulted in a brutal irruption and substitution of forms, but as times passed, these subterranean forces of the spirit dragged back to the sincere forms again. Consequently, the late colonial times were characterized by an architecture that was going back closer to the forms of the American spirit, until they were interrupted again for the academicist architecture of the post-independence times.

Mujica’s revalorization of the Pre-Columbian heritage has some important shortcoming. He created a version of Pre-Columbian architecture that was highly monolithic, privileging the constructions of Mesoamerica. His theories sought aesthetic emancipation, but were postcolonial in a narrow sense: for example, he did not establish any particular relation between Pre-Columbian teocallis and the indigenous population of the twentieth century—it seems he was talking about a lost civilization with no continuities in the present. In regards to his ideal future and the role of skyscraper as cartographic monuments to serve as a catalyst, Mujica was arguing for achieving in aesthetics the independence the Americas had achieved in politics, and built a non-materialistic, Romantic modernity. His theory was indeed a theory of political and aesthetic forms. In the next section it will be discussed what he meant by the formal presentation of the American spirit.
2.3. Monumentality and Monuments

For Mujica, what differentiated Pan-American architecture was its scale: while European architecture had been based on the human scale since the Greeks, the architecture of the Americas had traditionally been monumental, based on nature as a scale. This is not new to art history; in fact, since the beginning of the discipline during the Renaissance, an important concern of art historians was the contrast between the experimentation with human scale in classic Greece versus the gigantism of Asian architecture. In the case of Mujica, the different scales implied a different object-subject relation in art and architecture: while Europeans tailored the world to their needs, Americans adapted their needs to the world.

The fourth chart in the diagram above (down, left) was the representation of Mujica’s manifesto: he was calling for a “necessary reaction” against the academicist architecture that imitated European models after the independence. He never ascribed to Bergon’s theories of time and free will automatically, but was not doubt inspired by them. Bergson’s defense of the existence of free will was a way of overcoming positivist determinism by criticizing how this scientifist approach had confused abstract time with the concrete ways in which the consciousness experiences time. Mujica did something similar: by discrediting that architectural history could be understood merely by cause-effect relations and facts, he opened the door to subterranean time and the potentialities of repressions and returns, both spontaneous and motivated. That is why he thought he could influence the future developments of architecture, and encouraged architects to change paths, and embrace the forms that represented the spirit of the Americas.
Mujica’s proposal was very different to the ones made by many other twentieth-century manifestoes, which generally celebrated the new and claimed against tradition and the past. This is what he had to say about avant-garde in *History of the Skyscraper*:

Surely modern architecture should not be the deplorable creations of the would be-style inventors, the socialists who have penetrated the world of art further than they have the world of politics, who are more concerned in promulgating an innovation than in establishing a real improvement—so-called Futurists, New Thinkers, Cubists, ‘art nouveau’ followers, all unrelated to the past without thought of traditions. (*History of the Skyscraper* 33)

He could not accept the work of the avant-gardes because he did not share their revolutionary agenda, but above all because their relation to history was unacceptable for him. He considered there was neither progress nor improvement without tradition. Mujica understood identity in a way Futurists and Cubists could not: as a source of modern forms and aesthetic emancipation.

However, here again he showed a very monolithic understanding of both European and Pan-American art history. In the case of Europe, an analysis of the gothic and the architecture of the medieval times would have contradicted his argument of the human scale. Mujica was aware that gothic was an important source of inspiration for the modern skyscraper, but he overshadowed this influence. In his plates, the gothic was an earlier step in the development of the verticality and monumentality of the skyscraper, which only got its full potential when embracing its Pre-Columbian ancestors.

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30 Futurists had very different understanding of monuments than Mujica. For example, Russian poet and playwright Velimir Khlebnikov wished to de-localized them and made them universal:

Organize a worldwide authority to decorate Planet Earth with monuments, turning them out like a lathe operator. Decorate Mont Blanc with the head of Hiawatha, the gray peaks of Nicaragua with the head of Kruchonykh, the Andes with the head of David Burliuk. The fundamental rule of these monuments to be as follows: the individual’s birthplace and his monument must be located at opposite poles of the earth. (…) Erect portable moving monuments on the platforms of trains. (*Collected Works* 359, italics are mine)
He argued this in a way that his Romanticism was adapted to the functional ideals of modernism. First, he brought this up as a tension between spirit and will: the Pan-American sense of monumentality was manifesting itself spontaneously (what he called *la vibración americana*, or *la palpitación latente*), but needed the architects’ will to fully embrace it. Second, he proposed that building skyscrapers in the way he proposed could solve modern concerns related to the hygiene of the modern metropolis. This is where he made the distinction between monumentality and specific monuments. Architects should not only build monumental, but design skyscrapers in the pyramidal forms of the Pre-Columbian teocallis, he argued. One of the main challenges of modern urban planning in cities like New York was to make the ground level healthier in a city where skyscrapers arranged next to one another were producing a lack of air and light in the streets. According to Mujica, by building pyramidal skyscrapers, air and light would find their way to the ground level.

*History of the Skyscraper* ended here. By the 1930s, there were only skyscrapers built in the United States. Even though the 1929 Wall Street crash stopped the construction of tall buildings for some time, the crisis did not affect Latin America that much, and Mujica continued a campaign promoting the construction of skyscrapers in Mexico and other countries, while pursuing other intellectual and artistic paths.
Fig. 5. Mujica’s Evolution of the skyscraper (*History of the Skyscraper*: plate II). He made the gothic inspiration to be a step earlier than the definitive, pre-Columbian inspiration, that he called “modern.”
Fig. 6. Mujica’s pyramidal proposal for future skyscrapers (*History of the Skyscraper*: plate CXXXI).
In his conferences and exhibitions around Latin America of the 1930s and 1940s, his Romantic nationalism was emphasized, and the functionalism of the skyscraper was diminished. He disregarded the actual needs that have the skyscraper possible and useful in the United States, particularly in New York. Mexico City did not have the scarcity of space than the island of Manhattan suffered. However, Mujica promoted the skyscraper there too. He was not alone in this. Enrique X. de Anda has pointed out that these tall buildings made Mexican architects to look north for models instead to Europe for the very first time in history. This was Mujica’s purpose, too: he wanted Mexican—and Latin American—architects to build skyscrapers as sort of nationalistic statements, as temples to the nation and the Pan-American identity.

Nevertheless, very few tall buildings were built in Mexico around the publication of History of the Skyscraper. La Nacional (1929-1932) was probably the most representative. It had a pyramidal structure, but only thirteen floors. De Anda specified that this kind of “tall” buildings were built indeed for its “socio-cultural meaning” (Historia de la arquitectura mexicana 180). Mujica had approved this, since his Romantic ideas were prioritized over functional needs. He saw skyscrapers above all as monumental volumes, nationalistic temples, empty shells.

As years passed, he gained new confidence that the skyscraper would spread not only in the American continent, but worldwide. During the Second World War, he gave a series of talks and published articles that advocated for the idea of the twentieth century as the century when the forms produced in the American continent would finally influence the rest of the world. Mujica was spending most of his time in Chile and Argentina, hired by the government of both countries. In 1941, he published his theories in a Chilean newspapers under the title “América,
Also during the war, he gave an interview where he foresaw the promising future of the skyscraper:

El rascacielos se divulga rápidamente en el mundo. En Buenos Aires, en Río de Janeiro, en La Habana, los edificios principian a elevarse, y en París, santuario de tradiciones, ya hay voces que abogan porque se haga un lugar al rascacielos en los nuevos barrios residenciales que deberán construirse en la línea de las antiguas fortificaciones. Se aducen motivos de higiene y conveniencia de distinta índole. (Diario Ilustrado, unidentified titled, n. page: 24 June 1944).

[Skyscrapers quickly spread around the world. In Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Havana, they start to arise, and in Paris, sanctuary of traditions, some are advocating for the construction of skyscrapers in the new residential neighborhoods that will be built where there were old fortifications. Hygiene and convenience are adduced.] He never explained the hygiene and convenience causes he referred. Mujica soon realized the results of the Second World War would benefit the export of this American building type. In 1945 he published an article entitled “Filosofía y radiaciones del arte Americano,” where “radicaciones” pointed out to the potential export of the skyscraper. By the mid 1940s, Mujica could have drawn a fifth chart in his diagram, in which the influences between American and European architecture would be in the opposite direction: the skyscraper, and its sense of monumentality, would eventually be exported to Europe. The American continent stopped being merely a recipient of foreign influences, and became an agent that imported its forms and influenced Europe. The twentieth century was meant to be the Pan-American century in terms of aesthetic predominance.

Mujica’s embracement of monumentality was indeed different than the monumentality enacted by Fascism and Nazism in Europe at the time, in the sense that it was neither presented as a symbol of cultural superiority, nor with pretensions of eternity. He enthusiastically imagined

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31 La Nación (Chile), 20 June 1941: n. p.
how the skyscraper could influence European architecture; but he did not raise this as an imperial issue, but as an artistic exchange. Skyscrapers should not substitute European constructions, but enrich them. He was not thinking either in the magnificent ruins skyscrapers could produce in the future either (as Nazis did about their monumental constructions), and in fact he avoided ruins both in his architectural theories and archaeological drawings.

Mujica encouraged to build monumental for the nationalistic sake of the monumental, overshadowing it from any functionalist purpose. His skyscrapers are empty, with no functional origin, use, or interior space. They are shells. He advocated for skyscrapers as hollow national symbols. His ideal of modernity was spiritualist, liberated from the excesses of positivist determinism, but still rooted in Romantic nationalism.

His Pan-Americanism was also paradoxical. In this regard, he showed a sort of intra-American imperialism. He used Pan-Americanism as a rhetorical strategy to promote Mesoamerican architecture as the origin of modern architecture in the continent. If the skyscrapers were the return of the teocallis, he had the challenge to explain why the skyscrapers first appeared in the United States, far away from the Mesoamerican pyramids. According to him, the Americas share the same soil, and all peoples who inhabited the continent seemed to have the same experience on earth, an experience of the monumentality of nature that the Europeans lacked: “Volvamos la mirada a nuestras selvas, a nuestros cielos, a nuestros mares, a todas las formas de infinito que nos dan los ritmos y armonías del alma Americana” (Diario Ilustrado, unidentified titled, n. page: 24 June 1944) [Let’s look back to our forests, our skies, our seas, all our forms of the infinite provided by the rhythms and harmonies of the American soul].
Pre-Columbian constructions vary greatly along the American continent, and nature is also very diverse along the Americas. But Mujica presented a monolithic vision with a twofold purpose: to make skyscrapers the afterlife of the Mesoamerican temples and the architectural form of the future, and to promote ancient architecture of modern Mexico as the source of the modern skyscraper.

2.4. Losing Face: Cosmopolitanism, Capitalism, and the Skyscraper

Mujica’s approach to the skyscraper had the main ingredients of the utopian narratives around this building type in the early twentieth century: the horizon of a vertical city, the building as a geological feature, “the earth repeating itself” (Koolhas 72). He called his proposal “The Vertical City of the Future,” and indeed thought each skyscraper as its own city, with vertical zoning. This is very tangible in his drawings, where the 100-storied buildings are communicated with each other through a highway system, a similar transportation network than the one proposed by other contemporaries, such as the Weimar architect Ludwig Hilberseimer. There are two levels in the streets: the ground level is for wheeled traffic and the elevated level is for walking. In most utopias of the skyscrapers, urban life happens above all in the interior of the building-city. According to Koolhaas, its inhabitants are in a sort of Platonic cave: everything in the interior is constructed as if it were an open-air city, they are copies of the outside (Koolhaas 89).

Although Mujica’s skyscrapers shared this ideal of vertical, interior urbanism, his approach to the skyscraper is above all exterior: mass, volume, and shape. His theories are a celebration of what Koolhaas have called the “lobotomy” of the skyscraper (82). History of the
*Skyscraper* embraces Romantic anti-materialism and started as a diatribe against “el siglo industrial y materialista que vivimos” because “ha osado decir que la arquitectura es la ciencia de la buena construcción, olvidando que, sin el genio transformador y multiforme del artista, la arquitectura no puede existir” (19). “Materialism” was a term he used to oppose indistinctively socialism and capitalism. Both promoted different forms of cosmopolitan architecture that Mujica condemned.

Again in his conference in Chile in the mid 1940s, he argued against the possibility of a purely cosmopolitan architecture:

a pesar de que la civilización moderna tiende al cosmopolitanismo, será de todos puntos imposible el predominio universal de un tipo único de arquitectura y que ésta tenderá siempre, en mayor o menor grado, a definirse dentro de perfiles característicos en las diversas regiones de la tierra, cuyos factores naturales son diversos y diversas también las almas de sus pueblos (*Andean Quarterly*, Fall 1945: 18).

[despite modern civilization tends toward cosmopolitanism, it will be absolutely impossible the universal predominance of one specific type of architecture; architecture will always tend to be defined by the characteristic of each world region, whose natural features are diverse, and so are the soul of their peoples]

This is an example of Mujica’s tensions between positivist and spiritualist understandings of art. He used determinism to discredit the excesses of cosmopolitanism, but always left room for free will. In the same article, he regionalized the human necessities that the Modern Movement had internationalized: the material and spiritual needs are not universal, but depend on the fauna, flora, regional landscape, climate and customs (*Andean Quarterly* 21). An international

architecture, either socialist or capitalist, was impossible—it would have been insincere, following Mujica’s terminology.

To name the artist’s determinism to the soul of his/her culture, he used a surprising term, often employed by contemporary biologists and economists:

No variando los factores exteriores de un modo violento, sino lento y evolutivo, irán estos impresionando a los artistas de generación en generación, de un modo más o menos semejante, formando así una huella atávica dentro del pueblo habitante de la región, que vendrá a constituir su particularidad sentimental, formando un criterio, un sentimiento común en sus artistas para percibir, aquilatar e interpretar los factores del mundo exterior regional, con cierta predilección, con cierto amor y también con cierta clarividencia. (Andean Quarterly, Fall 1945: 21-22, italics are mine)

[If the external factors are not violently transformed, but follow a slow evolution, these factors will impress artists generation after generation in a similar way, creating a atavistic print within the people who inhabit a specific region. This atavistic print will become its sentimental particularity, creating a common judgment and feeling, in a way that they will perceive the factor of the regional, external world with a specific predilection, love, clairvoyance]
Fig. 7. Mujica’s “A Hundred Story City” (*History of the Skyscraper*: plate CXXXIII). This is one of Mujica’s rare references to the use of the interior of the skyscrapers.
Fig. 8. Mujica’s “The City of the Future” (*History of the Skyscraper*: plate CXXXIV).
The *huella atávica*, or atavistic print, is cosmopolitanism’s main opponent. Mujica called for an embrace of such atavistic print to be able to build a modern Pan-American architecture. For Mujica’s contemporary biologists, heirs of Darwinian thought, atavism was a return of a trait that evolution had left behind in previous generations. This trait was discarded because it did not provide any advantage for adaptation. However, it never disappeared from the DNA. It was “buried” in the DNA, hidden for several generations, and it arbitrarily returned in a specific individual, without contributing much to progress. In the social sciences of the times, atavism also had a pejorative meaning. For example, Joseph Schumpeter had considered the imperialism that provoked the First World War was a form of atavism that did not respond to the needs of modern capitalism.

Instead, atavism had a positive connotation for Mujica because it refers to the certainties of identity. The atavistic print was a shared way of seeing, feeling and thinking. Mujica’ use of this term can be clarified by comparison with how Surrealism also talked about atavism. The whimsical architectures of surrealism worked as a fundamental counterpoint to modern architecture. Surrealism often used domestic space to propose a critique to rationalism (*The Surreal House* 2010, Vidler’s *The Architectural Uncanny*, Foster 1993). The surrealist house is the opposite of the Corbusian *machine à habiter*; the former turned the spotlight on everything that the latter repressed: if the different forms of modern architecture sought to create order, harmony and functionality, surrealism created delirium, a theatre of instinctual dynamics, an altar of memories and repressed recollections.

In 1934, Salvador Dalí painted *Vestigios atávicos después de la lluvia* [Atavistic Vestiges after the Rain], a nostalgic composition in which a father and his son stand facing a fragile shelter feebly standing in the middle of a wasteland. It is a composition about the return home.
Just as in Dali’s painting, Mujica used atavism to refer to the Fatherland, to the subterranean forces that made an international architecture not only impossible, but also undesirable because of the betrayal to identity, the loss of truth, the impoverishment of art. He was against an architecture that flew in from abroad and landed, and in favor of a telluric architecture that slowly sprouted from the nation’s land. (see chapter III on Brasilia for a discussion of the opposed phenomena: the embrace of international architecture as a national symbol and the erasure such cosmopolitanism performed). In the case of Mujica, the archaeologist and the skyscraper architects were chasing the same purpose in the American continent: a process of self-awareness, of post-coloniality, but also of reaction against the excesses of cosmopolitanism.

By emphasizing the exterior shape, mass and volume, and relegating interior space and use, Mujica reconciled his anti-materialism with the capitalist skyscraper. This is what Koolhaas has characterized as the “lobotomy” of the skyscraper, understood as a liberating evolution:

In Western architecture there has been the humanistic assumption that it is desirable to establish a moral relationship between the two [the façade of a building and its interior], whereby the exterior makes certain revelations about the interior that the interior corroborates. The ‘honest’ façade speaks about the activities it conceals. (…) In the deliberate discrepancy between container and contained New York’s makers discover an area of unprecedented freedom. They exploit and formalize it in the architectural equivalent of a lobotomy (Koolhaas 82)

Mujica considered the interior of the skyscraper in one of his plates, following the conventional distribution between the lower floors devoted to business and the upper floors devoted to residency (see above plate CXXXIII). But he did not delve into this. His theories were almost entirely concerned with the skyscraper as a sculptural work. The moral break between interior and exterior was a way of making compatible his Romanticism with his anti-capitalism, his regionalism with the potential internationalism of the skyscraper’s use. Koolhaas called this
“insincere” (although in a positive, liberating way). For Mujica, the sincerity of this architecture did not have to do with the interior-exterior relation, because he did not considered the skyscraper a product of Western architecture consequence of functional needs, as Koolhaas said, but a manifestation of a sense of monumentality purely Pan-American.

In regards to the utopian dimension of the skyscraper, Koolhaas wrote in reference to the Globe Tower building projected in 1909:

But as spectral alternative, the diversity of the 84 platforms of the 1909 Skyscraper holds out the promise that all of this ‘business’ is only a phase, a provisional occupation that anticipates the Skyscraper’s Conquest by other forms of culture, floor by floor if necessary (Koolhaas 69).

This is also the reason why Mujica disregarded the interior —ideally, the capitalist use would eventually disappear. (This echoes a discussion of chapter II, when the Spanish Communist assumed the protectionist role of the bourgeois republic as a transitory phase towards a utopian, Communist future). Implicitly, Mujica disregarded the interior of the skyscraper and its use as a transitory phase towards a utopian, transcendental future where skyscraper would be merely national symbols in a Romantic, anti-materialist world. This is the future his pyramidal skyscraper as cartographic monuments proposed. In this regard, it could be considered that his anti-materialist modernity was highly aristocratic. However, his theories of architecture are only half of the equation. His engagement with graphic design since the mid 1930s would provide a richer and more complex portrayal of his political and aesthetic stances.
3. From Monuments to Charts

Exposición objetiva del Plan Sexenal: Mass Data for Mass Consumption

Building and writing were the two key concerns of Francisco Mujica’s intellectual endeavor. He combined the development and dissemination of his architectural theories with a theory and development of a writing system based on graphics. Mujica had devoted the 1920s to archaeology and skyscrapers, but the Wall Street Crash of 1929 had a direct impact on his career. Many constructions of skyscrapers got postponed or cancelled in the United States, and the interest in the topic declined. Although he continued promoting skyscrapers in Latin America, he re-focused on archaeology for some time, and resumed his work as an independent draftsman. In fact, his most important archaeological findings date from the early 1930s. In Tula, in the Valley of Mexico, he found evidence crucial to the confirmation of the relation between this archaeological site and the Mayan civilization of Yucatán. French archaeologist Désiré Charnay had suggested this relation a few decades earlier, but it was not until Mujica’s discoveries of material concomitances between the two that the relation could be certified.

Besides this continuing interest in archaeology, he started exploring other artistic and intellectual paths. Mujica engaged with graphic design, which provided him with an unexplored way of representing el rostro de México. Infography is the visual representation of complex data that can be apprehended at a glance. Infography historians have dated its origin in prehistoric cave painting and ancient hieroglyphics, since they visually convey a lot of information of the environment where they were produced. Maps are another ancient form of infographics. However, the modern charts were an enlightened invention: in 1786, Scottish political economist William Playfair published Commercial and Political Atlas, where his analysis was supported for the first time by a variety of types of charts, most of which we still use today. Later on, charts
became a favorite mean of communication for positivism because it provided an efficient way of representing quantitative data and formulate laws and trends.

Mujica picked up this positivist tradition, but he did something revolutionary in Mexico and worldwide: while charts were extensively used for governmental and academic elites, he was a pioneer in producing charts for mass consumption. Indeed, until the post-Second World War, charts were used exclusively for academic or governmental communication. To be decoded, charts required a different level of literacy, a specific ability to interpret the visual representation of mass data. After the war, various publications in the United States started to educate their readers in this kind of writing code. Magazines such as Fortune and Businessweek began to convey mass data in charts for mass consumption.

Francisco Mujica preceded them by a few years. Just as he had used diagrams to explain his history of the skyscraper to peer historians and architects, he proposed charts could be a great tool to build his ideal “democracia planificadora” [planning democracy]. His charts were first designed in the mid 1930s. His target audience was not only specialists, but regular Mexicans from all social classes. Mujica put together a series of exhibitions between 1937 and 1939 in Mexico, and then toured Latin America, offering his expertise with graphic design for mass consumption to different governments and institutions.

According to Mujica, the democratic potentialities of charts laid on their capacity for representing a large amount of data in a simple way for a mass audience, thus the citizens could understand better the resources available in the country and how they were being managed by the government. He was hired by President Lázaro Cárdenas as “Oficial Mayor del Comité del Plan Sexenal de la Presidencia de la República, encargado de la planificación y control del Primer Plan Sexenal mexicano, mediante la aplicación de sus sistemas gráficos de planificación estatal”
Chair of the Six-Year Plan Committee, under the Presidency of the Republic, tasked with the Planning of the First Mexican Six-Year Plan through the creation of a system of graphics for state planning. 

The challenge was unprecedented: he had to design a system of charts that were useful for both governmental specialists and the Mexican people. The collection of charts was shown at least in three main exhibitions: in newly-inaugurated Palacio de Bellas Artes in 1937, in the Mexican pavilion of the 1939 New York World’s Fair, and in a moving exhibition entitled “Exposición viajera objetiva del Plan Sexenal” that travelled all around Mexico in a train-turned-into-a-museum also in 1939.

Mujica’s interest for statistical graphics mirrored his interest in archaeology and monuments, and sheds light about his understanding of modernity, aesthetics and his political convictions. The ultimate project of his professional and intellectual career was visualizing Mexico, grasping how its soul presented itself in aesthetic forms, and how Mexican artists could represent it by using modern techniques, such as skyscrapers and charts. In the following section, I will analyze to what extend his charts were also a vindication of the ancient aesthetics of the Americas, what conversation they established with the spaces where they were shown, and the implications of this pioneering proposal, that preceded a trend that only started in the West a few years later and is dominating today: the visual representation of mass data for a mass audience. His charts were their artistic ideal for the technocratic form of government he called ‘planning democracy.’
3.1. Charts and Murals in Palacio de Bellas Artes (1937)

“Exposición objetiva del Plan Sexenal” can be considered a second literacy campaign for a new society—of masses—and a new scopic regime—prioritizing images over text. Since its target audience were Mexicans from all social classes, the successful reception of his charts was only possible after the literacy campaigns of the early 1920s organized by Vasconcelos. Mujica’s was the second stage in these campaigns. While Vasconcelos was focused on teaching how to read and write texts and make classical literature available, Mujica—as implementer of Cárdenas’ policies of public education—was interested in another system of dissemination of information that has enormously grown since the mid twentieth century up to today: infography. The charts showed an evolution in Mujica’s political ideals, from the vague form of Romantic nationalism and anti-materialism of his earlier work on the skyscraper to a more pragmatic system of protectionist and nationalist capitalism.

Cárdenas’ Six-Year Plan was originally inspired by the Soviet Union’s Five-Year Plans, implemented since the early 1920s—a top-down planning strategy in periods of five years to achieve a quick development of the country. The theoretical background is the Marxian notion of “productive forces,” a combination of means of production and human labor. After their success in the Soviet Union, numerous countries used similar strategies of development planning. Mexico was one of them, where the plan lasted six years in order to fit the duration of the presidential term.

The Cárdenas administration was an easy compromise for Mujica: very nationalistic, highly technocratic, and with a reformist program including agrarian reform and the nationalization of oil and the railway system. His anti-materialism was compatible with a form of
nationalistic and highly-protected capitalism. Cárdenas’ two main economic policies — agrarian reform and nationalization of oil — were a claim of the Mexican land for the Mexicans. What was new here in Mujica was his reformist agenda. If in *History of the Skyscraper* Mujica ha not made the connection between Pre-Columbian architecture and the indigenous population of the twentieth century, he definitely made it in his charts, broadening to the peasantry and working class in general. Mujica’s charts addressed the construction of workers’ houses, the number of new teachers (women and men), literacy campaigns, public health care, public transportation, birth and mortality rates, marriages and divorces (legal since 1929), agricultural innovations “al servicio del campesino” [for the peasant’s service], and national lottery for public charities.

Palacio de Bellas Artes’ marble walls were the first venue where these charts were exhibited. Once thought for the enjoyment of the elites, Bellas Artes showed charts representing the working class and peasantry, their socio-economic problems, and how the government was addressing them. The Palace was inaugurated only a few years earlier, in 1934. It originally was a project of dictator Porfirio Díaz to build an opera that would replace the Gran Teatro Nacional, demolished in 1901. It was designed by Italian architect Adamo Boari. The Revolution interrupted the construction in 1916, and works were not definitively resumed until 1932, when President Abelardo Rodríguez took on the project, which had been a huge brand-new ruin for decades.

It took so many years to take the decision of resuming the works because its enormous dimensions made it a very expensive work. There were heated discussions about whether such a sumptuous bourgeois building should be finished in a post-revolutionary country. It finally was, and this decision had implications to the understanding of monumental buildings in the Mexico
of the 1930s. Palacio de Bellas Artes was finished precisely because it was thought that humble people also deserved sumptuous buildings to celebrate their achievements.

Between 1932 and 1934, the interior was built, inspired by Pre-Columbian ornamentation, with motifs of the Mexican flora and fauna (coyotes, jaguars, snakes), in the prevalent architectural style of the times: art deco. Mujica’s was one of the very first exhibitions that took place in the brand-new palace. It was the perfect space for his charts, since Palacio de Bellas Artes summarized what he had theorized in his *History of the Skyscraper*: even though the building was not a skyscraper and its exterior may look like another conservative, European palace, its interior showed a change of direction, a “necessary reaction” towards aesthetic autonomy, as he would have put it. Mujica’s posters with charts covered the walls besides murals by Diego Rivera, David A. Siqueiros and José Vicente Orozco.

Mujica’s assessment of muralism must have been twofold: he did not share the political agenda of Communist muralists such as Siqueiros or Rivera, but he may have found in muralism a similar understanding of modernity as the one he promoted. Muralist painters used an ancestral technique and structure —murals— to produce a modern artistic form and address a modern social challenge: illiteracy and the self-awareness of the Mexican peasantry and working class (Gallo 2-18).

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33 Palacio de Bellas Artes was the most grandiloquent construction of Mexico City in the 1930s. Its life is comparable to the Monument to the Revolution, another unfinished building from Porfiriató, reinterpreted by architect Carlos Obregón Santacilia in art deco style: Monument to the Revolution was originally conceived as a legislative palace of the dictatorship, but eventually intervened and finished as mausoleum to the heroes of the Revolution.
Fig. 9. Mujica’s “Exposición objetiva del Plan Sexenal.” Palacio de Bellas Artes, 1937. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
Fig. 10. Mujica’s “Exposición objetiva del Plan Sexenal.” Palacio de Bellas Artes, 1937. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
Although he never wrote about Siqueiros, Mujica followed his work thoroughly, and his archive is full of newspaper clippings about him. Regarding Rivera, he may have been an admirer of his work, and gave conferences in Mexico and abroad about him.\textsuperscript{34} The manuscripts of these conferences are not preserved.

Indeed, many of Mujica’s posters looked like murals covering the Palacio’s marble walls. Exposición objetiva shared space with Rivera’s \textit{Man at the crossroads}, which had been originally conceived for the art deco Rockefeller Center skyscraper in New York, destroyed by Nelson Rockefeller when he found Lenin depicted, and re-painted in Palacio de Bellas Artes in 1934, three years before Mujica’s exhibition. When Rivera had to repaint his mural at Palacio de Bellas Artes, he emphasized the Communist overtones by painting not only Lenin but also Marx and Engels. Mujica would not have approved this.

In the undated manuscript “La obra de España en América,” [The work of Spain in the American continent] Mujica portrayed Rivera as a sectarian who focused too much on the mistakes and miseries of Spain in the American continent. This is paradoxical, because in \textit{History of the Skyscraper} he had made a similar accusation of the Spanish conquistadores. But it is also true that he never condemned the colonization tout court, and as the years passed, he was reconsidering his position towards a depiction of the Mexican identity that put at the center the idea of \textit{mestizaje}.

Mujica’s infographics included charts, texts and large-scale images of workers, particularly peasants and oil workers, the two key economic icons of Cárdenas’ political economy. Regarding muralism, and beyond Rivera’s explicit political agenda, the combination in

\textsuperscript{34} A few years after the Bellas Artes exhibition, in 1942, Mujica was invited by President Manuel Prados of Peru to give a talk in Lima. He chose Rivera’s murals as topic.
Bellas Artes of Mujica’s charts and Rivera’s mural expressed a similar belief in aesthetic emancipation, the potentialities of economic planning, and the role of the worker as the crucial figure of Mexico’s future.

Fig. 11. In Exposición Objetiva, oil workers and peasants were represented together, as the key figures of Cárdenas’ most important economic policies: nationalization of oil and agrarian reform. Palacio de Bellas Artes, 1937. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
Charts meant the recovery of positivist ideals such as progress and objectivity (Exposición objetiva) for a modern cause: the inauguration of a new system of communication between rulers and rule, a new scopic regimen based on the graphic representation of mass data for mass consumption. What was this new scopic regime about? It can be thought alongside Rivera’s Man at the Crossroads. The theoretical ideal in both River and Mujica was to grasp mass data — qualitative in the case of muralism, quantitative in the case of charts — at a glance, and both required a thorough process of decoding. Murals and charts need to be carefully read in parts, establishing relations between the different components. Both required a new process of literacy for a more visual society, and both were used as political propaganda.
Although during these years Mujica focused on his charts, his architectural theories of skyscrapers and monumentality were also addressed in Exposición objetiva. The exhibition included implicit references to his History of the Skyscraper. Some references pointed out to confirmations of his theories, some others were tacit reformulations. For example, a model of El Moro Building was shown. The construction of this tall building (‘tall’ for Mexican standards of that time: twenty floors) was about to start in Mexico City. This building would host the offices of the National Lottery, had a pyramidal structure and art deco style. It was a sort of summary of Mujica’s proposals for architecture and planning democracy: a tall, pyramidal building to host not businesses, but a governmental institution tasked with the redistribution of wealth.

Exposición objetiva also included models of archaeological excavations and a photograph of the Tajin pyramid in Papantla, the one Mujica had compared to the Fisk Building in New York City. The fact that what he saw as skyscrapers were starting to appear in Mexico was a confirmation of his theory that “the force of the destiny” (History of the Skyscraper 18) would manifest itself by returning the original Pan-American sense of monumentality in modernity through the construction of skyscrapers.
Fig. 13-14. Above: in the background, the model of El Moro building. Below: the photograph of the teocalli of Tajin shown in the exhibition. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
Mujica also had the opportunity to draw a variety of Corbusian buildings that had been built in Mexico since 1932, particularly under Cárdenas. As Enrique de Anda has shown, painters found a modern, post-Revolutionary expression —muralism— earlier than architects, who struggled between different options until the mid 1930s. The construction of functionalist schools was architect Juan O’Gorman’s initiative, and it achieved full realization with Cárdenas (de Anda 1995: 190). This evolution can also be seen in Mujica, who in *History of the Skyscraper* presented a project of a school with neocolonial structure and Mayan ornamentation, but for Exposición objetiva drew a series of functionalist schools.

35 Functionalism is the name the architecture proposed by the Modern Movement received in Mexico.
Fig. 16. Modernist schools drawn by Mujica as the ones built in Mexico during Cárdenas’ term. “Exposición objetiva del Plan Sexenal.” Palacio de Bellas Artes, 1937. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.

Just as in History of the Skyscraper Mujica had focused in architectural scale and barely referred to or drew human beings, his charts for Exposición objetiva continuously addressed the human scale. His charts privileged the silhouette of working men and women over bars, lines and pies. In his new communication system between ruler and ruled, the human form was at the center. This was an example of the pioneer work that he performed: while up to that time charts had been used exclusively for intra-governmental and scholarly communication among political and intellectual elites, he used them as a tool for mass communication. Consequently, he not only had regular Mexicans as target audience, but used regular people’s silhouettes as a mean of representation. The attendees to the exhibition saw mass data represented through the images of
people who worked the same jobs, inhabited the same houses, and went to the same schools than they did. This was a crucial strategy for literacy in this new form of communication between government and people. It also opened the way for its use as propaganda not only for internal but also for external consumption —in fact, the exhibition was shown both in Mexico and in the 1939 New York World’s Fair.

Mujica’s archaeological drawings and architectural renderings had almost no people represented. That was not the case in his charts. He experimented with different scales for human forms (mostly male, but also female), often before a background of buildings.

[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

**Fig.17.** In this chart about the national lottery, the growing human silhouettes mean the growing money raised to be distributed among the poorest. The combination of nationalism, protectionist capitalism, and catholic charity fit nicely in his Romantic ideology. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
**Fig. 18.** This chart shows the number of passengers who used the recently nationalized railway system. Later we will see how Mujica used the train to challenge the centralized notion of the enlightened national museum. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.

**Fig. 19.** Chart showing the data of the National School of Teaching (1932-1937): number of faculty, enrolled students, and graduated students. In the latter there is a gender distinction, to which correspond a different terminology: graduated males are called “maestros” [teachers] while graduated females are called “educadoras” [educators]. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
The comparison of people to architectural artifacts put the issue of the human scale at the forefront. In *History of the Skyscraper*, he had established a clear distinction between the American and the European scale. In his charts, the human silhouettes can be interpreted alongside Le Corbusier’s *Le Modulor. A Harmonious Measure to the Human Scale Universally Applicable to Architecture and Mechanics*, originally published in French more than a decade after Exposición objetiva, in 1950. The Mujica of *History of the Skyscraper* would immediately have rejected the “universal applicability” that Le Corbusier announced in the title. But the Mujica of these charts may have thought differently.

While in *History of the Skyscraper* he understood architectural monumentality as a manifestation of the Pan-American spirit, in Exposición objetiva he used human monumentality to express confidence in economic planning: the larger the human scale, the bigger the success of planning democracy. These charts show the faith in economic technicians, and, in a way, a return to an idea of the predictibility of history he had despised only a few years earlier.

By representing men and women as bars and lines, the charts involved all Mexicans in the crusade towards economic self-sufficiency. Mujica’s charts had plenty of humans, but there were almost no faces. Sometimes the drawing is more precise, and shows the outfits in detail, but the people still have no face. When they do, they have a generic one repeated in different figures of the same kind but in different scales. This standard representation of Mexicans was a propagandistic tool: by representing no one in particular, he was representing an ideal image of everyone—all Mexicas working together towards the same end: economic independency after the agrarian reform and the nationalization of oil.
Fig. 20. Chart showing the educational degree obtained by teachers in Mexico. While in 1928 there was a little gap between teacher with a teaching degree and those with no degree, in 1936 that gap has grown notoriously. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.

In *Le Modulor*, Le Corbusier wrote extensively about how he was pleased to see in his continuous trips to the United States how in the 1930s and 1940s the human scale was finally winning over also in the American continent. Mujica’s reflections on monumentality seemed to have shifted as well. If in the late 1920s, the monumental scale was used in architecture to convey an anti-materialistic notion of national identity, by the late 1930s he used monumentality applied to human silhouettes to portray the faith in economic planning and progress.

We have seen the evolution from Mujica’s architectural theories to his charts. But what is the relation between charts and the archaeological drawings he was still producing? They were inherently different. The first aspect to consider is that he worked as an independent archaeological draftsman, while as a graphic designer he was a government worker —his charts had to fit the message the government wanted to convey. This does not mean he agreed with
everything he was portraying, as will be discussed in the next section. Thus, while Mujica’s archaeologi
cal drawings of reconstructions of monuments were all about carefully representing the subt
est details, charts implied simplification and concealment of complex data. Charts made bureau
cratic information accessible to the people through a process of data selection, interpretat
ion and reduction.

The dialectics of hiding and revealing was opposed in both cases. As an archaeological drafts
man, Mujica had to reconstruct what was lost through scientific observation and imagina
tion. As a graphic designer, he had to hide what was considered irrelevant, inappropriate or irrepresentable. Graphics were presented as a tool that embraced transparency, coming from a government who cared about informing the masses about its resources and plans. But such transparency was selective and obscure. Graphics hide as much as they reveal.

Infographics theoretician Antonio Cairo distinguishes two kinds of communication through charts: strategic and candid. He says, “in strategic communication, you may begin with a message and then look for information to support it. In candid communication, you begin with

36 The notion of detail is opposed in archaeological drawings and charts. Mujica collected praising quotes by colleagues, politicians and intellectuals to his work. According to him, Peruvian President Belaúnde Terry, who was also an architect, said: “Tuvimos que ayudarnos con una lupa para poder captar todo el detalle que con habilidad de miniaturista florentino y tenacidad de alarife Mexica había incluido en su reproducción de lo existente y en su interpretación de lo ya derruido por el tiempo” [We need to use a magnifying glass in order to be able to appreciate the details that he had included as representation of the existing and interpretation of what collapsed with the passage of time, with the ability of a Florentine minaturist and the tenacity of a Mexica bricklayer]. In a 1944 newspaper article, Mujica’s drawing was characterized as “puntillista” [pointillist] and his work compared to that of paleontologists: “Así como los paleontólogos reconstruían el esqueleto de gigantesco mamouths antediluvianos con sólo una canilla, Mujica Diez de Bonilla ha construido la morfología primitiva de los monumentos mayas con unas cuantas piedras que respetaron los siglos” [Just as paleontologists used to reconstruct the skeletons of gigantic, antediluvian mammoth with only thin leg, Mujica Diez de Bonila has constructed the primitive morphology of the Mayan monuments with a few stones that were respected by the centuries] (Las Noticias de Última Hora (Chile), 14 November 1944: n. p.)

In archaeology, the detail is needed to reconstruct the whole; in the charts, details are numerous and form a mass of information that also needs to be represented as a whole. The difference is that while in archaeological drawings details can be appreciated with a magnifying glass, details are fully opaque in charts.
the information, and then you thoroughly analyze it to discover the messages worth spreading”
(n.p.) Mujica explained his engagement with charts as a way of democratizing science and governance. Before him, charts were used by political and intellectual elites for internal communication; there was the expectation that such communication should be candid, although of course not always was. By using charts for mass consumption, Mujica was exploring their strategic potentialities, becoming a pioneer in the use of charts as mass propaganda. Charts for mass consumption can be seen as both a mechanism of control and as an empowering tool. In a Foucaultian sense, charts were used to apprehend mass data at a glance —they represent an ideal of knowledge and control.37

As we saw above, Mujica also used a chart to explain his theory of history in History of the Skyscraper. But there are important differences between that diagram and his charts for Exposición objetiva, beyond the different target audiences. By joining the government and

37 A Chilean newspaper summarized Mujica’s words in this regard:

Terminó el señor Mujica Díez de Bonilla su interesantísima conferencia, por la cual fue muy felicitado, expresando que los gráficos capacitan al gobernante para apoderarse instantáneamente, a través de la retina y de un solo golpe de vista, de los conocimientos y estudios de los técnicos. (“Interesante conferencia dio ayer en el Senado el profesor mexicano Sr. Francisco Mujica Diez de B. acerca de la importancia del sistema de los gráficos en la política administrativo-económica de los países”, El Imparcial, 17 December 1946, n. page. Italics are mine).

[Mr. Mujica Díez de Bonilla finished his talk, for which he was congratulated, by stating that the graphics allow the governor to instantly take ownership of, through his retina and at a glance, the technician’s knowledge and studies. “Interesting talk given yesterday in the Senate by Mexican professor Mr. Francisco Mujica Díez de Bonilla, about the importance of the system of charts for the country’s administrative-economic policy”]

“To instantly take ownership of, through his retina and at a glance,” such is the ideal of the modern technocratic ruler. Modern societies were getting more complex and the scopic ideal of rulers was the one that allowed them “to immediately appropriate” such a complex mass of information easily and immediately. From that panoptic point of view, there were no people, but masses; there were not details but mass data. (See chapter III for further discussion on how Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek’s preferred point of view of the capital city he was building was from up in the air, from an helicopter, because there he could see everything at a glance. That made him feel in control of the construction works. His helicopter was the tower of the panopticon).
becoming a propagandist, Mujica’s complex understanding of history flattened. Exposición objetiva entailed a return to a positivist narrative of lineal history towards progress. While in *History of the Skyscraper* he represented what did not happen and what could have happened as important as quantifiable facts, Exposición objetiva was more attached to measurable facts and suspicious of any potentiality of things that could happen different than planned. The exhibition was called “objetiva” because it expressed a certainty about the success of planning and the role of technicians as political leaders. Charts were the base for positivist laws; the future could be planned and foreseen.

Mujica refined his ideas on planning democracy in the 1940s while touring Latin America to give talks and organize exhibitions of his charts. He was particularly welcomed in Chile, where President Arturo Alessandri hired him. In an article published in a Santiago newspaper, he explained his ideal of a *democracia planificadora*:
Fig. 21. Mujica showing one of his charts in the Mexican pavilion, New York’s World Fair, 1939. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
Situar ese eslabón, ese momento que vivimos dentro de la realidad histórica que representa el pasado que lo origina, el presente que lo define y el futuro que espera interrogante la acción de nuestro espíritu y de nuestra voluntad como fuente modeladora de nuestro destino ha de ser la elevada misión de las futuras *corporaciones técnicas de las democracias*, afanándose por alcanzar el rendimiento máximo de la vida para todos los hombres. (“El sistema de gráficos en la política administrativa y económica de los países”. *El Mercurio*, 17 December 1946, n. page. Italics are mine)

[To situate such link — the moment we inhabit within the historical reality representing the past that originates it, the present that defines it, and that future that hesitantly awaits the action of our spirit and free will as modeling forces of our destiny — is the high mission of the future democratic corporations of technicians, making huge efforts to achieve the maximum performance for the life of all men]

Scholars such as Stehn have argued about the persistence of some positivistic ideas on Mexico, despite the assumption that positivism died with the Revolution. Mujica is an example of one of the paths of this persistence, which can be found in the technocratic ideal. Mujica was still using Romantic terminology and had the purpose of capturing the Pan-American spirit, but this time through graphic design. His political ideal was still somehow vague in *History of the Skyscraper*, but it became clearer here: a nationalistic, technocratic democracy.
Fig. 22. Newspaper article showing Mujica discussing his charts in a meeting with Chilean senators. *La Nación*, 17 December 1946. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
Fig. 23. F. Mujica Archive, National Library Mexico. Undated and unidentified newspaper clipping. Article’s title: “El pueblo exige que los políticos hablen claro, sin rodeos ni ambajes. Cárdenas, en México, ahorró las palabras y las reemplazó por los gráficos” [The people ask politicians to speak clearly, bluntly and unambiguously. In Mexico, Cardenas saved words and replaced them with charts]. Francisco Mujica’s archive in National Library of Mexico.

3.2. Exposición viajera objetiva: an Itinerant Museum (1937)

Mujica’s Exposición objetiva was one of the first exhibitions that re-signified Palacio de Bellas Artes as a popular space for art and knowledge. But its closing was not the end. Exposición objetiva was conceived with the purpose to produce a conversation between rulers and ruled, and the ruled who could go to Palacio de Bellas Artes were few, in comparison with the twenty million Mexicans that were at the time. The exhibition’s target audience was the Mexican
people, but many could not visit the museum since they lived far away. This paradox lies at the origin of the national museum: on one hand, the museum was conceived as a more democratic space that took the art out of private spaces of antiquarians and collectors, and exhibited it for a larger audience: the national community. On the other, the museum is a centralized space of exhibition and power, accessible only to those spatially close, who can travel to the capital, with the economic and intellectual resources to access it and understand the curatorial conventions.

The creation of the national museum was contemporary to the creation of the modern charts. They were enlightened projects, with slightly different but convergent purposes. The museum sought to help create what Benedict Anderson has called the nation as an imagined community. This imagined community shares a patrimony partially exhibited in the national museum. Other media for the creation of this imagined, national communities were the census and maps. Maps are a type of infography as well, and the census is the collection of mass data that needs to be effectively represented in order to be interpreted and acknowledged. This is where charts became useful. By the time Mujica was working for Cárdenas, both the museum and the charts remained very important tools for government, but they were becoming old and disconnected to the deep social transformations brought up by the industrial revolution. From the late eighteenth century to Mujica’s times, the public sphere —as Habermas put it— had deeply

38 The tensions between his Romantic ideals and his modern use of charts can be traced in his indistinct use of the terms ‘pueblo’ and ‘masa’, sometimes in the same text. He spent the 1940s travelling around Latin America convincing different governments about the utility of his graphics for modern democracy. One of the most receptive governments was the Chilean. President Arturo Alessandri invited him to show his charts and give a conference in the Senate in 1946. An article published in the Chilean newspaper La hora on the occasion of Mujica’s visit paraphrases his words as follows:

El Gobierno del pueblo, por el pueblo y para el pueblo no pasará de ser una utopía de nuestras democracias mientras éstas no adopten sistemas gráficos de análisis, de planeación y de control capaces de hacer llegar a la mente de las masas un concepto preciso de sus propias necesidades y de los medios que la técnica ofrece para resolverlas. (“Sistemas gráficos.” La Hora, 17 December 1946, n. page).
transformed. The society of the 1930s was a mass society and required mass media for communication.

The unmovable and centralized nature of the museum dates back to the origins of this institution in the West. When the Louvre was created in 1793, it was planned to be the central point of a network of art museums that would spread all across the French geography. This project failed (Choay 66), and the most important art pieces collected by the French government were concentrated in the Paris museum. Later, most countries followed this centralized model.

To overcome this, Exposición objetiva took the streets of Mexico City. It became a parade where each float was devoted to a secretary of the government. If the Mexican people were not used to go to the museum, the museum went to the people. The picture below of the float devoted to the Department of Agriculture (Fig. 24) is the only one preserved. Mujica stated that his charts were represented in the parade, but cannot be seen in this picture. A seated woman was the centerpiece of the float. She might be a representation of an agriculture goddess in modern attire. Two men wearing only shorts escorted her. By showing their young bodies, they seemed to embrace the health of the agrarian work, and ultimately of the agrarian nation—a reminiscence of Romantic pastoralism. There were Mexican textiles and cactuses. We are only seeing the back of the float, which shows a very traditional representation of agriculture, with the exception of the woman’s outfit. Leading the float, we see a procession of young men. Maybe Mujica’s charts or drawings were shown in the front of the float, which cannot be seen in the photograph, composing an interesting contrast between traditional and modern representations of the countryside: mass data for mass consumption shown on a Mexican rebozo (shawl).
In fact, the moving nature of this exhibition went beyond this parade. A train was specifically designed to become an itinerant museum exhibiting all the charts created by Mujica to reach towns far away from the capital. This way the exhibition challenged time and space. Two years after its opening in Palacio de Bellas Artes, Exposición objetiva became “Exposición viajera objetiva,” [Travelling Objective Exhibition] and charts and train merged to become a moving museum that toured the country. Mujica’s charts were clearly not only created for the governmental and academic elites, not even for the cultural elites who attended museums, but the Mexican people at large. It was only 1939, at the dawn of the Second World War.

Exposición viajera objetiva can be thought as another literacy mission to bring culture to the countryside. In the early 1920s, Vasconcelos had created what he called an army of teachers.
to end illiteracy in rural areas. Cárdenas continued these educational missions in two ways: first, by implementing these campaigns of traditional literacy, using the railway system as an ally in order to carry books where there were not, and create libraries. Second, by initiating a new form of literacy, based on a sophisticated system of graphics. In the latter case, the train was not merely used as a system of transportation, but as a dislocated museum that left the capital in order to go meet the people in their hometowns. The images below (Figs. 25-29) show how the itinerant museum was designed.

![Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

**Fig. 25.** Lateral view of the train, exterior (above) and interior (below). The exterior was covered with great mural-like paintings, while the interior was full of smaller-scale charts, drawings and photographs. The nationalistic slogan of the campaign can be seen in the upper right part, in the exterior of the train: *Por la grandeza de Mexico* [For the Greatness of Mexico]. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.

39 Mujica como curador sponsorizado por Vasconcelos. His early work was influenced and sponsored by Secretary of Education José Vasconcelos, who granted Mujica the funds needed to buy Guillermo Kahlo’s collection of photography and make with them an exhibition in the second Pan American Congress, in Chile. En la expo ibero de Estocolmo, aporta 28 planos y dibujos.
Fig. 26-27. 3D renders of the exterior and the interior of the train. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
**Fig. 28.** Train of “Exposición viajera objetiva del Plan Sexenal,” 1939. Lateral and floor plan. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
Fig. 29. Train of “Exposición viajera objetiva del Plan Sexenal,” 1939. 3D render, interior. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
The train became a museum, and each wagon became a gallery hall. As Leo Marx has shown, the train was the quintessential symbol of the nineteenth-century industrial revolution. But by when this exhibition took place, Mexico had had train for over fifty years. Itinerant museums were created for a number of reasons, such as propaganda during wartime. (In chapter II, it will be discussed how the Francoists created an itinerant museum of art pieces that were destroyed by the “red hordes.” The Francoist museum and Exposición viajera objetiva were touring Spain and Mexico respectively in the same year of 1937). Mujica’s was an itinerant museum for propaganda during developmentalist peace.

This was not a positivist exhibition that showcased an already old machine. Instead, the train was used with two different purposes: to celebrate its recent nationalization (the railway system was nationalized in 1937) and to push for a democratization of the three cornerstones of the Enlightenment noted above: the museum, the map and the census. Exposición viajera objetiva used the train to make the museum itinerant, tour a great part of the Mexican geography as an integration strategy, and made the census and other mass data available and legible for the masses.

The exterior of the train showed big-format images that resembled murals, often covering most of the external surface of the wagon. The interior walls were also completely covered with small-format pictures and charts, in an orgiastic profusion of information that produced a coherent but complex narrative of modern Mexico. Mujica seemed to have been inspired by two forms of art and education pertaining to colonial and post-Revolutionary Mexico that he knew very well and wrote extensively about: the profusion of the decoration in the interior of baroque churches, and muralism.
Indeed, Mexicans from all towns along the Republic entered the wagons as they entered profusely decorated churches, such as Santa María Tonantzintla in Puebla. Mujica admired Santa María Tonantzintla and gave several conferences about its art and architecture.\textsuperscript{40} Just as people learned about the divine in churches, they learned about the modern world and progress in this train. The museum was originally conceived as a temple to the Muses, the divinities of art and science. The train in Exposición viajera objetiva became a temple to planning democracy. The museum was originally thought to portray the process of the human being towards perfection; this itinerant museum showed the process of the perfectibility of the nation through planning.

The itinerant museum was meant to facilitate such incorporation by educating the Mexican citizens of the provinces about the resources of the country and the government’s plan for development and progress. While a traditional national museum would have provided a space of identification and a producer of the official narrative of the country for the urban citizens, the itinerant museum had the purpose of “incorporating” \textsuperscript{41} the citizens of the provinces to the national narrative and quest for progress. Integration of the country was an old positivistic ideal of Porfiriato, but it did not include the indigenous population the way this exhibition did.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{40} under the title ‘Arquitectura.’
\textsuperscript{41} Defensa del indígena: en un artículo de El Diario Ilustrado de 10 de nov de 1942, defiende que México no es un Estado nacional porque hay una masa de indígenas no relacionada con él, esto, pero que no hay razas superiores, sino conductas superiores, y que los indígenas han dado mucho a la economía (trabajando en la mina y la arquitectura) y al ejército mexicano. Se ha juzgado mal al indígena. La conferencia se llama “El hombre de América frente al proceso de integración nacional”
\end{footnotesize}
Fig. 30-31. Numerous newspapers noted how the arrival of the itinerant museum to town became a social event. Above, the train of Exposición viajera objetiva while travelling. Below, the disposition of wagons with canopies during the exhibition and many attendees. 1939. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
Fig. 32. Organizers and local authorities at the entry of one of the wagons-exhibition halls. Mujica is the third from the left. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
[Images temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

**Fig. 33-34.** Mural-like drawings and maps in the exterior of the wagons. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
Fig. 35. Train of “Exposición viajera objetiva del Plan Sexenal,” 1939. Interior of the wagon devoted to the Department of Education. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.
As Chair of the Secretary of the Six-Year Plan at the Secretary of the Interior, one of the propagandistic roles of Mujica was promote Cardenas’ plan for the integration of the indigenous population. In Mujica’s archives can be found numerous references to this plan, and clippings with Cárdenas’ campaigns such as the one below (Fig. 36), published at the same time the exhibition was touring Mexico:

[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

**Fig. 36.** Newspaper clipping. “The incorporation of the indigenous to civilization should take place not for charity, but as justice. Lázaro Cárdenas.” *Heraldo michoacano*, 8 June 1939. Francisco Mujica’ archive in National Library of Mexico.

This campaign shows the tensions between the acknowledgement of the value of the indigenous contributions versus the premise of their uncivilized state and need for assimilation to civilization. Mujica addressed this issue in several talks he gave in various institutions all around Latin America. His ideas about race and civilization are very clarifying not only for this itinerant
exhibition, but for the nature of his recovery of the Pre-Columbian heritage in regards of the skyscraper. In 1942 he gave a conference in University of Chile under the title “Sobre el hombre de América” [About the Man of the Americas]. He made an inflammatory allegation against the European arrogance:

El hombre blanco, que no ha llegado todavía a penetrar dentro de sí mismo; que desconoce dilatadas extensiones superficiales de su pequeño planeta y casi la totalidad de su masa interior; que ignora el verdadero y exacto significado del mismo dentro del mundo sideral en que existe y desplaza; ese mismo hombre que teoriza sobre un universo que desconoce y que afirma verdades que mañana niega o rectifica, es el que ha establecido dogmática, la superioridad de la raza blanca sobre las demás razas humanas, sin poder fundamentar su aserto, ignorando, como ignora, el contenido y el significado de su propio ser y de su propio planeta (La Nación, Chile, 12 November 1942, n. p.).

[The white man has not penetrated within himself; is unaware of large superficial areas of his own planet and almost the totality of its inner mass; ignores the true and exact meaning of his planet within the cosmic world where it exists and travels; that same man theorizes about a universe he does not know, and states truth that rejects or rectifies tomorrow; that man has established the superiority of the white race over the other races, without being able to substantiate his affirmations, ignoring the content and meaning of his own being and his own planet]

He gave this talk at the height of World War Two, what can be understood as his condemnation of Nazism. The rhetoric is certainly more incendiary than in other occasions, but this was not the first time Mujica had made severe accusations against Europeans. In fact, his theory of the skyscraper as a return of the architectural repressed was based on the barbaric destruction of the Conquest and colonization. Implicitly, it can be understood that he accused the white man of the excesses of positivism: the white man did not know anything about his own spirituality and soul, and obsessively conceptualized about the outside world, even though he was familiar only with a limited part of it. Moreover, the white man did not have any sense of essence and moral purpose
of himself and the land he inhabited. This was crucial criticism against positivism. He eventually discredited any theory of racial superiority:

Sin embargo, si juzgamos a los hombres, no a través de su color, sino a través de sus obras, hijas de su espíritu y producto de su esfuerzo, concluiremos que no existen razas superiores, que existen tan solo conductas superiores, morales superiores, virtudes superiores. (*La Nación*, Chile, 12 November 1942, n. p.)

[However, if men are judged not for their skin color, but for their actions, the product of their spirit and efforts, we will conclude that there are not superior races but superior behaviors, superior moralities, superior virtues]

Nazism and other proposers of the theories of racial superiority had been based on an interpretation of Darwinian thought that left aside notions of morality. Henri Bergson and other philosophers had been emphasizing moral values and free will to overcome the limitations of this deterministic interpretation of race and ultimately history. Mujica belonged to this tradition of thought. For him, inferiority and superiority was not a racial given, but a consequence of the use of free will and moral values, independently of the race. This way, he not only distanced himself from Nazism and Fascism, but also from one of his mentors, José Vasconcelos, and his theory of the cosmic race (Gallo 201-226).

In the same article, Mujica defended the achievements of the indigenous cultures in the most explicit way he did in his career:

El hombre de América, verdadero y único descubridor de nuestro continente, tampoco necesitó de la raza blanca para descubrirse a sí mismo, para observar cómo su mente despertaba al contacto del mundo exterior, para nutrir su espíritu con las savias pródigas del panorama natural de América.

Y fue así como en América, al igual que en Asia y que en la Cuenca Mediterránea, palpitó espontáneamente el alma humana al contacto del mundo exterior, concibiendo la idea de realizar y realizando las primeras combinaciones de elementos naturales derivadas de su propia observación.
Estas combinaciones de carácter físico, primero, químico, después, fueron creando en el hombre Americano rudimentos de civilización: rudimentos que al ir recibiendo día a día mayor dosis de espiritualidad humana, evolucionaron hasta determinar la formación de los avanzados y grandiosos conjuntos materiales y espirituales precolombinos que todavía, hoy día, son motivo de orgullo y de gloria de América. (La Nación, Chile, 12 November 1942, n. p.)

[The man of the Americas, the true and only discoverer of the new continent, did not need the white race to discover himself, to observe how his mind awakened through the contact with the outside world, to nurture his spirit with the lavish lifeblood of the natural landscape of the Americas.

This way in America, and so in Asia and the Mediterranean Basin, the human soul spontaneously throbbed through the contact with the outside world, conceiving the idea of conducting, and conducting the first combinations of natural elements chosen through its own observations.

These combination of physical elements first, later of chemical elements, started to create rudiments of civilization in the man of the Americas: by receiving day by day doses of human spirituality, these rudiments evolved until they produced the sophisticated and grandiose Pre-Columbian material and spiritual constructions that still today are sources of pride and glory of the Americas]

He clarified he was a white man himself, with no indigenous blood, but felt part and proud of the indigenous heritage of Mexico. By emphasizing the achievements of the indigenous “civilization,” he implied the indigenous population did not need to be civilized, as stated in the Cárdenas campaign of which he also partook. Maybe he thought that by using charts he was not “civilizing” the indigenous, but just offering a writing system that belonged to their cultural heritage. By 1939, when Exposición viajera was touring the country, Fortune and Businessweek magazines, the pioneers in the use of charts for a larger audience, had not started yet to use graphics. Mujica preceded them, becoming a pioneer in this system of communication that

42 He identified as a “spiritual citizen of the Americas.” His parents were white Mexicans, mostly of Spanish origin. He said one of his grandfathers was Peruvian, and he also had Uruguayan and English ancestry.
characterized the communication of mass data to a mass audience since the postwar to the present.\footnote{In 1968, journalist Arturo Sotomayor called Mujica “un precursor de la Cibernética” (“La obra de un mexicano exceptional. Visión del Futuro de un Notable Urbanista” [The works of an exceptional Mexican. Vision of the Future of a Remarkable Urban Planner]. México en su cultura, 24 November 1968: 1-6.}

It is interesting that he did not tie his system of graphics to the indigenous heritage the way he did with the skyscraper. In fact, the evidences were even more notorious in this case. It is generally accepted that the origin of infography can be found in logographic writing systems, such as the one that produced the Mesoamerican civilizations before the arrival of the Spaniards.

If he argued that the pyramidal skyscraper could solve the modern challenge of providing healthier streets with more air and light, he could have done the same for charts: the Pre-Columbian writing systems would have solved another modern challenge, that of a more objective, less ideological communication between ruler and ruled, the simplification of mass data for mass consumption. However, he never established this connection. Why so? Maybe he just did not find such similarities. Or maybe there are other, more pragmatic reasons. The fact is that his theory of the skyscraper received less attention that the one he expected. He had struggled to make a living as an architectural historian. This time, Mujica might have preferred to focus on modern notions that were less controversial, such as planning and efficiency, when it came to introduce his chart system in order to make it more palatable to his potential employers. Indeed, he achieved the peak of his professional career as a graphic designer.
4. Conclusion

In the general introduction to the life and work of Francisco Mujica Diez de Bonilla at the beginning of this chapter I had suggested he was a very telling figure to discuss what Theodor Adorno had described in this *Aesthetic Theory* as “moderate modernism.” According to Adorno,

> The idea of a moderate modernism is self-contradictory because it restrains aesthetic rationality. That every element in a work absolutely accomplishes what it is supposed to accomplish coincides directly with the modern as desideratum: The moderate work evasion this requirement because it receives its means from an available or fictitious tradition to which it attributes a power it no longer possesses. (*Aesthetic Theory* 47)

Adorno accused moderate modernism of two key ideas that were crucial for Mujica. The first one is the need to curtail rationality. The second one is the role of tradition in modernity, and the degree to what such tradition is invented and crafted.

Mujica did have the purpose to curtail rationality as a way of counteracting the excesses of positivism, which left outside any morality, spirituality and the potentialities of free will. But he was far from monolithic in this regard, and the freedom he showed in his criticism to positivist historiography in *History of the Skyscraper* faded a few years later in Exposición objetiva. He went from a complex notion of history that incorporated ideas of subterranean time, repression, what could have happened but did not, and free will, to a notion of history that heavily relied on positivist ideas of the quantifiable, predictability, progress, teleology, and development.

Regarding the role of tradition in modernity, although Mujica eventually agreed with the national narrative of Mexicans as children of both the indigenous and Spanish ancestors, he devoted most of his inquiries to the indigenous heritage, the vindication of the sophistication of
indigenous civilizations, and their role in modernity. He always avoided contemporary theories of racial superiority. In this case, he also moderated his positions, and while in *History of the Skyscraper* he made an explicit connection between Pre-Columbian teocallis and the modern skyscraper, in *Exposición Objetiva* he did not make any considerations of the pictographic origins of charts.

Mujica was theoretically bolder when he worked as an independent scholar—the implicit criticism of positivist historiography was remarkable. However, it is paradoxical that his most successful avant-garde practice was performed as a government worker and embracing key values of positivism applied to what he called planning democracy, which is no more than a form of technocracy. By creating charts for both an elitist and mass audience, he was preceding a form of communication that would develop worldwide a few years later.

For all this, Mujica is an example of what Alexander Stehn has called the continuities of positivism in Mexico. What remained constant in his career was his Romantic sense of nationalism, which he expressed in the manuscript of his memoir as follows:

Yo no soy iturbidista, ni santanista, ni juarista, ni imperialista, ni porfirista, ni maderista, ni huertista, ni carrancista, ni obregonista, ni callista, ni cardenista, ni avilacamachista, ni alemanista, ni lopezmateista, ni diazordacista; soy, solamente, un mexicano, enamorado de su patria, que ha consagrado su vida entera a buscar y dar a conocer el rostro de nuestro México.

Tampoco soy enemigo de ninguno de los que actuaron, dentro de esos grupos ni de los que todavía comparten alguna de sus diferentes y opuestas ideologías; pero sí lo soy de todos los que han causado daño a México, sin considerar, para nada, su ideología política. (“Palabras previas,” manuscript of his memoirs, late 1960s)

[I am a follower of neither Iturbide, nor Santana, Juárez, the Mexican Empire (with Maxílim I), Porfirio Díaz, Madero, Huerta, Carranza, Obregón, Calles, Cárdenas, Ávila Camacho, Alemán, Lopez Mateos, Díaz Ordaz; I am just a Mexican, in love with his]
Fatherland, who has dedicated his entire life to search for and advertise our Mexico’s face.

Neither am I enemy of any of those who joined any of the mentioned groups, nor of any of those who still today share any of their different and opposed ideologies; but I am enemy of all those who have harmed Mexico, regardless their political ideology.

Mujica was an interdisciplinary intellectual and artist; his political ideas were based on planning; his infographical theories founded a scopic regime based on the interpretation of proportions that related to his architectural theories of scale; his architectural theories were rooted in his archaeological findings. He was an advocate of regionalism and evolution, as opposed to a cosmopolitanism too inclined to standardization and too dependent on revolutionary ruptures that according to him were merely transient fads.

Mujica exploited the cartographic value of monuments and monumentality in two ways: by presenting the “Vertical City of the Future” in *History of the Skyscraper*, he expected to influence architects, who should make use of their free will to embrace a sense of construction that was both nationalistic and modern. In Exposición Objetiva he presented models of some of the pyramidal tall buildings that were being built in Mexico at the time, as an implicit confirmation that his architectural renders had a cartographic value and served as catalysts for the buildings. He thought that indeed the future was starting to look like the city he foresaw and promoted.

Mujica’s ideal future was one where the political emancipation corresponds to aesthetic emancipation, and patriotism prevails over any political ideology. His understanding of aesthetic emancipation did neither entail superiority nor isolation. His anti-materialist Romanticism could compromise with a capitalism highly protectionist and nationalist. His skyscraper wanted to serve as catalyst for this kind of future, while at the same time establishing a dialectical
relationship with its commemorative value: a reconsideration of the Pre-Columbian tradition, rewriting of the Conquest as a barbaric act and of the aesthetic of the colonial and republican times, and a vague opposition to the civilization of the indigenous population because they had already produced a sophisticated material and spiritual culture.

Mujica was indeed a moderate modernist, in political and aesthetic terms, and full of the contradictions and tensions Adorno had described. But unlike Adorno’s predictions, Mujica’s vindication of the indigenous tradition to build a modern world would surpass his time. His architectural theories remained unnoticed for years, but in the 1970s the architectural sensibility was very different than in previous decades, showing clear signs of exhaustion of the rationalistic approaches of modern architecture. In this context, some of the most important architectural critics recovered Mujica’s theories and renders, and published them in prestigious magazines: his renders of the Vertical City of the Future were reproduced by Diana Agrest in *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* in 1975, and his theories were commented by Italian critic Manfredo Tafuri in a 1976 article in *Architese*. Eventually, *History of Skyscraper* was republished by the Boston-based publishing house De Capo in 1977. As Daniel López Pérez has pointed out, these critics were rethinking the history and nature of the skyscraper by looking for alternative interpretations of tall buildings. By embracing identity over functionality in his theory of the skyscraper, Mujica laid the foundations for a post-modern interpretation of the skyscraper. He died when this was just starting to happen, in 1979.

44 Daniel López Pérez has called “skyscraperology” the interest on the history of the skyscraper that was prominent from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s.
CHAPTER II
MONUMENTS AT WAR

1. The Protection of the Monuments of Madrid during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)

In June 1937, the iconic fountain of Cybele disappeared from Madrid, covered in a pyramid made of bricks, cement, and sand, hidden and protected from the air raids. Some months later, in November, the master Fallas builders built a replica in Valencia and sent it to the Soviet Union as a gift for a double commemoration: the first anniversary of the Battle of Madrid and the twentieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. The goddess-icon of Madrid disappeared from Alcalá street and reappeared in the country of the Soviets. Using this intervention on Cybele as the backbone of this case study, this chapter analyzes the different attitudes of the Spanish Republic, particularly the Communists, toward the protection of monuments in Madrid during the civil war (1936-1939). This analysis has two parts: the concealment of monuments for their protection, and the debates generated by the aerial raids and such concealment.

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46 Popular festivity that takes place in March in Valencia in commemoration of Saint Joseph, consisting of the erection of cardboard monuments that are eventually burnt.

47 Instead of addressing the widely researched salvage of the collections of the Prado Museum, this chapter focuses on the city monuments, barely studied by scholars. Visual artist Fernando Sánchez Castillo’s piece Monumentos ciegos (2011), a scale recreation of the protective structures, is the only reflection of these protective project I know. For a study of Monumentos ciegos, see Miriam Basilio 238-246.
The first part is a study of the project of monumental protection managed by a Communist-majority government and other pro-Communist organizations, directed by the architects of Madrid closest to the Modern Movement, and carried out by workers-turned-technicians of preservation. Communists were accused of vandalism, and the international avant-gardes promote a rhetoric of rupture, anti-academicism and anti-ornamentation. However, both pro-Communist politicians and modern architects of Madrid led a protectionist project that transformed the urban landscape into a reversible palimpsest: the traditional monuments were buried in sand and covered by sophisticated protecting structures that became themselves transient modernist monuments. Hence, during the war the city had two layers of monuments: the academicist in stone and the modern in wood and bricks; the latter were performative monuments, which would only got fully completed with their eventual disassembling once the war was finished.
Monuments were at war in 1937: international avant-garde architects and intellectuals said to repudiate them, air raids put them in constant danger. Indeed, making them disappear was a modernist fantasy. The avant-gardes, particularly Futurism, considered them a sign of moral decadence. Monuments were attacked as facilitators of the survival of traditional values and for their nature as ornaments in the urban landscape. Marinetti’s vindication of “the anarchist’s destructive gesture” and celebration of war destruction is oft-quoted (Perloff xxiii). Futurist

48 The rhetoric of destruction employed by Futurism prevented many post-war scholars of Modernism from pursuing a dispassionate study of Marientti, Appolinaire or Mayakovsky (Perloff xxiii). Destruction was almost a taboo topic after the war. See Sebald. Explicar un poco más de por qué mirar Sebald.
architect Antonio Sant’Elia put academicist monuments—“quello sbalorditivo fiorire di idiozie e di impotenza che presse il nome di neo-classicismo” [that stunning flourishing of stupidity and impotence that takes the name of neo-classicism] (da Costa Meyer 150, italics in the original)—at the center of his vehement critique. He disavowed neoclassical aesthetics for embodying the certainties of stability and permanence: it is “solemne, ieratica, scenografica, decorative, monumentale, leggiadra, piacevole” [solemn, hieratic, scenographic, decorative, monumental, pretty and pleasing] (da Costa Meyer 150).

Adolf Loos had anticipated that ornamentation was a crime, and monuments were often considered merely ornamental. Le Corbusier’s Vers une architecture (1923) was full of images of historical monuments. In the chapter “The Lesson of Rome,” he cleaned the Roman monuments from its decorative excesses and rescued their simple geometrical structures. His ideal was: “Absence of verbosity, good arrangement, a single idea, daring and unity of construction, the use of elementary shapes. A sane morality” (Le Corbusier 1986 158-159). However, he erased many old monuments from his urban plans.

Monuments were also attacked from other philosophical and literary circles. In 1929, Georges Bataille pointed out the authoritarian nature of architecture as a whole, and particularly monuments: “great monuments rise up like dams, opposing a logic of majesty and authority to all unquiet elements; it is in the form of cathedrals and palaces that Church and state speak to an impose silence upon the crowds” (1995: 35). For Bataille, the most iconic monument of modernity was the fall of the Bastille, an image of destruction by urban mobs. Mass society was

49 Paradoxically, Le Cobusier had an obsession with preserving every material thing he produced, and since early in his career started to preserved everything from bills to drawings (Colomina 2).

50 A Spanish exile was the co-author of the official manifesto of the modern movement for monumentality. In 1943, Josep Lluis Sert, along with Fernand Léger and Sigfried Giedion, published “Nine Points on Monumentality.”
inherently identified by its tendency to destroy monuments: “this mass movement is difficult to explain otherwise than by popular hostility toward monuments.” (Bataille, 1995: 35). 1937, the year the protection of monuments started in Madrid, Lewis Mumford proclaimed the death of the monument: “The very notion of a modern monument is a contradiction in terms: if it is a monument, it cannot be modern; and if it is modern, it cannot be a monument” (1937: 264).

All these ideas resonated in the Spanish Republican architects, whose transient monuments embraced eventual destruction, eliminated ornamentation, were ephemeral, celebrated clean, geometrical forms, emphasized empathy with people, and embraced modernity. But differently from Futurism, the Modern Movement, Bataille and Mumford, the Spanish architects protected the academicist heritage of the city of Madrid.

Carl Schmitt’s notion of state of exception, as reformulated by Giorgio Agamben, will be used to explain the constant exposure to total, sudden destruction to which not only people but also the artistic heritage was exposed during total war. Historians have traditionally considered the Spanish Civil War as a laboratory for new forms of total destruction; this chapter proposes to interpret the war as a laboratory for new preservation methods. Indeed, Madrid was the first European capital subjected to systematic aerial bombardments in history. Its protection measures changed international protocols, and served as a blueprint for other European cities that faced similar challenges during the Second World War.

The protective structures designed by the modernist architects of Madrid not only sought to keep the monuments safe — moreover, they became a political and aesthetic statement. The architectural avant-gardes executed this project in the avant-garde indigenous spatial-temporal

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51 A few months earlier, Italian Fascists had systematically bombed the Ethiopian Empire in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War (1934-1936).
coordinates: war. War was the opportunity to rethink premises and propose bold ideas. The protection of monuments was part of a broader project of modern urban planning managed by the Comandancia de Reforma, Reconstrucción y Saneamiento [Command for Refurbishing, Reconstruction and Sanitation] entailing the removal of rubble, the opening of new streets, the general hygienization of Madrid, and the connection of the capital with its surrounding region. The modernist architects of Madrid used this opportunity for two purposes: the advocacy for a protectionist modernism; and the transformation of the cityscape into a preview of what a utopian, post-war Madrid could look like.

This practice of iconoclasm without destruction invites to a discussion about the distinctive way in which architecture and monuments are perceived — Walter Benjamin was writing about this at that time — and the conflicting notions of history these permanent and transient monuments entailed. In this case, the dialectics of concealment made iconoclasm and protectionism compatible: new aesthetic forms were proposed, and old forms were concealed, but preserved. The Committee engaged in this project as if the victory in the war was secured, with a definite orientation towards the future. The transient monuments built onto the academicist ones exploited their cartographic value, since they were used as propaganda by offering a utopian vision of Madrid to the people.
Fig. 38. Damages in the lion of Cybele before its protection. Vaamonde Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.

Fig. 39. Protective pyramid of Cybele. Vaamonde Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.
The traditional monuments were not the only representation of the nation-state that disappeared from the capital city. They were removed from the passers-by’s sight during the same months that Madrid went through a process of de-capitalization: the national treasure (whose highest piece is the Prado collection) was evacuated to Valencia, the Pyrenees, and eventually Geneva; the gold reserves were sent to the Soviet Union; the government fled to Valencia. With no treasure, no gold, no government, and no monuments, Madrid turned into a sort of degree zero, opening the way to engage in some fundamental debates about forms of government, the relation between the city and the countryside, the role of women, and the role of monuments in the modern world, among others.

The second part of this chapter addresses the latter: how monuments should be built after the war? Such debate was ushered by the aerial raids and the protection project, because of a paradox: concealing the monuments made them more visible than ever. First, these debates addressed how to incorporate the destruction experienced during war into the construction of monuments. Second, intellectuals speculated with the design of new monuments celebrating “the people” as the engine of history. Poems, vignettes, essays and experimental proposals about how monuments would be in the future were discussed in newspapers and magazines. They postulated alternatives such as the reuse of war ruins to build the new monuments to the epic of the people, the burning of religious monuments as an expiatory ritual to create a new, popular Church from scratch, or the need to prioritize the improvement of living conditions over the erection of monuments.

The chapter closes with a possible travel to Moscow of the Fallas replica of Cybele. This allows for a comparison between experimental monuments proposed in pro-Communist Spain and the monumental project the Soviet Union was carrying out at that moment, particularly in
Moscow. All the alternatives for monuments of the future proposed in newspapers and the case of the Fallas established a particular attachment to a teleological understanding of history, which held that after a hypothetical victory of the Republic in the war, Spain would achieve a new, more advanced historical phase led by the people, which would correspond to a new way of building monuments.

As Nicola Lambourne has pointed out, histories of architecture tend to focus on the “normal” life of buildings and monuments. Instead of focusing on construction, she proposed to write a history of destruction (Lambourne 4). This chapter seeks to collaborate with this purpose in two ways: by recovering a lost chapter of the history of Spanish modern architecture; and by rescuing the history of the Spanish Civil War for the international history of protection of monuments.

2. The Besieged City as a Reversible Palimpsest.

A palimpsest is a manuscript page that results from a lack: the writer does not have any more parchment, and needs to scrap his previous writing in order to have the surface clean again and available for new writing. A city’s historical downtown can be thought as a parchment, whose space is always limited—a new construction may probably need scraping whatever was built there before. Modernist architects were very aware of this, and often played with the idea of tabula rasa, a radical version in which the scraping involves not only the destruction of what was built before, but often also the oblivion of what was built before.

Unlike this ideal of tabula rasa, besieged Madrid is understood in this chapter as a reversible palimpsest—a layer of monuments had been built on top of another layer of
monuments; but instead of scraping the older ones to built new ones in that same space, the new monuments were built on top of the old ones, preserving them, and eventually allowing the disassembly of the new ones and the recovery of the old ones.

In the international context of Modern Architecture, it may seem surprising that these architects rejected tabula rasa. Since the first modernist building was built in Spain in 1928, Spanish modernist architects had had many obstacles to implement the postulates of modern architecture in the country. By 1937, many even had desisted from fully engaging with the trajectories followed by modernist architects in other parts of the world. But the Spanish Civil War became an opportunity, maybe the last one: they were charged with the protection of the same traditional monuments that had symbolized the resistance against modernism. Some called for disassembling them and putting them into storage with the excuse of their protection; it was a form of scraping. Instead, the modernist architects chose to protect them in situ by building modernist protective structures on top —they postulated a protectionist modernism.52

In chapter I, Francisco Mujica’s pyramidal skyscrapers were interpreted as a project of cartographic monuments never fully materialized. In this chapter, we passed from an architectural project to an executed project of transient monuments that fully exploited their cartographic value. The architects’ intervention transformed Madrid’s landscape, echoing the ultramodern cities depicted in aspirational Republican propaganda. According to Pierre Nora, “There are lieux de mémoire, sites of memory, because there are no longer milieux de mémoire, real environments of memory” (Nora 1989: 7). This suggests modernity was characterized by amnesia, and may have used monuments as an antidote against oblivion. The intervention of the

52 For a history of protectionism in Spain, see López Trujillo and Cabañas Bravo.
Spanish architects suggested another strategy to prevent oblivion, and another use of monuments in modernity—that of producers of utopian imaginaries, catalysts for the creation of potential futures.

2.1. The Value of Monuments

18 July 1936. The conservative sections of the military rose up in arms against the government of the Republic. General Francisco Franco quickly became their leader. The coup d’état succeeded in some Spanish cities, but failed in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, splitting the country into two zones and triggering a civil war. The fronts quickly converged, and Franco’s forces began a siege of Madrid that lasted from November 1936—the Battle of Madrid—until the end of the war, in 1939. It was the first time the techniques of total war were used against a European capital city.

As Virilio has studied, total war was omniscient (2008: 18); it created a new atmosphere determined by the way power is executed (2008: 42-43). In Madrid, air raids redefined space, as the limits between the military vanguard and rearguard blurred. Destruction came from the sky and could reach any point at any moment: shelters could become mortal traps. Based on Carl Schmitt’s suggestions,\(^53\) Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben employed the notion of state of exception to argue that the twenty and twenty first centuries have been characterized by the prolongation of the state of exception over certain individuals, who have been deprived from

\(^{53}\) In 1921, he had used the notion of ‘state of exception’ to define sovereignty as the power to decide over the exception.
their fundamental rights, from their ‘bios’—their citizenry—and left as pure ‘zoe’—pure life always available for destruction.  

This characterization can also be applied to monuments during total war. Both people and monuments were in a constant state of exception, their integrity permanently threatened. As Lucia Allais has shown, the Nazi belief in Lebensraum, or living space, called for a cleansing of ethnic groups and their heritage (Allais 231). Nazi aircraft first tried this in Spain, and the Spanish Civil War became a laboratory of destruction of both population and heritage. In total war and under state of exception in Agamben’s terms, monuments were deprived of their sacred nature (their separation into a special, protected space) and right to survive (to persist over generations). In fact, instead of securing their preservation, their sacred nature and right to survive made them a special target—Guernica was destroyed particularly because it was the house of the tree symbolizing the Basque nation.  

Historians have emphasized this characterization of the Spanish Civil War as a laboratory of destruction. However, unprecedented methods of destruction posed unprecedented challenges for those charged with protecting the heritage, and new methods of protection were also implemented. Thus, this chapter approaches the Spanish Civil War from this other side, as a laboratory for protection and preservation.  

Beyond this philosophical understanding of the state of exception, Spain was also under a legal state of exception in a literal sense, which got renewed every month, while the capital city

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54 Some paradigmatic cases discussed by Agamben are the Nazi concentration camps and the United States Guantanamo Bay detention camp.  
55 Between 21 October 1931 and 29 August 1933, the so-called ‘reformist biennium’, the Republic put into effect the Defense of the Republic Act (Second Transitory Disposition, 1931 Constitution), which regulated the state of exception for cases in which the Republic was thought to be threatened. For example, it was used to deport a
went through a process of de-capitalization: the government moved to Valencia, leaving a Military Junta in charge (Preston 85-87); the gold reserves, then the fourth largest in the world, were transferred to Cartagena to be sent to the Soviet Union in order to pay for help (Payne 140); the Prado collection, considered the jewel of Spain’s artistic treasures, was evacuated to Valencia, then Catalonia, and finally Geneva (cf. Álvarez Lopera; Argerich and Ara); the most iconic and popular monuments were hidden from view, camouflaged in protecting structures that resignified Madrid’s urban landscape. Madrid lost its government, gold reserves, artistic treasure, and monuments. A few officials and many volunteers were tasked with the protection of what remained.

Regarding the government, Socialist President Largo Caballero\textsuperscript{56} decided to move to Valencia due to the predictable fall of the city. He left a Junta de Defensa \textsuperscript{[Defense Board]}, lead by General Miaja, in charge of Madrid,\textsuperscript{57} tasked with a mission many considered a group of 104 anarchists — Buenaventura Durruti among them — to the West Sahara colony because of the 1933 uprising in the Alt Llobregat.

The Defense of the Republic Act was substituted by the Public Order Act on 28 July 1933, recurrently used during the two years of conservative governments (1934-1936), and after the electoral victory of the Popular Front (1936) and the civil war (1936-1939). The three Republican presidents — José Giral, Francisco Largo Caballero and Juan Negrín— renovated the state of exception every month during the war. This Act made a distinction between three different kinds of states of exception: state of prevention, state of alarm and state of war. The one being renovated every month was the state of alarm; the difference between this and the state of war was the handing over the power to a military authority. The state of war never declared, despite the authority over Madrid was ceded to the Junta de Defensa during six months. Only in January 1939, when the Republican defeat was near, the government declared the state of war.

\textsuperscript{56} And so his government, composed of Six socialists, two communists, four anarchists, four left-wing republicans, and two moderate republicans.

\textsuperscript{57} In \textit{La Junta de Defensa de Madrid. November 1936-April 1937}, Julio Aróstegui and Jesús Martínez present the first research ever made of Junta de Defensa’s complete archives. The Junta’s archives in the Library of the Congress in Washington DC and those in the Library of the Military Historical Service in Madrid were well known. Aróstegui and Martínez include a study of the Junta papers in the National Historical Archives in Salamanca.

Aróstegui and Martínez have studied the Junta de Defensa within the tradition of 19th century Spanish Juntas. In the case of the civil war, the Junta had to centralize the defense of the capital and the country. There were actually two Juntas, one created on 1 October 1936, the second one on 6 November 1936, when the civil government fled to Valencia. The first one was an advisory body, with very limited executive power. The second
insurmountable: keeping Madrid in the Republican side. The arrival of the International Brigades and the dedicated defense of the Spanish militias turned the battle into a long combat of six months, until the front stabilized in the western edge of the city.

The rescue of the Prado’s collections is a well-known story. A few days after the outbreak of the war, the Alianza de intelectuales antifascistas por la defensa de la cultura [Alliance of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals for the Defense of Culture] was founded by prominent Spanish and international intellectuals, writers and artists such as María Zambrano, Luis Buñuel, Miguel Hernández, Rafael Alberti, Pablo Neruda, Ernest Hemingway, Octavio Paz, André Malraux, and Louis Aragon. Within the Alliance, the Junta de Defensa del Tesoro Artístico Nacional [Board for the Defense of the Nation’s Artistic Treasure] was created. Originally charged with protecting Spain’s religious buildings and artifacts from anti-clerical mobs, the Board was soon tasked with the imposing challenge of saving the Prado’s paintings from aerial bombardments.

On 16 November 1936, nine fire bombs were dropped on the roof of the Prado Museum, and a few more fell in the surroundings. This caused a public outraged against the rebel Army one, chaired by General Miaja, was the one in charge of defending the city until its last breath. In this second Junta, Communists and anarchists had a more preponderant role.

Julio Aróstegui (1939-2013) has also been a very active scholar of historical memory studies, directing the collective work Guerra civil. Mito y memoria (2006). He was the first professor of holding the university chair in historical memory in Complutense University of Madrid.

Headquartered in Madrid and Valencia. In Madrid, they were located very close to Cybele, in the confiscated Zubálburu Palace (today), at 7 Marqués del Duero Street.

According to Montoliu, the Francoists asked the Republicans to surrender before starting the aerial bombardments, stating they would not assume any responsibility of the damages the city could suffer. It was a way of making the Republicans responsible of any damage for using the monuments as parapets (Montoliu 172). Eventually, Francoists argued they drop bombs on the Prado because there were people with machine guns on their roof. In fact, the accusation of using monuments as parapets was used by both sides. Below (section 3.1 Against stone) will be discussed how Republicans argued they destroyed religious buildings because Francoists were using them as parapets.
and its Fascist and Nazi allies, which also questioned the ability of the Republic to protect the national heritage. The aerial bombardment of a museum was a new situation in the history of art protection, and a controversy arose: should the Prado be converted into a bunker, or should it be evacuated? Both solutions had supporters and critics, but the strategy of evacuation won out in the end. Between November 1936 and the spring of 1938, around three thousand paintings and other artworks were carefully packed and transferred by truck to Valencia, crossing enemy lines at night to escape the besieged city and the menace of bombs.

According to Allais, art historian William George Constable suggested that the painting collections evacuated or taken away during the Second World War could be reconfigured by taking the opportunity provided by the general modernization of the countries during reconstruction (Allais 252).

When the government moved to Catalonia at the end of the war, the paintings were moved there too. They were finally sent to the headquarters of the League of Nations in Geneva. Shortly after the fall of the Republican government, the League turned the collection over to Spain, already under Franco.

As will be discussed later, the monuments were often portrayed as soldiers fighting in their parapets. In the play Noche de guerra en el Museo del Prado [Night of War in the Prado Museum] (1956), Rafael Alberti recreated the first nights of evacuation in the Prado Museum. He directed the operation from the museum. In the play, the characters portrayed in some very famous paintings came to life.
Fig. 40. Propaganda poster. “The People of Madrid to his Heroic Defender General Miaja.” Cybele is used as emblem of the people. The background silhouette represents the Republic.
According to Allais, there is always a hierarchy in protection. In reference to the Second World War, she wrote: “in order to support a policy that would be equally applicable to Axis and Allied countries, monuments had to be presented as the bearers of a universal value” (Allais 156-157). Consequently, this implies that during the Second World War monuments were considered more important than the survival of a specific political regime or a nation because they have this universal value. This was the origin of the protectionist awareness that a few years later produced the notion of world heritage.\(^6^2\) Such consideration had a precedent in Spain.

The hierarchy of protection during the Spanish Civil War in the Republican side had three poles: the Republic, the people, and the national heritage. Priorities changed during the war. There are some quotes famously attributed to Spanish Prime Minister Manuel Azaña showing the evolution in this hierarchy since the first years of the Second Republic to the civil war. In 1931, during the riots that ended up in the burning of several convents, he arguably said: “ni todos los conventos de Madrid valen la vida de un republicano” [all convents in Madrid are worth less than the life of a single Republican]. Years later, during the war, he seemed to have said that “El Museo del Prado es lo más importante para España, más que la Monarquía y la República juntas” [The Prado Museum is the most important for Spain, even more than the Monarchy and Republic together].\(^6^3\) Although the terms in the comparison are not equivalent, his

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\(^6^2\) If the salvage of the Prado Museum was the origin of the reflections on a notion of world heritage, the salvage of the archaeological sites of the Aswan Dam in Egypt (1954) was the final protection project that led UNESCO to mobilize the bureaucratic apparatus that eventually made this notion official (Allais 339-509).

\(^6^3\) Similar discussions took place during the Second World War. This is General Dwight Eisenhower in 1944, a few years before becoming US President: sobre Roberts Commission: “If we have to choose between destroying a famous building and sacrificing our own men, then our men’s lives count infinitely more and the buildings must go. But the choice is not always so clear-cut as that” (quoted by Allais 156).
words expressed an emergent notion of universal value for the national heritage during the war that did not exist back in 1931.\textsuperscript{64}

The Prado Museum was indeed considered the most important piece of Madrid, whose artistic and historical values transcended national borders. Its protection mobilized international associations and foreign countries.\textsuperscript{65} That is why, at the end of the war, the Prado collection could be sent to Geneva, and finally returned to Spain after the victory of Franco.

Monuments occupied a secondary position in this hierarchy. They had been left exposed to aerial bombardment during the Battle of Madrid (November 1936-March 1937). The international commissions who visited the city were interested in the Prado and religious heritage, but not as much in the monuments.\textsuperscript{66} Although the emptying of Prado continued until the end of the war, the most important paintings were already evacuated in Valencia by the

\textsuperscript{64} The press covered other cases of the discussion between prioritizing the Republic, the people, or the heritage. For example, in September 1936, the magazine \textit{Estampa} devotes the number 453 (p. 1-5) to an intellectual who had to deal with this issue of preservation and conservation, but this time not only in his thought and writing, but also in action as a lieutenant colonel of the Republican Army, Julio Mangada Rosenôrn. Lieutenant Mangada was one of the highest-rank military officers who remained loyal to the Republic and formed one of the original military columns —Columna Mangada— at the beginning of the war. His performance in Sierra de Gredos and the province of Avila earned him national recognition; Madrid City Council awarded him the Golden Medal of the city on August 1936. He became a hero of the defense of the capital; posters were made about him. He was also a very peculiar military officer: a vegetarian, freemason, spiritist, and the Spanish representative for the Esperantist movement, partially translating Don Quixote into Esperanto, besides writing many other works in this language. \textit{Estampa} commented on Mangada’s unconventional lifestyle: his vegetarian diet and the heliotherapy sessions he had practiced for over twenty five years both in Northern Africa during the Rif war and in Madrid. On 1924, Mangada published a book in Esperanto about the monuments of the city of Ávila. During the war he led the soldiers that recuperated Avila for the Republic. His wife quoted him for the \textit{Estampa} article: “¿Tener que bombardear Madrid y destruir lo que tanto amé!” [Being forced to bomb what I so much loved!]. She clarifies his husband’s priorities: “Pero, ante todo, pone siempre la República” [But the Republic goes always first] (\textit{Estampa}, 19 September 1936: 5).

\textsuperscript{65} The International Committee for Safeguarding of the Spanish Art Treasures was created in 1938 to salvage the Prado Museum. It comprised the director of the main museums of Europe and the United States: the Museum of Art and History in Geneva, the Royal Museums for the Fine Arts in Belgium, the Louvre in Paris, the National Gallery, Tate Gallery and the Wallace collection in London, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

\textsuperscript{66} Among others, the former director of the British Museum Frederick Kenyon and the curator of the Wallace Collection F. G. Mann.
summer of 1937. That was when the protection of monuments started, not because of an emergent notion of universal value but for national interests explained through a variety of reasons: first, ideological; second, aesthetic; third and last, historical.

Despite being the capital of Spain, Madrid was a relatively young city with no cathedral, and most of its iconic monuments were just over a century old. Age value — according to Riegl’s classification— did not play a decisive role in the hierarchy of protection. Cybele was the first monument to be protected, followed by the other fountains in Paseo del Prado, but there were older monuments in Madrid, whose protection was postponed. In 1937, the city was implicitly split into two parts: baroque, imperial Madrid (Plaza Mayor, statues of monarchs, the Royal Palace) and neoclassical, enlightened Madrid (Prado Museum, fountains with pagan goddesses and gods, Alcalá Gate). Architects prioritized the latter because of their iconic importance —Cybele was long considered Madrid’s popular, pagan goddess— and the ideological identification with Charles III’s enlightened project. Some of the most sophisticated structures were those protecting this kind of monuments, particularly Cybele and Apollo.

The modern architects’ sympathy for neoclassical Madrid was both aesthetic and political. Architectural historian Emil Kaufmann was a pioneer in pointing out to the neoclassical origins of modern architecture in works such as Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier (1933). The Spanish modern architects found affinity with Charles III since they shared the purpose of dramatically changing the image of Madrid through the implementation of a radical urban project that incarnated the most progressive ideology of the times. The construction of the transient, protective monuments during the Spanish Civil War was part of a broader project of

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67 Almudena Cathedral was still under construction.
urbanization eventually put on paper in 1939 under the name of Plan Besteiro.\textsuperscript{69} In the case of Charles III, he implemented a urban plan that included the hygienization of streets (installation of paving stones, public lighting system, sewerage network, garbage collection, construction of broad avenues, an urban expansion plan), monumentalization and embellishment of the city (Cybele, Apollo, Neptune and Artichoke Fountains, Prado Museum, San Charles Hospital — current Queen Sofia Museum— and the botanic garden).

These monuments and urban interventions were the symbols of the European enlightened culture Charles III wanted to bring to Spain, just as the modern architects of the 1930s wanted to bring the postulates of modern urban planning and architecture. Both the enlightened king and the modern architects built new monuments not for their commemorative value, but above all for their cartographic value — both Cybele and its protective pyramid were originally built as monuments for the future, catalysts for enlightenment and modernization, respectively.

The modern architects of Republican Madrid made an interpretation of the city that privileged the part of it with which they ideologically identified. But the cartographic value is always in dialectical relationship with the commemorative value, and this was not an exception. By protecting the monuments built during the reign of Charles III, they were also commemorating the king’s gesture of radical modernization of the cityscape, and his faith in architecture, monuments and urban planning to produce such radical transformation in the city’s identity.

\textsuperscript{69} Julián Besteiro was a university professor of philosophy and socialist politician. He remained in Madrid when the government fled, and became a member of the last government of the Republic. He was President of the Comandancia de Reforma, Reconstrucción y Saneamiento.
If the Republicans identified with enlightened Madrid, Francoists identified with the Renaissance and baroque heritage. For Franco, Spain had achieved its historical plenitude with Philip II (1527-1598), and the coup d’état sought to return to Spain the preeminence of the values of the Church and Empire.\textsuperscript{70} However, the Republicans had Madrid under control, and so the heritage that represented these values. Statues of sixteenth-and-seventeenth-century kings and façades of churches and palaces were also protected, although only after the fountains with pagan gods.

For the protection of these ecclesiastical and imperial monuments, aesthetic value was emphasized over historical value. Baroque façades were considered artistically valuable, and were protected with sophisticated, geometrical structures that echoed Soviet monumental architecture and Cubism. Particularly interesting was the one covering the façade of Real Hospicio de San Fernando (Fig. 37) consisting of the attachment of various cubic structures of different sizes, forming a surface with geometrical reliefs, and playing with depth and shadows.

Statues of kings were preserved above all for their historical value, and were covered with simpler, more pragmatic structures, without any further aesthetic statement. For example, the protection of the statue of Philip III in Plaza Mayor was less refined but still efficient, similar to others used in Europe during the Second World War, such as the one protecting the Bronze Horseman in Leningrad.

Indeed, the architects of Republican Madrid never considered the city as a tabula rasa. Instead, they protected monuments with which they identified because of their ideological value, sophisticated churches and palaces because of their artistic value, and monuments representing

\textsuperscript{70} This does not mean Republicans were anti-colonialists.
positions opposed to Republican ideals for their historical value. Even though the pro-
Communist government was accused for its lack of respect towards the national heritage, all
monuments of Madrid were eventually protected regardless of their political connotations. A
new ethical commitment to protect the national heritage was arising.

![Fig. 41. Phillip III in Plaza Mayor. Otto Wunderlich (1886-1975). Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.](image)
Fig. 42-44. Details of the protection of Phillip III in Plaza Mayor. By Fernando Gallego Fernández. Junta del Tesoro Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.
Fig. 45. Phillip III protected. By Fernando Gallego Fernández. Junta del Tesoro Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.
2.2. Preservationist Revolutionaries

Historically, monuments have always been exposed to violence, illegal or codified, loutish or warring. In the case of Republican Madrid, such destruction was both internal (anticlerical mobs, anarchists) and external (Francoists and their Nazi and Fascist allies). Even though the left felt compelled to stay united, most anarchists did not agree with the historical reading of the war made by the Communists. Although high-rank CNT members (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo —National Confederation of Labor, anarchist union) were allied to the government, many CNT affiliates, some UGT affiliates (Unión General de Trabajadores —General Union of Workers, socialist union) and other non-affiliated workers did push for a revolution, with important projects of self-management communities in Aragon (Casanova 2006), Levant, Andalusia and Catalonia (Mintz 67-146). This provoked important inner conflicts within the Republican side, which sometimes ended up in armed combats. Most anarchists understood the war as an opportunity to pursue the libertarian revolution, and were not interested at all in the protection of monuments that symbolize the state and Church —in any case, they were interested in either destroying them or using them for other purposes: schools, storage, shops, stables (Mintz 89). Liberalism was historically anticlerical too, and their political party —Izquierda Republicana [Republican Left]— promoted or, to the least, were uninterested in restraining the anticlerical vandalism.

In terms of creating organisms of protection, the Republicans were much more rapid than the Francoists. Initiatives of protecting were formed since the very first days of the war, in principle to stop the popular mobs from attacking churches, and soon to protect art and monuments from aerial and artillery attacks by Franco troops and his Nazi and Fascist allies. In the Francoist side, a similiar protectionist body was not created until almost two years later. The
Republican Junta de Defensa del Tesoro Artístico Nacional was founded on 23 July 1936, while the Francoist Servicio de Defensa del Patrimonio Artístico Nacional [Service of Defense of the National Artistic Patrimony] was founded on 22 April 1938.

However, the Francoists were far from monolithic in terms of protectionism. Their project of protection needs its own study, which I cannot comprehensively address here, but some general ideas can be inferred. The Nazi Legion Condor and the Fascist Aviazione Legionaria perpetrated most aerial bombardments, attacking artistic pieces of the highest quality, such as the Prado Museum. Walter Benjamin stated that Fascim saw destruction as a source of aesthetic pleasure (2008: 42). Republicans agreed with this assessment, and used these attacks to portray their enemies as an incarnation of the idea that the vandals are always foreign. Regarding Spanish Francoist forces, Republican anticlericalism was one of the key motifs they adduced to justify the coup d’etat. Also, during the war some pro-Franco writers such as José María Pemán raised their voice in favor of the protection of monuments.

Francoists also attacked Madrid selectively: the upper-class Salamanca neighborhood was declared free of bombings, while the Gran Vía (then, Avenida de la Unión Soviética) was identified as the incarnation of modern Madrid, and became the main target. Moreover, they developed a radical exhibition project: provisional, itinerant museums were created to show works of art mutilated by the “red hordes,” or what Seidman has called “tributes to the visual power of iconoclasm” (180). (See chapter I for a discussion of the itinerant museum put together by Francisco Mujica. It toured Mexico at the same time Francoists had their itinerant museum of

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71 Hitler also applied selective destruction: while preserving (to steal) the heritage of the European West because they were considered culturally elevated, he systematically destroyed the heritage of Eastern countries (Lambourne 2).
“red destruction” touring Spain). Seidman adds that the budget to protect the patrimony was always very scarce. Most funds came from campaigns of Catholic internationalism (180-181).

Republican Madrid quickly went from grabbing headlines in the international press because of the out-of-control vandalism of its inhabitants against ecclesiastical heritage — architectonical, artistic, and human— to pursuing a protectionist campaign on several fronts, involving government and unions, in order to show the world that the Republic, unlike the Nazi barbarians and the Soviet iconoclasts, was synonymous with respect for the national heritage.

The debate on protectionism did not start with the outburst of war, although war did change the approach to protectionism. The same day of the coup d’état, Unión Radio broadcasted one of its *Cursillos culturales* [Cultural Crash-Courses] with the theme “Los monumentos nacionales y el presupuesto extraordinario para su restauración” [The National Monuments and the Extraordinary Budget for Restoration] (*El Sol*, 18 July 1936: 3). The guest lecturer was Alejandro Ferrant, architect and official preservationist of Zone 1 (Northeastern Spain). Ferrant was an example of the potential transversality of preservation and restoration from an ideological point of view. His career started at the end of the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, continued

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Ferrant graduated from the School of Architecture of Madrid in 1921, a year earlier than Fernando García Mercadal. Since 1933, Spain had one of the most modern legislation regarding monumental protection and preservation, based on the Athens Chartes of 1931. This was possible because after decades of indecisions and shortcomings, Spain could engage in the international conversations on preservation by sending one representative to Athens: Leopoldo Torres Balbás, architect-restorer of La Alhambra. The 1933 preservation law introduced the notion of rationality to the preservation practice, as well as the recognition of the historical value of monuments — understood monuments as “historic-artistic”, including the surroundings and the ethnographical practices attached to them—, which is key to understand why the Republican architects protected the monuments of Madrid the way they did. It was a very successful law, staying in effect until 1985. This was possible because the rationalization implied des-ideologization. A good example of this is architect López Otero’s 1932 speech in the Academy of History: “El problema, antes tan filosófico, tan erudito, se hace técnico. El monumento es una estructura, por lo general dañada, ruinosa. Conservar la vida a una estructura, a un organismo arquitectónico, es una cuestión puramente constructiva” [The problem used to be considered philosophical and erudite, but has become technical. The monument is a structure, often damaged, in ruins. To preserve the life of a structure, of an architectural organism, is a purely constructive matter] (Academy of History, Madrid, January 3rd, 1932, quoted in Ordieres Diez 154).
during the Republic, the war, and Franquismo, until his death in 1975. The changes in
government and regimes did not significantly affect his work.\(^73\)

Protection and restoration of the national heritage are not, in principle, the monopoly of
any ideology or political party, since all parties, even the most iconoclastic, have practiced
protectionism to some extent. The case of Spain in war is paradigmatic. The most radical
protectionism was not practiced by political conservatives. Indeed, it was the Republicans,
particularly Communists and pro-Communists, who led the main projects of salvage and
preservation in Madrid. The Communist Party took control of the capital and had to make a
serious effort to present themselves before the Western democracies as guarantors of monuments
and democratic order, because of the ongoing attacks on temples and killings of clergy (Álvarez
Bolado 34-37). Thus, on 30 July 1936, at the climax of anticlerical furor,\(^74\) Communist leader
Dolores Ibarruri addressed the nation from the microphones of Unión Radio as follows:

“¿Qué pasa en España?” (…) En nuestro país no hay más hechos vandálicos que los
realizados por los generales insurrectos, que han arrasado los pueblos por donde han
pasado, que han destruido los monumentos artísticos, patrimonio nacional conseguido a
através de años de esfuerzos y de trabajos heroicos (“La diputada Dolores Ibárruri, en su
discurso radiado, dice que los comunistas están dispuestos a continuar luchando por el
triunfo de la revolución democrática burguesa que se está realizando en nuestro país.” La
Libertad, 30 July 1936: 5)

\(^73\) During the war he was Secretary of Historical and Artistic Monuments, and reported to the Section of
Artistic Treasure, directed by his brother, the sculptor Ángel Ferrant (Escolar 128-131).

\(^74\) According to Revuelta González, Spanish anticlericalism is plural, there have been many forms and
motivations, but almost constant since the early nineteenth century (Revuelta 5). He distinguished six periods of
anticlericalism: 1. Liberal Revolution (1808-1843); 2. Elizabethan era, with its resistance to the concordat and
secularization (1844-1868); 3. Democracy during the Revolutionary Six Years (1868-1874); 4. Reaction against the
Church’s recuperation during the monarchical restoration (1875-1900); 5. From Elektra to the Lock Law (1900-
1912); 6. Settling of scores during the Second Republic and prosecution during the Spanish Civil War (1931-1939).
According to La Parra López, the prosecution sent the Church back to the catacombs (285)

LaParra López: la persecución devuelve la Iglesia a las catacumbas (285). In the short story “Refugio” [Shelter] (in
the collection Valor y miedo), Spanish writer Arturo Barea described a priest taking shelter in a basement as a return
to the catacombs.
[“What is happening in Spain?” (…) In our country the only loutish acts are perpetrated by the insurrectionist generals, who have razed to the ground all towns they have gone through, destroyed artistic monuments, national patrimony built over years of effort and heroic work (‘Deputy Dolores Ibarruri, in a radio broadcasting, says the Communist are ready to keep the fight for the triumph of the democratic-bourgeois revolution that is taking place in our country’)]

Ibarruri was answering the Western democracies who were afraid that anticlericalism was a sign of the revolutionary process Spain might initiate during the war. According to her, that was not the case: the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), without renouncing the revolution, respected democracy and electoral results, which gave the Communist a minimal representation in the congress. The priority was the victory in the war, and the Communists aligned themselves with the bourgeois forces, assuming their protectionism:

Es la revolución democrática burguesa que en otros países como Francia se desarrolló ya hace más de un siglo, la que se está realizando en nuestro país. Y nosotros, comunistas, somos los luchadores de vanguardia en esta lucha contra las fuerzas que representan el obscurantismo de tiempos pasados. (‘La diputada Dolores Ibárruri…’ La Libertad, 30 July 1936: 5)

[It is the bourgeois, democratic revolution that already took place in other countries such as France more than a century ago, what is taking place in our country now. We the Communists are the avant-garde fighters in this struggle against the forces representing the obscurantism of an earlier era]

She interpreted the Civil War as a traditionalist counter-revolution, seeking to return the country to a pre-liberal era. Consequently, the Communists, maintaining a teleological vision of history, had to paradoxically perform the conservative role of the bourgeoisie, consolidating the bourgeois democracy, also in regards to monumental protectionism. Spain was far from being ready for a government of the proletariat, she thought; thanks to the support of the Soviet Union,
the Communist Party took the reins of besieged Madrid and Spain, and occupied the key positions in the protection of the bourgeois democracy, and the salvage and preservation of the national heritage.

In his study of the relations between Spain and the Soviet Union, Stanley Payne has called for interpreting Ibarruri’s words with suspicion. According to Payne, these words are proof of the “political camouflage” the Communist Party assumed during the war (293). Such camouflage consisted in carrying the banner for the bourgeois democracy and anti-Fascism, while at the same time building a “social democracy of a new type” (202). Payne has criticized historians of the Spanish Civil War for their inability to distinguish between the rhetorical strategy and the genuine position of the Spanish Communist Party, calling it one of their greatest mistakes (137).

Assuming these precautions, what is key is how this political ambiguity worked, how the Communist Party interpreted the war historically, and how that interpretation determined their approach to the protection of monuments. There was a wide range of intermediate possibilities in the continuum that stretches from revolutionary iconoclasm to bourgeois protectionism. Communists were fighting on two fronts: against Fascism, and to different degree, against anarchism. They used protectionism as a propaganda strategy, compatible with “social

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75 Hermann has described Ibarruri’s leadership in the Communist Party (25-43). Kirschenbaum has studied Ibarruri portrayed as a model of the Communist female hero in the USSR (2015: 125-131).

76 “Social democracy of a new type” is the term used by the Spanish Communist Party Central Committee to take stock of their position and expectations during the war when, years later, in 1960, the party published Historia del Partido Comunista en España in Paris (174-180). For terminology and a comparison between different “popular democracies” of Eastern Europe after the Second World War, see Broué 253-258.

77 This discussion dates back to the origins of the historiography of the Spanish Civil War in the 1960s. Bolloten published his first book on this topic in 1961, The Grand Camouflage. The sub-chapter ‘Camouflaging the Revolution’ (102-115) of his 1979 book traces how historians have been accepting this idea of political camouflage of the Spanish Communist Party.

Charles José Márquez describes the groups of historians from Bolloten to Payne as “neo-Francoist or para-Francoist” (215-216).
democracy of a new type” as a transitory regime. These protectionist policies were also based in a genuine interest in preserving the monuments from the many intellectuals supporting the Communist Party and the people of Madrid.

Immediately after the coup d’état, the Republic activated a institutional machinery that led to the creation of a number of official organisms of protection. The first weeks of war were hectic: many new protectionist institutions and associations were created, such as the aforementioned Junta de Defensa del Tesoro Artístico Nacional, Comisión General de Museos [General Commission of Museums], Instituto Nacional de Cultura [National Institute of Culture], and Consejo General de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Tesoro Artístico [Central Council of Archives, Libraries and Artistic Treasure]. They were largely composed of popular brigades of protection, and heavily supported by pro-Communist associations, such as the Alliance of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals, whose members included Communist visual artist Josep Renau, General Director of Beaux-Arts (see section 3.2 of this chapter about his reflections on the Fallas festivities as a prototype of how monuments should be after the war) and Communist writers María Teresa León and Rafael Alberti, who were involved in the salvage of the Prado.

Regarding the government, anarchist ministers were in charge of the mobilization of workers, while a Communist Minister of War, Antonio Mije, was in charge of fortification and hygiene. 78 In regards to the monuments, chaos prevailed at the beginning. Different institutions

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78 During the last months of 1936, the Junta organized the bureaucratic apparatus to design a strategy for the physical protection of Madrid. Two Consejerías [Departments] were created for that purpose: Consejería de Guerra [War Department] and Consejería de Industrias de la Guerra [War Industries Department]. Consejería de Industrias de Guerra, directed by anarchists Amor Nuño (until December 1936) and Lorenzo Íñigo (until April 1937), was tasked with the fabrication of arms and mobilization of workers. Communist Antonio Mije was Minister of War, and also responsible for health and fortifications. Mije had at his disposal six battalions of one thousand members each. On December 1936, Consejería de Guerra got split into two bodies: Delegación de Milicias [Militia Delegation] and Delegación de Servicios del Frente [Front Services Delegation].
and associations disputed the protection. Madrid City Council was the first to take action. Its plan was to disassemble fountains and sculptures, and put them into storage. The council began to execute this plan by dismantling Puerta de Toledo. However, they soon met with strong opposition from two other organizations: the Junta de Defensa del Tesoro Artístico Nacional and the Comandancia de Obras y Fortificaciones [Command for Constructions and Fortifications]. The latter was a military organization chaired by architect Roberto Fernández Balbuena, which had the best human and material resources.

The dispute was political (anarchists vs Communists vs the military), aesthetic (removing the monuments from the urban landscape — many were removable, and in fact had changed location several times over the years — vs protecting them in situ) and a power struggle (local government vs non-governmental pro-Communist associations vs the military). The urgency of the situation called for a rapid response, as the monuments were totally exposed to aerial bombardment. The protection had political consequences — doing nothing entailed further damage on the Republic’s already tarnished reputation for the inaction against the urban mobs that burned churches and killed clergy.

To resolve the conflict and the problem of overlapping domains, Comité de Reforma, Reconstrucción y Saneamiento [Command for Refurbishment, Reconstruction, and Sanitation] was created under the chairmanship of Julián Besteiro. Professor of Logic at Complutense University of Madrid, translator of Kant’s Prolegomena, and member of the Socialist Party, Besteiro was one of the few congressmen who remained in Madrid after the siege. The committee led by Besteiro was given full responsibility for the protection of monuments. The

79 He and his wife Elvira Gascón were key in the salvage of the Prado. They both went into exile in Mexico after the war.
80 He was also the highest-ranking politician to fall into Francoist hands after the war.
soon withdrawal of the cosmopolitan Alliance of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals from the competition for the responsibility of protecting the monuments and its constant concern for the protection of the Prado is a sign of to what extend the monuments of Madrid were not a priority, and eventually protected not as universal but as national heritage.

This protection was a collective enterprise carried out by avant-garde architects with different ideological beliefs: Teodoro de Anasagasti, Fernando García Mercadal, Roberto Fernández Balbuena, José de Azpiroz. They met at Madrid’s School of Architecture in the mid 1920s, were members of what Carlos Flores has called the Generation of 1925, and became the promoters of the postulates of the Modern Movement in the capital. Anasagasti was the oldest and mentor of the others. He was a pioneer of the use of reinforced concrete in Spain. Even though he was considered a conservative Republican, he published in anarchist magazines during the war, as will be discussed below. He died during the war. Fernández Balbuena was closer to socialism. He was very involved in the salvage of the Prado, and after the war went into exile in Mexico, where he spent the rest of his life. Azpiroz was the architect of one of the most representative buildings of the Modern Movement in Madrid, the Parque Sur Building (1935). After the war, he joined the new dictatorial regime, and became state chief architect.

Similarly, García Mercadal remained in Spain after the war, and was purged, but eventually was allowed to work again, and in 1946 joined the Department of Architecture of the Instituto Nacional de Previsión, where he built several medical centers during the dictatorship of Franco. Alongside Josep Lluis Sert, he had been one the most representative figures of the
origins of modern architecture in Spain. Garcia Mercadal was the Spanish representative in the first CIAM (La Sarraz, 1928), and organized the first visit to Madrid of Le Corbusier (1929) Erich Mendelshon (1929), Theo van Doesburg (1929) and Walter Gropius (1930). In 1928, he built the first modernist building of Spain: Rincón de Goya, which will be discussed later. Historian Laborda Yneva attributes the design of the protection of Cybele to García Mercadal (XLVIII), while historian Juan Ignacio del Cueto attributes it to Fernández Balbuena. These discrepancies are just a proof that these protections were a collective enterprise.

[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

Fig. 46. Cybele protected. Unidentified author.

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81 Laborda called García Mercadal a “moderno moderado” [moderate modern] (Laborda XXII). See conclusions of chapter I for a discussion on Francisco Mujica as a moderate modern, following Adorno’s suggestions.

82 In a personal interview held in Madrid on July 2015, his cousin, also named Fernando García Mercadal, said he also thought his uncle had built the protective pyramid of Cybele.

83 Exhibition “Presencia del exilio español en la arquitectura mexicana” [Presence of Spanish Exiles in Mexican Architecture], Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, May 14-August 3, 2014.
Prior to the war, these architects had encountered extraordinary obstacles to build modern architecture in Madrid. Even in the progressive environment of the Second Republic, there was little room for their modern aesthetics as a response to the material, intellectual, and spiritual needs of mass society. Unlike in Catalonia, where modernist architects collaborated closely with the government, modernist buildings were uncommon in Madrid.

These architects advocated for geometrical forms, flat, clean surfaces, and the eradication of ornamentation, while the capital was still dominated by Islamic, mudéjar, and baroque eclecticisms, as well as Antonio Palacio’s grandiloquent buildings with neocolonial overtones. Modernist works, such as Azpiroz’s Parque Sur Building, or the Porto Pi gas station built by Casto Fernández Shaw, were exceptions. Understandably, avant-garde architects saw the civil war as a unique opportunity —perhaps their last— to have a real impact on the landscape of Madrid. They had different political ideals, but worked under a pro-Communist government, in collaboration with pro-Communist organizations, and shared an aesthetic project of modernization.

In January 1938, the Barcelona-based anarchist publication *Solidaridad obrera* [Workers’ Solidarity] published an article on measures for the protection of monuments being implemented in besieged Madrid at the time. According to the article, the capital’s School of Architecture had left its elitism behind, opening the classrooms to workers interested in learning about “el estudio de los medios de destrucción de la guerra moderna, la preservación de los monumentos y obras de arte” [the means of destruction of modern war, the preservation of monuments and works of

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84 See Antonio Pizza.
The faculty teaching included Fernando García Mercadal, Luis Blanco Soler, and Teodoro de Anasagasti, among others. Titled “La capacitación cultural de los trabajadores” [The Cultural Training of Workers], the article praised how these architects worked “en perfecta consonancia con la clase trabajadora” [in perfect harmony with the working class] to innovatively protect monuments, offer relief from air raids, and develop new pedagogical techniques. Indeed, Comandancia de Reforma, Reconstrucción y Saneamiento, the command in charge of the protection, was composed by forty architects, forty engineers, and two thousand construction workers who were trained this way.

As was pointed earlier, the vandal is always the other. While Francoists presented the Spanish Republic as a nest of foreign Communists and freemasons with no respect for the Spanish national heritage, the Republicans accused international Fascism of the same. Republicans considered themselves the true Spaniards because the Spanish people chose them in democratic elections. Francoist said to be the true Spaniards because they incarnated the glories of the imperial past and had a project of recovery of the lost splendor through military authoritarianism, Catholicism and Hispanism. Protection became an argument for both sides to win legitimacy and foreign support. This is an example of how the pro-Franco press addressed the destruction of monuments and the foreignness of the Republicans:

No cesan un momento de martillar nuestros oídos con las tristes noticias, que nos llenan de indignación y de pena, de que valiosos monumentos, verdaderos arsenales de grandeza, relicarios de poderío, indiscutibles joyas artísticas han sido objeto de la furia roja, que jamás ha sentido el estímulo de lo sobrehumano, y cuyo lema no ha sido otro que la destrucción, la barbarie, el saqueo. Son verdaderos detentores de lo ajeno: son extranjeros y por ende nada tienen en nuestra Patria, como no sea el negro historial de sus orígenes. (“¡Viva España! Haciendo patria.” Diario de avisos de La Palma, n. 17513, 13 August 1936, p. 1)

85 “La Escuela de Arquitectura de Madrid, adaptada a las necesidades de la guerra” [Madrid School of Architecture Adapted to the Needs of War]. Solidaridad obrera, 15 January 1938: 3.
Sad news do not cease to painfully reach our ears, filling us with indignation and grief —valuable monuments, true arsenals of grandeur, reliquaries of vigor, indisputable artistic jewels, have been the target of the red fury, which had never felt the stimulus of the supernatural, and whose motto has been nothing but destruction, brutality, and looting. They are thieves: they are foreigners, and thereby they have nothing in our Fatherland, but their dark origins ("Viva Spain! Building the Fatherland")]

The language used in this article is that of the imperial tradition. It uses a number of synonyms of storage applied to monuments: “verdaderos arsenales de grandeza, relicario de poderío, indiscutibles joyas artísticas.” “Arsenal” refers to military storage and “relicario” to religious storage. Republicans had protected churches and statues of imperial kings for their artistic and historical value. Instead, for Francoists, these monuments were a concentration of military and religious meaning that preserved their imperial ideals of glory and power (‘grandeza,’ ‘poderío’). For them, these monuments were not historical but commemorative —there was not historical distance, their projection towards the future was exemplary, a way of setting the standards of how the Spaniards should continue to be.

2.3. Iconoclasm Without Destruction

In November 1936, at the beginning of the Battle of Madrid, the Junta de Defensa had to choose between two opposed proposals for defending the city: either defending Madrid from outside, establishing the fronts in the Guadarrama mountain range, Somosierra mountain pass (Segovia) and the city of Sigüenza (Guadalajara); or turning the city into a fortress (Aróstegui and Martínez 28-45). These two options echoed the two interpretation of the war discussed so far: an opportunity for revolution —corresponding with the attacking attitude of taking the surrounding

86 These discrepancies continued once the government was back from Valencia and somehow replicated in the strife to design a general strategy to defend and protect the city, its people and monuments.
mountain ranges—versus a consolidation of the bourgeois democracy and postponement of the revolution—corresponding with the protective attitude of turning the city into a fortress. Most Communists, who also favored the consolidation of the bourgeois Republic, advocated for the latter.\(^8\)

Both the Communist Party and Juventud Socialista Unificada [Unified Socialist Youth]\(^8\) carried out a propaganda campaign under the slogan “¡Fortificaciones!” [Fortifications!] in their official publications Mundo Obrero [Workers’ World] and Milicia Popular [Popular Militia]. A poster could be seen around the city where fortifications were presented as “an avant-garde weapon” (Fig. 47). In the background of the poster, there was a silhouette of the Telefónica Building, the iconic skyscraper of Gran Vía, Madrid’s main avenue inspired in Broadway. Since it incarnated a symbol of modern Madrid and was hosting the international press covering the war, the Telefónica Building was one of the main targets of the Francoist artillery. Fortifications meant to protect what such symbol represented: a modern, cosmopolitan capital.

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\(^8\) Anarchists agreed with the need to build fortifications, but they were more concerned with mobilizing the masses. They opposed the Communists in their understanding of rigid discipline and hierarchy, and promoted a more horizontal tactic of mobilization through popular committees. The thought mobilization should go beyond city borders and reach all the Spanish population in the Republican side. The government’s move from Madrid to Valencia can be understood within these debates: the strategy would have been letting the Francoists take Madrid, and then counterattack from outside (Aróstegui and Martinez 35).

Against the odds, Madrid resisted the offensive. It was not because of a system of fortresses, since little was built during the months the Junta was in charge. The help of the Soviet Union and the International Brigades was crucial. There was also a stroke of luck: Republicans got to steal the Francoist plan of attack from an enemy soldier who carried it on paper and killed in combat, so they could organize the defense accordingly.

\(^8\) A merge of Communist and socialist youth organizations since spring 1936.
Fig. 47. Propaganda posters. Down right: “Fortification, avant-garde weapon.” Command for Constructions and Fortifications.
In this poster, the notion of fortification was used in a military context, but a similar connotation could be applied to architecture. In the military, the avant-gardes refer to the first ones in the line, the advanced scout. The poster presented the paradox that a defensive attitude was an avant-garde weapon. This made sense in the context of the Communist Party’s general interpretation of the war: they were protecting the consolidation of a bourgeois political system in order to create the conditions that one day would lead to a political revolution. Being defensive was a way of securing the functioning of the teleological development of history. The protective structures built for the monuments functioned within the same paradox: fortifying the monuments and turning the protective structures into monuments themselves was an avant-garde intervention that built a new type of monument and changed the cityscape, while still protecting and preserving the traditional monuments of Madrid —iconoclasm (the icons are changed) without destruction (but the previous ones are preserved).

Cybele was the first monument to be protected in late June 1937. Its surroundings were continuously bombed because nearby there were many institutions that were crucial for the Republicans: the Ministry of War, the Bank of Spain, the Palace of Communications. But beyond its location, Cybele was the first monument to be protected due to its symbolism. The first words of its protection report were: “Es un símbolo de Madrid” [It is a symbol of Madrid] (de Vicente González: 3582-3583). Due to the shortage of sandbags, Cybele was literally buried in loose sand, with a wall of impermeable material.89 To cover the buried monument, a pyramid

89 Materials used depended on what was available. The report says: “enterrar la figura con arena suelta, sin que tenga contacto directa con ella” [bury the statue in loose sand, which should not get into contact with the statue]. Cybeles was buried in a pyramid. Technically, the shape of the protecting structure was due to the dynamism of the monument: “La naturaleza misma de la figura, dado el gran movimiento de ella y el gran número de elementos en voladizo” [the statue has great movement and a great number of corbels] (de Vicente González: 3582-3583).
made of bricks and cement was built. Its body was composed by a series of concave surfaces that worked as sort of buttresses. Later, many other monuments were similarly intervened. In 1938, Comandancia de Reforma, Reconstrucción y Saneamiento published a *Memoria* with a list of the monuments protected as of December 1937, those whose protecting structure was being built at that moment, and those whose protection was planned to be undertaken soon.

As of December 1937, the protecting structures for the following monuments were finished: Cybele, Neptune, Apollo, Real Hospicio de San Fernando (façade), Miraflores Palace (façade), statue of Felipe IV, Torrecilla Palace, Prado Museum (lateral loggias), Ministry of Interior (archive, library, basements), San Sebastián Church (Architects Chapel), San Francisco el Grande Church. The following ones were under construction: Descalzas Monastery (façade and stairs), statue of Philip III, San Andrés Church, San Sebastián Church (Actors Chapel), San Isidro school. The protection of these other were planned but the works had not started yet: Obispo Chapel (altarpiece and crypts), Fuentecilla, Philip IV Gate in Retiro Park, other fountains in Paseo del Prado, Monument to the Heroes of May 2.

There was an overarching, uniform result in the new image of the city with most of its traditional monuments covered by geometric structures. The ornamentation of the baroque façades, the academicism of the neoclassical fountains and statues, and indeed the historical dimension of the city were masked and removed from the public eye. However, not all protecting structures had the same level of sophistication and made the same impactful aesthetic statement. Some were merely pragmatic structures with the only purpose of protecting a monument and sending the message that the Republic appreciated and respected the national heritage. Some others became monuments themselves and exploited their evocative potential, becoming symbols of a utopian, postwar Spain.
The protective structures of Cybele, Apollo and Real Hospicio de San Fernando were the first ones to be protected and the most sophisticated ones. In *Bunker Archaeology*, Virilio thought war space as a sort of exhibition hall because “military instrument is never strictly functional” (1994: 27). In-situ protection emphasized the cartographic value of these protecting structures because they were temporarily providing an image of a future, ideal Madrid.

These transient, cartographic monuments were used for propaganda both at home — people of Madrid could dream of a future, modern city— and abroad. Abroad, the protection of the Apollo fountain made it to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Between 15 March and 18 April of 1938, the exhibition *Luis Quintanilla: An Exhibition of Drawings of the War in Spain* took place.⁹⁰ Luis Quintanilla was a painter of Cubist inspiration that had toured the Republican fronts to draw war scenes with pencil in a sketchbook. Spanish President socialist Juan Negrín had commissioned his 104 drawings. One of them showed at MoMA was “Protegiendo la fuente de Apolo” [Protecting the Apollo fountain], portraying the pedestal of the fountain already protected, while the construction workers were building the protective structure for the statue.

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⁹⁰ Quintanilla showed for the first time in New York in 1934. It was “Madrid Life and Street Scenes”, in the Pierre Matisse Gallery, with catalogue by John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway.
**Fig. 48.** List of the monuments protected, in execution and planned as of December 1937. *Memoria 1937-1938*. Madrid: Ministry of Communication, Transportation, and Public Works, 1938: 37. Special Collections of Goldfarb Library, Brandeis University.
Fig. 49. Apollo Fountain during the protection works. Vaamonde Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.
Fig. 50. Apollo protected. Vaamonde Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.
Just as Picasso’s *Guernica* had been used as propaganda in the 1937 World Exhibition in Paris by showing the Francoists as barbarians that destroyed entire towns and national symbols, Quintanilla’s drawings at the 1938 MoMA exhibition portrayed the life in the Republican fronts, including the protectionist measures carried out by government.  

The catalogue was written by Ernest Hemingway, who briefly commented as follows: “There is much to say about Quintanilla, and no space to say it, but the drawings say all they need to say themselves” (*Luis Quintanilla: An Exhibition of Drawings of the War in Spain* Catalogue, 1938: n. p.). He indeed could not write much more: the United States were neutral during the Spanish Civil War, and director of MoMA Alfred Barr Jr. was afraid that taking parts could have undesirable consequences for the museum. Therefore, Quintanilla was asked to not make political statements to the press. However, the mere exhibition of these drawings was interpreted as a support to the Republican cause.

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91 After the exhibition, each they were sold for $100. Critics wrote positive reviews: The war drawings by Mr. Quintanilla are, in themselves, so beautiful, so sensitively fine –just as drawings so superbly wrought- that at first this very perfection may seem somewhat to overshadow the message they have been created to convey. But as soon as you pass from drawing to drawing this terrific and vital theme, without attendant loss on the esthetic side, becomes strangely and compellingly and absorbingly eloquent. The hand of the draftsman moves in harmonious obedience to the command of an artist’s eye that appears instinctively to have sought and to have found the more significant, the deeper traits that would not reveal themselves to vision less acute or to a mind less qualified for true insight. (“Finland and Spain.” *New York Times*, March 20th, 1938: 9. *Luis Quintanilla Exhibition Papers*. MoMA Archives, New York).

92 This is why Barr wrote in the catalogue:

Although the artist has been a participant in the Spanish Civil War he wishes these drawings to be considered as objective Works of art, not as partisan documents. It is entirely in accordance with this intention that the Museum places them on exhibition. (*Luis Quintanilla: An Exhibition of Drawings of the War in Spain* Catalogue, 1938: n. p.)

93 Chicago Tribune journalist Jay Allen was a war correspondent in Spain and collaborated with the exhibition. In a letter to Barr Jr. signed on 18 February 1938, he expressed his willingness to avoid the politicization of the exhibition: “I shall prevent Quintanilla from making any kind of statement that might be termed as political.” (*Luis Quintanilla Exhibition Papers*. MoMA Archives, New York).

94 In a letter from Barr Jr. to Allen, it seems clear that such prevention was not enough: “I regret that I wrote you so brusquely, but we were rather concerned about the uncontrolled releases on Quintanilla which appeared only the day after our conversation with him and you.” In a letter to American war correspondent Jay Allen, Barr Jr. said:
The internal propaganda was particularly telling. Communism had always used the metaphor of construction both with the metaphoric meaning of constructing a new society and the literal meaning of celebrating construction work, as can be seen in the 1936 electoral propaganda: fig. 52 uncannily resembles one of the covered monuments with the statue’s bust—in this case, Karl Marx—coming out of the protective structure.

Sometimes, propaganda contradicted the protection of monuments to some extend. See, for example, fig. 53. This poster of unidentified author is titled “Visión futura” and the caption says as follows: “EL TRABAJO y el AMOR triunfantes ante la desaparición del sistema capitalista, cuyas ruinas representan el estigma infamante de un pasado de horror y crímenes” [Triumphant WORK and LOVE in the face of the disappearance of the capitalist system, whose

As you can imagine, I have been very much embarrassed by the necessity of making certain changes in the arrangements of the show, labels for the drawings, and text of the catalogue. I was able to proceed with the exhibition only on the explicit understanding with our Committee that there should be no propaganda since our Museum is a public and non-partisan institution. I had not anticipated just what would be considered propaganda but found, after submitting material to nonpartisan judges, that any emphasis upon foreign participation in Spain would be considered propaganda. This surprised me since this participation seemed to me merely a matter of historical fact—but this, it appears, makes it all the more effective as propaganda. (Luis Quintanilla Exhibition Papers. MoMA Archives, New York).

By 1938, the Republican government planned to participate in the 1939 New York World Fair. Quintanilla was charged with painting five murals for the Spanish pavilion. Due to the defeat of the Republicands, the pavilion was never built. However, Quintanilla painted the murals, which were shown in the Associate American Artists Galleries on November 1939. They were known as “the other Guernicas.” On the occasion of the opening, Quintanilla told The New York Times:

‘I arrived here’ the artist goes on to say, ‘sad and demoralized. I didn’t know whether I should commit suicide or get married, which is to prolong life; I married. I didn’t know whether to take to alcohol or to work, and I worked. Little by little I took from my palette the bitter memories of Spain, and by dint of brush strokes I came to feel myself an individual again, and to love colors as old friends who for a long time had been forgotten; during three years I had not painted.’ (“Luis Quintanilla Puts Art on View”. The New York Times, November 7th 1938:


Murals were titled ‘Hunger,’ ‘Destruction,’ ‘Pain,’ ‘Flight,’ ‘Soldiers.’ Although his war drawings had received good reviews, critics considered his murals merely decorative. They were lost for decades and found again in the 1990s in a movie theatre at Bleecker Street, New York. Sponsored by Banco Santander, they were acquired and restored, and can be seen today in Paraninfo of Universidad de Cantabria (cf. Gutiérrez-Solana Salcedo). To know the full story, see documentary Los otros Guernicas, by Iñaki Pinedo.
ruins represent the shameful stigma of a past of horror and crimes]. Unlike the protected monuments, this poster advocates for iconoclasm with destruction.

There are two temporalities in it: the present in the foreground and the future in the background. The utopian future is represented with tall, cubic buildings (see also the resemblance with Mujica’s Vertical City of the Future, discussed in chapter I) and different industrial technologies such as factory chimneys and tanks, a steamship, a zeppelin and an aircraft. It shows a mix of eighteen-century inventions (the steamship),\textsuperscript{95} twenty-century machines that in the 1930s were getting obsolete (zeppelin) and others that were booming (aircraft). This heterogeneous arrangement is very telling of the anachronism of Spanish modernity, also pointed out by Ibarruri when stated that the Spanish Republic was the bourgeois Revolution that took place in France over a century before.

\textsuperscript{95} For a discussion on eighteen-century inventions, see Labrador 2009.
Fig. 52. Construction Workers Union (part of the socialist UGT) electoral propaganda for the 1936 elections. “Vote for the Popular Front,” “Building the Great Work.” Bargaria. UGT Society of Construction Workers. Pablo Iglesias Foundation
[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

**Fig. 53.** “Visión Futura” poster. Unidentified author.
The triumph of work and love would provide access to that future. The gender representation of these values is the heteropatriarchal: he incarnates work and shows the path towards the utopian future to her female partner, who incarnates love. Their attributes are machinery and an olive branch, representing peace. This portrayal contrasts with many other Republican propaganda posters showing women as workers thanks to the reconfiguration of gender roles fostered by the war, as Mary Nash has extensively studied — there were militawomen and many women working in factories in the rearguard. The representation of women as love is closer to Francoist propaganda, which portrayed women exclusively as caregivers for family and soldiers. However, in this poster, the woman is leaning on the factory machinery, thus her role is equivocal. The utopian future aspired in this propaganda was technological and artistic, but ambiguous regarding gender equality.

Where the protected monuments and this poster essentially disagreed was about the role of the national heritage in the future. The poster seems to suggest a disconnection between technological and artistic forms, because even though some enlightened inventions such as the steamship was celebrated, the artistic style that embraced the values of Enlightenment — neoclassicism — was discredited and presented as ruin. While capitalism was linked to neoclassical aesthetic forms, it was disassociated with technological inventions: factories, boats and planes. Unlike the protective iconoclasm of the covered monuments, the iconoclasm this poster proposed was based on the destruction of the artistic heritage, particularly the neoclassical. It may be argued that the plan for the monuments after the war (hence, the olive branch) was destruction to build the new, geometrical city. In the next section, it will be argued that that was not the case.
2.4. Concealing to Make Visible

During the war, military architecture took over the city. Madrid went through a deep transformation of its urban landscape, in which the civic and the military were not clearly separated anymore. Aerial warfare re-signified life underground, making it one of the paradigms of war (and post-war) societies. Both people and monuments lived in shelters, which led to a transference of experiences. People of Madrid wrote poems to the covered monuments, where the shared experience of living underground was emphasized. On 29 June 1937, just a few days after the construction of the pyramid for Cybele, the following poem was published:

La diosa de Frigia
soporta la guerra
cubierta de tierra.

Hermoso Atis, ¿tú sabes
que la divina Cibeles
ha sido, al fin, enterrada
en la ciudad indulgente?
¡Bajo la tierra, esa madre

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96 For example, during the Battle of Madrid, the radio show “Altavoz del Frente” [The Front’s Megaphone] organized a “Parapet’s Day”. Altavoz del frente was a radio broadcasting service operating in the fronts for soldiers and militias, providing both propaganda and entertainment. The Parapet’s Day was created to raise money “from stores, industry and banks” and buy “tobacco, clothing and food” (in this order; tobacco was particularly scarce, see Fernando Díaz Plaja 191) for those fighting in the city fronts (La Voz, 13 November 1936: 2; El Sol, 14 November 1936: 2).

The parapets became the most symbolic architectural artifact of the war; tourists came to Madrid not to see its treasure, which was being evacuated, but to visit the parapets. Elena Garro offered a testimony of this kind of tourists in the Ciudad Universitaria fronts (26-27).

97 See Atomic Dwelling, Anxiety, Domesticity, and Postwar Architecture (2012), edited by Robin Schuldenfrei. For a reconstruction of Spain after the war, see Muñoz Rojas.
del Universo perenne!
Corre a la orilla del Gallo,
que lo sepan los curetes;
sube al Ida; los pastores
son audaces, son valientes.
Tromba de guerreros frígios
contra la bárbara gente.

La diosa de Frigia
soporta la guerra
cubierta de tierra.

¿El motivo del ultraje?

Mancebo hermoso, si quieres,
te lo diré maldiciendo:
castillo sobre las sienes,
broncos leones del carro,
mano de las llaves fuerte
lo han roto con la metralla
de sus obuses rugientes
esos aquivos de ahora.

Madrid, el pueblo doliente,
para librarla del daño,
ha enterrado a la Cibeles.
La diosa de Frigia
soporta la guerra
cubierta de tierra.

Cuando el silencio nocturno
cubre la graciosa fuente
procesión de blancas formas
se acercan a la Cibeles.
Son las vestales, sus hijas;
siempre bellas, castas siempre
en la cama de la noche
oigo resonar sus preces:
Madre Vesta, profanada
por la barbarie inclemente
consuma el fuego las vidas
malditas y maldicientes.

La diosa de Frigia
soporta la guerra
cubierta de tierra.


[The goddess of Phrygia]
endures the war
covered in sand.

Beautiful Atis, do you know
divine Cybele
had finally been buried
in the indulgent city?
Underground, the mother
of the perennial Universe!
Rush to the edges of the Gallo river,
let the Curetes know.
Climb the Ida; the shepherds are courageous,
are brave.
A cyclone of Phrygian warriors
against the barbarians.

The goddess of Phrygia
endures the war
covered in sand.

The cause of the outrage?
Beautiful young man,
I will tell you, if you want:
the castles on her temples,
the ferocious lions of her carriage,
her hand holding the keys strongly
have been broken by the roaring shell’s
grapeshots
of these contemporary Achaeans.

Madrid, the grieving people,
to keep her safe,
has buried Cybele.

The goddess of Phrygia
endures the war
covered in sand.

When the night silence
covers the gracious fountain
a procession of white shapes
approaches Cybele.

They are the Vestals, her daughters,
always beautiful, chaste always,
from my night bed
I can hear their prayers.

Mother Vesta, profaned
by the inclement barbarians,
may the fire consume
the damned and defamatory lives.

The goddess of Phrygia

endures the war
covered in sand.


This poem reveals two effects of the protection of monuments: first, the use of Cybele as icon of the Republican cause; second, the paradoxical hyper-visibility the concealed monuments achieved. According to the poem, the people of Madrid became Phrygian warriors, who protected their goddess mother. Just as Francoists had understood the war as a crusade against the infidels led by Catholic virgins —generally Virgin of Pilar or the Immaculate Conception, symbols of Hispanism and Counter-Reformation, respectively— this poem portrayed the pagan goddess Cybele as the mother goddess of the people of Madrid defending the city against the barbarian invasions —monuments were not perceived as authoritarians, but as allied to the people’s struggles. Consequently, the people of Madrid did not need to attack monuments anymore; they are portrayed as preservationist.98

Even though Cybele was buried, the monument was more visible than ever.99 In the same year the Spanish Civil War broke out, Walter Benjamin wrote his famous lines on architecture in

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98 Although it does not refer to Catholic, but pagan imagery.
99 Solé i Sabaté has discussed the new urban subject known as “el mirón” [the voyeur]. In total war, the voyeur was fascinated with aircrafts, and sometimes risked his/her life just to be able to stare at planes (Solé i Sabaté
The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. He argued that architecture was perceived in a different way that other art forms: not by contemplation, but through use:

Distraction and concentration form an antithesis, which may be formulated as follows. A person who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it; he enters into the work, just as, according to legend, a Chinese painter entered his completed painting while beholding it. By contrast, the distracted masses absorb the work of art into themselves. Their waves lap around it; they encompass it with their tide. This is the most obvious in regards to buildings. Architecture has always offered the prototype of an artwork that is received in a state of distraction and through the collective. The laws of architecture’s reception are highly instructive. (2008: 39-40)

Buildings are necessary for shelter, and this functionality means that they are perceived in a distracted, rather than in an attentive, manner. Said otherwise, people are completely surrounded by architecture, and are so familiar with it, that they generally do not stop to actively look at architecture.

What happened with Cybele suggests that this idea proposed by Benjamin is applicable not only to buildings but to monuments as well — monuments are such an integrated part of the urban landscape, that city dwellers do not stop to see them anymore. In the case of Madrid, some of the covered monuments were actually buildings (church and palace façades), while others were sculptures. They all were artifacts fixed in the urban landscape, and very familiar for the people of Madrid. The Spanish avant-garde architects seemed to be implicitly reflecting on these same issues than concerned Benjamin: by concealing the monuments, they made them more visible than ever. An example of this hyper-visibility is how the people of Madrid created nicknames for them:

11, 276-277). Regarding monuments, Riegl has noticed the voyeuristic pleasure of looking at the progressive deterioration of monuments (73). This changed with total war, when destruction could happen suddenly at any time.
La diosa Cibeles —la más madrileña de las diosas— corrió un terrible peligro. Había que ponerla a salvo de los obuses, y se la encerró en el espacio cóncavo de una cueva de ladrillos y de sacos terreros. Los bárbaros no respetan ni el arte ni la tradición.

Al ver encerrada a la diosa en su trinchera, la musa popular, c[n] una delicada ofrenda de cariño, la llama así:

—¿No has visto a la Cibeles?... ¡Es una linda tapada! (“Sin el permiso del alcalde, los madrileños han cambiado los nombres de calles y plazas” [Without the mayor’s permission, Madrilenians have changed names of streets and squares], ABC (Madrid edition), 8 April 1937, p. 11)

[Godess Cybele —the most Madrilenian of all goddesses— was in great danger. She had to be put into safety from the shells, and was shut up in the concave space of a cave made out of bricks and sandbags. Barbarians respect neither art nor tradition.

When the popular Muse saw her shut up in her trench, as a delicate offering of affection, called her this way:

—Have you seen Cybele?... She is the Covered Beauty!

“La linda tapada,” the Covered Beauty, is the way people called Cybele during the war. This nickname came after a very popular zarzuela written by José Tellaeche, with music by Francisco Alonso, premiered in Madrid in 1924, and performed during several seasons. Just as Cybele, the protagonist of this zarzuela covered herself to become more visible, and get the attention of the man she desired.

The story of La linda tapada dates back to the seventeenth century, when Doña Laura Marialba followed Don Íñigo de Albornoz to Salamanca. He had gone there to recruit soldiers for the Army of Flanders. Since Don Íñigo had paid little attention to her the previous times they had met, Doña Laura developed a strategy to not go unnoticed this time: in order to be seen, she

100 This nickname appeared in several articles of different newspapers (Crónica, 15 August 1937: 5); Mi revista, 15 October 1937: 26).
covered her face. The strategy worked, and Don Íñigo was not the only one intrigued by her mysterious hidden face, but the entire city of Salamanca. The zarzuela finishes with a happy ending: Don Íñigo fell in love with Doña Laura, and she went to Flanders with him.

Fig. 54-55. Above, Neptune by Antonio Passaporte (1901-1983). Loty Archive. Below, Neptune protected during the war. Vaamonde Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.
Fig. 56. Project for protection of the façade of San Isidro Institute. The concave surfaces resembled those of Cybele. Moreno Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.
Fig. 57. Works of protection of the façade of San Isidro Institute. By Fernando Gallego Fernández. Junta del Tesoro Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.
Fig. 58. Left. Project for protection of the façade of Miraflores Palace. Moreno Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.

Fig. 59. Right. Project for protection of the façade of Torrecilla Palace. Moreno Archive. Spanish Photography Library of Historical Heritage.
Cybele was not alone in receiving a nickname: the protected statue of Neptune was known as El Emboscado [The ambushed]. Journalists also changed names to different sites and streets. For example, some articles referred to Paseo del Prado as Paseo del Ocaso de los Dioses [Twilight of the Gods Boulevard], echoing Wagner. \(^{101}\) Paseo del Prado is where the fountains of Cybele, Apollo and Neptune are located. This choice of nickname is surprising because of the way Wagner was used by the Nazi as a nationalist symbol. \(^{102}\) However, it fit the propaganda narrative that presented Madrid as the tomb of Fascism.

At least since the old Egyptians, pyramids have represented the funeral architectural form par excellence. This ancient motif is the form invoked in the structure built to cover the very symbol of Madrid —Cybele. \(^{103}\) Cybele is the Phrygian and Roman goddess of Earth, agriculture, and fecundity. In mythology, she is associated with the seasons, which are controlled by her granddaughter Persephone’s annual journey into and out of the underworld. The myth promoted by Republican propaganda followed a similar narrative: Cybele —and the other gods of Paseo del Prado— would stay in the underworld—that is why the twilight—, in her tomb, until the

\(^{101}\) Other streets received nicknames: Conde de Peñalver (a section of current Gran Vía) became Avenida de Rusia first, and then Avenida de la Unión Soviética. After the war, it was renamed Avenida de José Antonio, after the founder of Spanish pro-Fascist party Falange. In 1981, its original name Gran Vía was recovered. Other cases were: Alfonso XII St became Alcalá Zamora (Republican President) and eventually Reforma Agraria; San Isidro St became Largo Caballero (socialist Prime Minister), Carrera de San Francisco became Avenida del Alférez Pedrín (killed militiaman), and Tutor St became Comandante Ristrori (killed mayor of Toledo) (See Fernando Díaz Plaja 42-43 and Montoliu 142).

Also, Avenida de la Unión Soviética was sarcastically called Avenida de los obuses [Avenue of Shells] or Avenida del quince y medio [Avenue of Fifteen and a Half], referring to the type of projectile used by the Francoists against that area representing modern Madrid, particularly the skyscraper Telefónica Building, headquarters of the foreign press (see more in García Algarra; Arturo Barea La forja de un rebelde vol. 3. La llama)

\(^{102}\) Wagner was rarely performed in Madrid; the scarce representations of his repertoire were a failure (La Voz, 14 February 1937: 6) Wagner was sort of a taboo in the Republican side because the Nazi used him as a national symbol. The few times Wagner was performed in Spain during those years, a controversy followed. (Solidaridad obrera, 7 July 1937: 11).

\(^{103}\) A similar form is used in the original Lenin mausoleum (1924-1929).
The winter of wartime would pass, and emerge after victory, announcing the arrival of a spring without Fascism.\textsuperscript{104}

2.5. The Returning Pyramid

Even though the cartographic value of the protective monuments is exploited to the extreme, they did have a commemorative value as well. As explained in the Introduction of this dissertation, when the cartographic value is used, it is always in dialectical relationship with the commemorative value. This is particularly telling in the case of the pyramid that protected Cybele, that was built in 1937, but whose origin dated back at least to 1928, when Le Corbusier first visited Madrid, the beginnings of modern architecture in Spain, and the festivities of the centenary of the death of Spanish painter Francisco de Goya.

After decades of oblivion, Goya was recovered as a picturesque painter of popular scenes in the late nineteenth century. His consecration as Spain’s national painter took place during the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1930). 1928 was the year of the centenary of his death. The official festivities in Madrid and Zaragoza (the region where Goya was born) continued to celebrate him as a picturesque painter. However, that same year, other celebrations, official and non-official, started to create a different image of Goya: a painter politically committed with the popular classes. There were two particular events that promoted this new image: the un-official homage organized by anarchist artist Ramón Acín in Huesca, and a cycle of fourteen conferences

\textsuperscript{104} Virilio described the performatic nature of bunkers: men used them for protection and left them as an act of resurrection (1994: 46).
—some of them in the headquarters of the socialist UGT union in Zaragoza—, with speakers such as Oswald Spengler and José García Mercadal—brother of Fernando, one of the leaders of the protection of monuments.

José García Mercadal read an essay titled “Goya, pintor del pueblo” [Goya, Painter of the People]. He argued Goya was for Spanish painting what Galdós became for literature a few decades later: Galdós had ventured into Madrid’s slums with a notepad to explore and learn about the people’s language, customs, and everyday conflicts. Goya had placed his easel in the popular festivities and next to the firing squads the day after the uprisings. For José García Mercadal, Goya was the first painter of the people who emerged after the French Revolution anywhere in the world.

For architecture, the great event of this centennial was the construction of Rincón de Goya [Goya’s Retreat], the first building in Spain that followed the postulates of Modern Architecture.105 His author was in fact Fernando García Mercadal, who was also originally from Zaragoza. As Huergo Cardoso has put it, Rincón de Goya was a building-manifesto, a proposal for a new architecture embracing the ideals of Spain as a modern country, closely connected with Europe and the world (Huergo Cardoso 12). Mercadal’s building entailed a double rupture: a disassociation with the dominant, historicist architecture by bringing to Spain a new way of conceiving architecture; and a new proposal for monuments: even though a traditional sculpture with pedestal was expected, he built a building that functioned as a library and exhibition hall. Just as Goya was seen as a pioneer of a painter committed to the needs of the working classes —

105 The junta in charge of the centennial celebrations of Goya in Zaragoza commissioned Rincón de Goya. It was a building of orthodox rationalism, with little concessions: two rectangular bodies—one vertical, one horizontal—intersect; it does not have pilotis but a portico; clean façade; picture windows—vertical and horizontal—only at the back of the building; surrounded by a leafy garden.
as well as a pioneer of surrealism because of his *Black Paintings*—, García Mercadal repeated Goya’s avant-garde gesture by proposing a new form of architecture and monument: a monument to be inhabited, to do research, to celebrate innovation, and to encourage fellow architects to build this way—a cartographic monument. Academicist critics were very harsh against Mercadal, and the architect struggled to see his building completed.  

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106 Most critics were unfavorable, calling *Rincón de Goya* “a cube of air.” On April 1928, García Mercadal complained by letter to Hermenegildo Esteban, secretary of the Spanish Academy in Rome, about his bad building was received in Spain:

> Por el periódico habrá Vd. visto el curso de las fiestas goyescas y la “inauguración” del Rincón de Goya, si así puede llamarse ya que faltan los libros de la biblioteca y los cuadros reproducciones de las obras de nuestro más ilustre paisano.

> Crea Vd. que la verdadera historia de este centenario está por escribir y quizás desdichadamente no sea escrita nunca. Mi “éxito” rotundo, a nadie [h]a gustado como yo esperaba, el tiempo espero me irá dando partidarios (Reproduced by Laborda LXXIX)

[You must have seen in the press the course of the Goya festivities and the ‘inauguration’ of Rincón de Goya, if it can be so called, since the books of the library, and the reproductions of the paintings of our fellow Aragonese are still missing.

The true story of this centennial is still to be written, but unfortunately it might happen that such story will never be written. My resounding ‘success’ has pleased nobody, which came to me as a surprise; I hope time will provide me supporters]
Fig. 60-61. García Mercadal’s *Rincón de Goya*, project (above) and back view (below).
During those years, García Mercadal was leading the campaign for the introduction of modern architecture in Spain alongside his friend writer José Moreno Villa. They both were the guides of Le Corbusier in Madrid and El Escorial. Huergo Cardoso has studied the role of Moreno Villa as the most important architectural critic of Spain in the 1920s and 1930s (Huergo Cardoso 12-14), and how the interpretation of modern architecture in Spain was influenced by the studies of Moreno Villa and very probably García Mercadal on Goya’s designs of funerary monuments.

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107 Moreno Villa started with a column on architecture in the newspaper El Sol that became very famous to the point that the Central Society of Architects of Madrid invited him to direct the journal Arquitectura, the most influential and prestigious of the time.
Just as Emil Kauffman was doing at the time, Moreno Villa was interested in the concomitances of neoclassical and modern architecture. He focused on an overlooked facet of Goya as designer of monuments. Goya was highly influenced by some of the most important architects of the Enlightenment in France, particularly Etienne-Louis Boullé and his revolutionary shapes, often inspired in Egyptian pyramids (Kaufmann 1952). Goya drew several building in pyramidal shapes with different purposes. Moreno Villa, who was also a painter, made an interpretation of Goya’s *La gran pirámide* [The Great Pyramid] with surrealist overtones. Goya’s pyramid worked as a city gate, and echoed some of Boullée’s projects for entrances to cemeteries in pyramidal shapes. A reproduction of *La gran pirámide* was published in the magazine *Arquitectura* on June 1928, immediately after the inauguration of *Rincón de Goya*.

In the same number of *Arquitectura*, Moreno Villa published another design by Goya of similar characteristics. It was painted with ink, entitled *Proyecto de monumento*, and dated between 1808-1820. It is currently preserved in the Prado. Moreno Villa wrote a text titled “Proyecto arquitectónico de Goya. ¿Para las víctimas del Dos de Mayo?” [Goya’s Architectural Project. To the Victims of May 2?], in reference to the people killed by the Napoleonic forces after the May 2 popular uprising. It was a funerary monument, inspired in some of Boullée’s pyramidal cenotaphs again, with three bodies: a portico, a frontispiece, and a step pyramid. Moreno Villa used the language of modern architecture to describe this neoclassical building:

> Es de notar que no insinúa columnas, ni decoración de ningún género, en la obra no hay más que horizontales y verticales, masas tranquilas que se valoran con la luz simplemente. (Moreno Villa 2001: 370)

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108 Moreno Villa’s oil painting is held today at the Provincial Museum of Malaga.
[It is noticeable that it does suggest neither columns,\textsuperscript{109} nor decoration of any type; there is nothing more than horizontal and vertical lines, tranquil masses that can be appreciated simply with light]

Fig. 63. Francisco de Goya’s “Proyecto de monumento,” 1808-1820. Prado Museum.

He did not engage in this study alone, as he clarified:

Para ver mejor aún lo que sería este monumento pedí a un amigo que lo pusiese en perspectiva. (…) El resultado es, como se ve, imponente. (…) siempre tendremos un panteón que sobrepasa las necesidades y vanidades familiares. Pensé en un panteón popular y, en seguida, en un panteón para las víctimas del Dos de Mayo. (Moreno Villa 2001: 370)

\textsuperscript{109} He considered the portico was made of a wall with a series of hollows.
[To appreciate this monument better, I asked a friend to draw it in perspective. (...) As can be seen, the result is imposing. We have a pantheon exceeding family needs and vanities. I thought of a pantheon for the people, and immediately thought of a pantheon for the victims of May 2]

Huergo Cardoso suggested García Mercadal was that friend who helped him by drawing Goya’s monument in perspective. Indeed, in 1928 both Moreno Villa and García Mercadal were collaborating in the magazine *Arquitectura*, investigating on Goya’s architectural drawings, and tracing the origins of modern architecture in the experimental and committed architecture of the Enlightenment. García Mercadal had just finished his *Rincón de Goya*.

Today Moreno Villa’s hypothesis was right. Goya designed this cenotaph for a tender calling for the construction of a pyramid in Paseo del Prado, just a few meters away from Cybele. The tender rules said as follows:

El terreno donde actualmente yacen las víctimas del 2 de mayo, contiguo al salón del Prado, se cerrará con verjas y árboles, y en su centro se levantará una sencilla pirámide que transmita a la posterioridad la memoria de los leales, y tomará el nombre de Campo de la Lealtad (Moreno Villa 2001, p. 371.)

[The plot where the victims of the May 2 uprising currently lie, next to the Prado, will get fenced off and blocked with trees, a simple pyramid will be erected at its center, keeping alive the memory of the loyal for posterity, and it will be named Loyalty Yard]

Goya’s cenotaph was never built; he came second in the tender. Because of economic constraints caused by the Independence War, Madrid City Council finally chose an obelisk designed by

110 He also suggested architect Luis Moya, although affirmed Mercadal seems more plausible (Huergo Cardoso 67).
Isidro Velázquez, which was cheaper. This obelisk is still there today. Indeed, a pyramid was never built in Paseo del Prado. Until 1937.

In his book *Derrida, an Egyptian. On the Problem of the Jewish Pyramid* (2006), Peter Sloterdijk used the metaphor of the portable pyramid to unravel Derrida’s deconstruction. Just as Freud had deconstructed Judaism by tracing back the Egyptian origins of Moses and the metaphorical pyramid he carried with him and transformed (the sign of his *Egyptianness*), deconstruction consists of: first, being aware that such portable pyramid haunts us; second, tracing back the pyramid’s history in search of its/our origins.

Cybele’s protective structure was also a portable pyramid that embraced the contradictions of this project of protective iconoclasm. Its construction really started in the 1810s-1820s,\(^{111}\) when Goya proposed it as a monument to the people of Madrid who had fought for independence against the foreign forces Napoleon. Virilio stated that the Napoleonic Wars were the first modern wars, because of its mass killings (1994: 21). Indeed, this prominence of the masses was emphasized in 1936-1939 —the defeat of the Napoleonic army by the people of Madrid was used as an inspiration for the defense of Madrid during the civil war.\(^ {112}\)

It is true that neither the studies of Goya’s pyramidal cenotaphs nor the protective pyramid of Cybele can be attributed with absolute certainty to García Mercadal. This lack of certainty speaks about the collective nature of both projects. However, it is highly probable that he was behind both. What can be called the heroic phase of the history of modern architecture in Spain started and finished with Goya’s pyramid: the same architect, Fernando García Mercadal, built the first modern building of Spain as homage to Goya, investigated the modern nature of

\(^{111}\) Goya’s *Proyecto de monumento* is dated between 1808-1820.  
\(^{112}\) Although, as will be discussed later, the Republic preferred the term ‘people’ over ‘masses’.  

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Goya’s pyramid in the late 1920s, and built a protective pyramid for the most iconic enlightened of Madrid in 1937, very close to where Goya would have built his pyramidal cenotaph.

The protective structures that the modern architects built in Madrid were indeed cartographic monuments that made the people dream of a future, modern city. But they were commemorative as well, and at the core of this commemoration laid the apparent contradiction of iconoclasm without destruction that characterized the protection of monuments. This commemoration is both political—a reference to Goya as painter of the people, and the victims of the Independence War against Napoleon—and aesthetic—a recovery of the experimental projects of neoclassical architecture.

Regarding the political commemoration, in summer of 2013 Queen Sofia Museum in Madrid organized the exhibition Lo trágico y lo grotesco: Goya en la Guerra Civil [The Tragic and the Grotesque: Goya in the Civil War], where Goya was presented as an emblem for both sides of the civil war: while the Francoists claimed the picturesque Goya as incarnation of the national spirit, the Republicans portrayed Goya as an artist politically committed with the people. The history of the portable pyramid reinforces this characterization. By echoing Goya’s pyramidal cenotaph to the victims of May 2, García Mercadal was implicitly equating the Independence War and the Spanish Civil War as war of the people of Madrid against the foreign, oppressive invader. This implied a concession to a cyclical understanding of history, in which the working class continuously struggles against tyrannical forces, although in a teleological framework towards emancipation.
Indeed, when Cybele was covered in 1937, newspaper articles referred to her and her protective pyramid with this double attribution of its neoclassical forms and its appropriation as icon of the working class:

La Cibeles está ya soterrada. Bajo su caparazón de cemento y de sacos terreros seguirá ahora, sobre su calesa de piedra, acunando sueños madrileñistas, a la espera de poder lucir de nuevo, bajo el buen sol de las tardes amables, con buen andar de madrileñas paseantes, su gracia entre helénica y de barrios bajos. (“La calle. La Cibeles y los monumentos con rodilleras.” Mundo Gráfico, 21 July 1937. Cited by Ara 48. My italics).

[Cybele has just been concealed. Under her shell made out of cement and sandbags, she will continue rocking Madrilenian dreams in her stone calash, pending the opportunity to walk her charming walk under the good sun of the gentle afternoons, and show off her grace half Hellenic, half slum (“The Street. Cybele and the Monuments with Kneepads.” My italics]

This explains to some extend why the modern architects of Madrid were iconoclast but preservationist, and why they privileged the enlightened Madrid of Charles III. The construction of Cybele in the late eighteenth century was an attempt to use neoclassical monuments to transform Madrid into an enlightened capital city, which would produce innovations and discoveries in all fields of the nature and human sciences. By covering Cybele with an experimental protective pyramid, García Mercadal and other modern architects of Madrid were preserving not only one specific monument, but an ideal of modernization, progress, innovation, and transformation, while still commemorating the committed architecture of the Enlightenment. Both Spanish enlightened and modern architects shared a similar faith in monuments as catalysts of change.
2.6. Performative Monuments

What kind of monument is a protective structure?

The protective structures were total-war architecture: military, ephemeral, simultaneously avant-garde and rearguard. They performed their task effectively: though several of them were damaged, the protected monuments survived the bombings with minor or none damage.

Paul Virilio affirmed that during the war “the organization of space would now go hand in hand with the manifestations of time” (1994: 14). Indeed, the protective structures represented the suspended time of war; such radical intervention could only happen during wartime. They were built with an expiration date, lasting as long as the war lasted. In this case, the dialectics of concealment not only made the old monuments more visible by hiding them, but promised an eventual unearthing that would correspond with the Republican victory.

This transient intervention left unanswered the question of what would happen with the old monuments after the war. Were they protected only for propaganda, but would be eventually destroyed in order to built more modern monuments in the same plots? This is what the “Visión Futura” poster suggested. Would they continue to be protected as historical monuments, while the new geometrical monuments would be built somewhere else, maybe in conversation with the historical ones? The nature of the protection project suggests the latter. In a future Madrid, modern monuments would be built by incorporating the experience of war: as will be discussed below (see 3. The Future of Monuments), the covering of monuments opened a conversation about how the monuments of the future should be, and some crucial proposals had precariousness, disassembling and creative destruction at its core. Likewise, the old monuments
would still be protected because the Spanish modern architects demonstrated during the war the importance of making old and new monuments compatible for political and aesthetic reasons.

The transience of the protective monuments was fetishized; their disassembling was an inherent part of their existence, and therefore part of the understanding of the new monuments with which these architects were experimenting. It was a celebration of the ephemeral and a criticism of stone’s pretended eternity. That is why photography, poems and articles as those analyzed above, and the memory of the people who experienced the war in Madrid were crucial to attest their existence. Since they would be disassembled when the war was over, the shorter the life of these structures, the most successful they were. These architects were pushing toward a form of monument based on transience and precariousness.

Precariousness and destruction were also at the core of the artistic avant-garde’s understanding of monuments, particularly Futurism. In Manifesto dell’Architettura Futurista, published at the dawn of the First World War, Antonio Sant’Elia stated:

From an architecture conceived in this way no formal or linear habit can grow, since the fundamental characteristics of Futurist architecture will be its impermanence and transience [la caducità e la transitorietà]. Things will endure less than us. Every generation must build its own city. (da Costa Meyer 150)

In a way, the modern architects of Madrid put this axiom into action, and built their own urban landscape. But there was a second part in Sant’Ellia’s words:

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113 Fernando Sánchez Castillo’s Monumentos ciegos (2011) was based on his father’s memory of the protective pyramid of Cybele. For the reconstruction of everyday life in Madrid during the Spanish Civil War, the photographs taken by Martín Santos Yubero are crucial.
This constant renewal of the architectonic environment will contribute to the victory of Futurism which has already been affirmed by words-in-freedom, plastic dynamism, music without quadrature, and the art of noises, and for which we fight without respite against traditionalist cowardice (da Costa Meyer 150, my italics).

These were the last lines of his manifesto, and this is where the Spanish architects disagreed with the Italian. Although modern architects in Madrid advocated for the creation of a new city for a new generation and used the opportunity provided by war to carry that out, their project lacked the destructive attitude of Futurism towards “traditionalist cowardice.”

While building the protective structures, the modern architects pointed out toward a potential future where neither the old monuments, nor their protective structures would be present in the same way they existed during the war. The traditional monuments would not remain the same because they would become historical —modern, geometrical-shaped monuments as the ones suggested by the protected structures would replaced them as the contemporary intentional monuments, following Riegl’s classification: that is, as the monuments that would represent the values of the new Madrid, and which need to be kept alive and remembered. The protective structures would not remain the same either because since their conception it was considered that their full completion would only take place through their removal —they were transient, performative monuments.

The traditional monuments would also be protected in the future because the protection project during the war unmasked Spanish Modern Architecture’s commitment to preservation of the national heritage. This can be explain through the Freudian notion of negation:

114 As explained in other sections of this chapter (particularly in 2.1. The value of monuments and 2.6. The returning pyramid) not all monuments were historical in the same sense; some were protected because of political affinities.
Thus the content of a repressed image or idea can make its way into consciousness, on condition that it is negated. Negation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed; indeed it is already a lifting of the repression, though not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed. (235)

Negation is the psychic mechanism helping to make conscious an unconscious desire. Likewise, Theodor Adorno also insisted on this idea a few years later in his *Aesthetic Theory*: “the negated is nevertheless retained in the negation. Such works speak by virtue of the taboos they radiate” (148). The modern architects’ decision of protecting the monuments in situ instead of putting them into a protected storage resulted in an exhibition of this process of negation. If Modern Architecture has despised academicist architecture, they were expressing that such despised architecture (at least some of it) had elements that were actually at the core of their own architectural project.

This performative nature of the protective monuments showed to what extend modern architects exploited the cartographic value of monuments —the notion of modernism as producer of utopias was emphasized. However, their prediction did not happen. As performative monuments, the circumstances of the disassembling were decisive for their success. The promised idea of a modern Madrid was at stake, depending on who would unearth the buried goddesses and gods, either the Republicans or the Francoists. The Francoists did. In the spring of 1939, they finally seized Madrid and subverted the Republican logo “No pasarán” [They won’t pass] into “Pasamos” [We passed], using photographs of the unearthing of the protective monuments as propaganda to visualize such idea.
Cybele did not return to a world without Fascism. As Solé i Sabaté has studied, children had been a headache for the brigades in charge of the construction of protective structures (Solé i Sabaté 279): they used to pierce the sandbags in order to get the sand out and play with it; they disassembled parapets protecting store windows or buildings in order to build their own, smaller ones and play war. Just as a continuation of these games, the Francoist forces who seized Madrid called a group of children to unearth Cybele —her body still buried, her head uncovered for the first time since July 1937—, and pose with the statue while giving the Fascist salute (Fig. 64). This picture symbolized the victory of the Francoist forces, the defeat of the cartographic prevision of the protective monuments, the infancy of the new Francoist regime that was about to start, and the peak of Fascism that was about to lead into the Second World War.
Fig. 64. Children unearthing of Cybele. Unidentified author.
3. The Future of Monuments

Under the threat of air raids, fundamental debates about the nature of war, statecraft, and the development of history were raised in the public sphere. Monuments became a point of convergence for these debates. Although the Republic maintained a coherent preservationist position in Madrid during most of the war, dissenting voices were raised from within. What place should the national heritage occupy in the new order, and how could a new kind of monument be built? What to do with monuments that celebrated old authoritarian regimes, the enemies of the people? “The people” was the term preferred by the Republicans instead of “the masses,” as Jo Labanyi has pointed out.115 “The people” became the engine of history and required a new kind of monument that represented their quest.

These debates were possible because of the degree zero Madrid reached during the war: besieged, with no government, no treasure, no gold reserves, no the old, traditional monuments.116 Some discussions pointed out directly to the covered monuments. Thus, the covering of monuments not only worked for protection and propaganda, but also ushered important controversies about the role of monuments and the relation between monuments and people. Often from a teleological, Marxist interpretation of history, these critics proposed alternatives to mere protection: some embraced destruction as a catharsis and chance to renovate corrupted institutions, some considered that the destruction of monuments was not desirable, but

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115 For Labanyi, this terminological preference comes from the Romantic tradition, and illustrates the cultural paternalism exercised by the Republican intellectuals (162).
116 Spatially, they all were originally located in a very small area: the Alliance of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals headquarters were few blocks away from Cybele. The gold reserves were kept in the safety vaults of Bank of Spain, across the street from the statue of the goddess. In those same safety vaults some of the Prado paintings were kept at the beginning of the evacuation; however, the proximity of the water system of the Cybele fountain made the safety vaults very humid, and some Greco paintings dramatically deteriorated. That was one of the reasons why the paintings were finally sent to Valencia.
neither the repetition of the same monumentalistic dynamics of past regimes that subdued the working class. Generally, these dissenting voices disagreed with the idea of defending the bourgeois revolution incarnated in the Second Republic in the same way that Dolores Ibárruri established as the official doctrine of the Spanish Communist Party. Instead, they saw the civil war as an opportunity to accelerate history and pursue some kind of working-class revolution. Spain had the chance to overcome her historical backwardness, and align herself with the political revolutions of the world. Monuments, as condensers of time and glories of eras of exploitation, would not bear this acceleration and end up either blowing up or deeply transformed.

3.1. Against Stone

On 27 July 1936, while the Republican forces were still not able to restrain the attacks against churches and convents, the Republican newspaper *El Liberal* published on its cover the vignette “Arquitectura nueva” [New Architecture] (Fig. 65),\(^{117}\) signed by Méndez.\(^{118}\) It was a polyphonic composition: the drawing showed the current situation of an undetermined monument, while each of the three footnotes used a different typography corresponding to different voices and

\(^{117}\) *El Liberal* was a newspaper with a long Republican tradition and widely read by the moderate left. Founded in 1879, one of the most read among the working class. It disappeared in 1939, seized by the dictatorial government. After the war, the newspaper *Madrid* was produced from its offices and press

\(^{118}\) I have not been able to identify this author. Next to the vignette, there is the news with photograph of the air raids of the Zocodover Square in Toledo by Republican airplanes, “para reducir a las fuerzas tercas y criminalmente rebeldes” [to subdue the stubborn, criminal, rebel forces]. Since late July to late September, the Republicans (mostly militias) besieged the Alcázar in Toledo, took by Francoist military forces, Guardia Civil and some civilians pro-rebellion. Eventually, the latter won, incorporating Toledo to the Francoist side. This was one of the most crucial victories for them.
hierarchies. It was also a graphic editorial, announcing a new order that would need a “new architecture.”

This new architecture was the ruin, transformed from its melancholic but ordered nature inherited from the nineteenth century. In the drawing, the ruin of the building was crowned by immense clouds of smoke. It was the ruin of the state of exception, provoked by the sudden, disproportionate, destructive intervention of total war. The portrayed building was not specified, but its two towers, lateral doors with pointed arches, and the simplified reference to a rose window, pointed out to a cathedral. Concretely, this drawing followed the pattern of the gothic cathedral of Burgos. Burgos was already in Fanco’s hands in the first weeks of war, and soon became the capital of Francoist Spain. However, this identification is uncertain, since the cathedral of Burgos was not damaged to this extend. Instead, the drawing portrays an archetypical religious building, undetermined and delocalized, in an imprecise landscape of stones and rubble.

119 The cloisters were used as shelters because they were considered relatively safe (Castro 144).
There was an implicit question of who was responsible for such destruction. The answer is provided by an external voice, quoted: *La Prensa*, or simply the press —no publication with such name has been identified— affirming that “Los rebeldes se refugian en los monumentos” [The rebels use monuments as shelters].\(^{120}\) The vignette seems to confirm this statement, since some parapets can be seen in the ruins. The enemies are represented by the damage they have

\(^{120}\) In his 1961 *The Spanish Civil War*, Thomas stated that all stories of rebels using religious buildings as shelters are false, with the exception of the Carmelite church of Lauria Street in Barcelona (269).
made to provoke. In the last text, the bold letters returned and so did the first-person: “Los sustituiremos por monumentos al heroismo del pueblo” [We will replace them with monuments to the heroism of the people]. The enemies were barbarians, since they used monuments as a battleground without appreciation for historical or artistic values. This barbarism is emphasized, because cathedrals were the quintessential monuments Francoists would like to preserve. By using cathedrals as shelters, they were turning cathedrals into Republican targets. Therefore, the vignette was saying that Francoists were self-destructive. This represented a double opportunity.

First, if Francoists were self-destructive, Republicans were somehow allowed to keep on destroying religious monuments (as urban mobs were doing at the time —the vignette was published in the first days of the war) and blaming barbarian Francoists for using them as parapets. Second, the first person plural (“we will substitute them”) was imprecise, and referred to a replacement of monuments, a new kind of monument devoted to the heroism of the people. The “new” monumental architecture is these ruins of the present, although the vignette points beyond the present. The ashes, smoke and rubble are indexes to past and future: as remains of the destruction of monuments of past regimes, and heralds of the erection of new monuments still to be determined. The new monuments have to incorporate what Virilio and Lotringer have called “the instantaneousness of destruction” (46),121 but the specific form of these new monuments remained unclear.

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121 For Virilio, although this instantaneousness of destruction dates back to the invention of explosives by the Chinese, the difference from nuclear destruction—and total war—lies “in the vectors, in the carriers of destruction. Now we possess vectors of absolute speed, carriers of absolute destruction…” (2008: 43). Below alternative projects of monuments incorporating destruction are discussed.
During the first weeks of the war, news were continuously arriving to Madrid about monuments of past regimes that were being demolished in other parts of the country. A month after the publication of the “Nueva Arquitectura” vignette, La Voz published a short note about the destruction of a monument in the city of Sagunto:

En Sagunto ha sido destruido el monumento que se elevó en tiempos de la Dictadura para conmemorar la restauración de la monarquía y la proclamación de Alfonso XII por Martínez Campos. (“Destructión de un monumento. ¿Todavía estaba en pie?” La Voz, August 21st 1936: 1).

[In Sagunto, a monument erected during the Dictatorship\textsuperscript{122} to commemorate the restoration of the monarchy and the proclamation of Alfonso XII by Martínez Campos has been destroyed. (“Destruction of a Monument. Was It Still Standing?”)]

In the same article, there was a transcription of a very inflammatory speech gave by Juan García Morales from the microphones of the Ministry of War. García Morales’ true name was Hugo Moreno López.\textsuperscript{123} He was a grassroots Catholic priest very critic of the alliance of the Church with the Francoists, who decided to remain loyal to the Republic. With the authority of a priest, he addressed Spanish Catholics with Marxist rhetoric to discuss the meaning of monuments, particularly to discredit them as concentration of military and religious power:

El apóstrofe vibró en sus labios [de Jesucristo] para los hipócrtas y fariseos, para los mercaderes del templo, que hicieron en aquella época de la Casa de Dios lonja de contratación, como hoy la han convertido en una fortaleza para atacar al proletariado y defender lo indefendible: la España inquisitorial, la España monástica, que tuvo su época gloriosa, pero que pasó, como pasan las nubes, y como los ríos se precipitan al mar. (“Destructión de un monumento. ¿Todavía estaba en pie?” La Voz, 21 August 1936: 1).

\textsuperscript{122} Referring to the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1930).
\textsuperscript{123} See more in Moreno Cantano.
[The apostrophe vibrated in his lips (Jesus Christ’s) against hypocritical and Pharisees, against the merchants in the temple, who in those times turned the House of God into a trade marketplace, just as today they have turned it into a fortress from which they attack the proletariat and defend the indefensible: inquisitorial Spain, monastic Spain, which had her glorious times, already passed, as the clouds pass, and as rivers run into the sea]

For García Morales, God was on the side of the proletarians, and so the Church should be, but it was not. Once again, impostors have taken ownership of the House of God and were using it against Him. Nevertheless, this time it was not enough to expel the impostors, but to tear down the house and return to the example of the modest lifestyle of Jesus Christ. García Morales did not fully reject the glorious Spanish Golden Age—including Inquisition—, but asserted it was impossible to live in that past anymore.

Differently from the protectionist modern architects, García Morales advocated against trying to stop the destruction of religious monuments as a way of forcing the clergy to leave their wealthy retreats, and in favor of going out to meet the Lord where the poor live, following the example of Jesus Christ: “Jesucristo, el Dios obrero y pobre que por aquella tierra incomparable de Palestina no tuvo más trato que con los pobres, con los humildes, con los oprimidos” [Jesus Christ, the poor, worker Lord, who in that unparalleled land of Palestine only met with the poor, the humble, the oppressed].

García Morales was an example of what Feliciano Montero García

His intellectual project consisted of the recovery of Catholic thinkers with concerns for the poor. In this speech, he quoted the Catholic intellectual Donoso Cortés (1809-1853) as an introduction to his own approach to the issue of the burnt churches and the national heritage in general:

He visto —dice [Donoso]— dos torres babilónicas, dos civilizaciones espléndidas, levantadas a lo alto por la sabiduría humana: la primera cayó al ruido de las trompetas apostólicas: era la civilización pagana con sus filósofos, con sus oradores, con sus poetas, con sus artistas; era la civilización de Roma. (…) Pues esta civilización europa que se llama cristiana, y que tiene a Cristo en los labios y no en el corazón, caerá también al fragor estrepitosos de las trompetas socialistas y sindicalistas. (“Destrucción de un monumento. ¿Todavía estaba en pie?” La Voz, 21 August 1936: 1).
has called “la otra Iglesia” [the other Church], composed by dissident clergy who radicalized during the war.

For him, the new socialist ideologies had substituted Catholicism, because Catholicism had not been able to remain next to the poor anymore. Religious monuments were just a symbol of such corruption, and it was a natural historical outcome that they get burned down. It was as if the rage of God sent its fire to cathedrals as He had done with Sodom and Gomorrah. Nothing should be done to avoid it, just surrender:

Católicos españoles: no habéis hecho caso a la voz del pueblo, que es la voz de Dios. No vengáis ahora con que la España monumental y artística se pierde. La civilización que entra no respetará nada si segúis oponiéndoos a ella. La nueva civilización labrará otros monumentos que sean también asombro de las naciones extranjeras. (“Destrucción de un monumento. ¿Todavía estaba en pie?” La Voz, 21 August 1936: 1).

[Spanish Catholics: you have not minded the people’s voice, which is God’s voice. Do not cry now the loss of the monumental, artistic Spain. The coming civilization will not respect anything if you keep opposing them. The new civilization will carve new monuments that will still impress the foreign nations]

García Morales celebrated this purifying fire that would produce a new Church. Just as Jesus Christ had expelled the merchants from the temple, the people —God’s voice— were expelling the corrupted clergy from their churches. From within Catholicism, he expressed a similar desire to the “Nueva arquitectura” vignette. He asked the Church to let the monuments go, as a penitence for its inability to be with the poor: “no necesitamos para celebrar calices de oro y

[I have seen —(Donoso) says— two Babylonian towers, two splendid civilizations, erected upon human wisdom: the first one fell with the sound of the apostolic trumpets; it was the pagan civilization of philosophers, orators, poets, artists; if was the Roman civilization. (…) This European civilization self-proclaimed Christian has Christ in her lips but not in her heart, and will also fall with the resounding roar of the socialist and syndicalist trumpets]
pedrería, nos basta con un sencillo cáliz de madera (...) Los obispos —decía el Padre Tarín— con una cruz de palo, una sotana raída y un anillo de hoja de lata están en su papel” (Ibid.) [We do not need golden chalices with precious stones; a simple wooden chalice is enough (...) Bishops —as Father Tarín used to say—, a wooden cross, a worn-out cassock, and a tinplate ring is all they need]. He showed a tension between a teleological understanding of history inspired by Marxism, and a claim to return to the humble origins of Christianity —the future entailed a return to the beginnings.

* * * * *

How can the people be celebrated without repeating old patterns of monumentality? How to incorporate the dematerialization of ashes, smoke and rubble into this new way of building monuments? Just a few weeks later, writer Antonio Zozaya\textsuperscript{125} published in Mundo Gráfico\textsuperscript{126} a series of articles about monuments in ruins. The format of his articles did not change during the war: one-page essays addressing philosophical themes, with a central image of a woman, sometimes a female celebrity, wearing a swimsuit, happy, relaxed, objectified, so the readers could admire her while reading philosophy, as it was sometimes explicitly stated. In principle, Zozaya understood the ruins that started to appear in Madrid with elements of pre-aerial war.

\textsuperscript{125} He was a Leftist Republican, committed to the education of the working class, hence his editing and translation work for the Library of Economic Philosophy. He was a writer and poet, close to Giner de los Ríos, and well-known as a journalist. His articles were discussed in literary and political gatherings with workers, organized by himself in his own apartment (see Zozaya Montes).

\textsuperscript{126} A publication devoted to photojournalism (1911-1938).
Nevertheless, he soon started to notice that those hermeneutic resources were insufficient, and needed to develop new analytical tools.

In “Ruins” (Fig. 66), Zozaya reflected on the evocative power of ruins, even more effective than that of monuments. It exuded melancholy, for example in the allusion to disappeared monumental cities: the Solomonic Jerusalem, Babylon, Nineveh, Palmyra…, concluding with Omnia transeunt. In the last paragraphs, Zozaya called his readers to overcome the pessimism of destruction and build from the ashes; the destruction of old cities was painful, but it was part of a historical necessity. A baroque reading opened new possibilities for thinking this destruction:

Nuestras propias vidas, conforme van avanzando, no son sino evocaciones de ruinas. (…) Llevamos el espíritu cubierto de escombros, de despedazados anfiteatros y de jaramagos amarillos.

[Our own lives, as they go on, are nothing but evocations of ruins (…) Our spirit is covered in rubble, crumbled amphitheaters, and hedge mustard (Antonio Zozaya, “Ruinas,” Mundo Gráfico, 2 September 1936: 17)]

Indeed, disillusionment and melancholy were defensive responses, albeit insufficient, since they avoided facing the new order where destruction was sudden and omnipresent. He preferred to consider how to incorporate such destruction into a new way of building monuments, proposing an alternative to overcome the illusion of the eternity of stone. This reflection echoed Walter Benjamin’s thinking at that time in his interpretation of Paul Klee’s Angelus Novus for his Theses on the Philosophy of History (1940): the rubble of old times as an ineludible load to carry

127 In 1936, Albert Speer is at the peak of his work for Adolf Hitler. His theory of ruin value is discussed in chapter III.3.4.
in the development of history (258). Instead, Zozaya attempted to move towards a position where this rubble could become a productive starting point to understand a new social order in a new historical phase.
In the next article, “The tragedy of stone,” published two weeks later, he gave an answer to these questions. In the past, sumptuous monuments were built even before the fields were cultivated. Monuments were meant for deifying and for the celebration of national epic deeds. This dynamic was what should be disputed. Stone had historically been the monopoly of the dominant classes. Now it was the time of the people, and that illusion of eternity and divinity should be discarded, not only by postponing the erection of monuments until decent living conditions were created for all, but by drastically eliminating the possibility of building new stone monuments in the new historical phase that could be achieved if Fascism was defeated. For Zozaya, the new monuments would not deify, but humanize:

Lo que ahora nos interesa a todos no es contar con un nuevo alcázar ni con un admirable Partenón, sino con campos bien cultivados, canales fecundadores de riquezas y escuelas donde se enseñe a los hombres a amarse los unos a los otros y a respetar la labor de sus mismos adversarios, y sobre todo, sus vidas. (Antonio Zozaya, “La tragedia de la piedra.” Mundo Gráfico, 9 September 1936: 17)

[What interests us all is not having a new alcazar or an admirable Parthenon, but well-cultivated fields, wealth-producing canals, and schools where men are taught to love each other and respect their own adversaries and, above all, their lives]

This implied new questions with regard to the heritage, which should coexist with this new form of conceiving monuments. He was concerned with the new role the old monuments would assume if they survive grapeshot and bombs; the implications that this new understanding of monuments had for art; and the kind of art that would be produced by a society that had renounced stone monuments. Zozaya was committed to the preservation of monuments, very close to the official position of the Republic:
pensamos que tenemos el deber ineludible de conservar esas preciosas reliquias del arte pretérito; pero que haríamos muy mal si volviésemos a construir monumentos tan costosos como inútiles para el desarrollo de la vida moderna. (Antonio Zozaya, “La tragedia de la piedra.” Mundo Gráfico, 9 September 1936: 17)

[we think we have the inescapable duty of preserving such precious relics of previous art; but we would be wrong if we go back to building monuments as costly as useless for the development of modern life]

This interpretation of history is teleological. The preserved monuments enabled to trace the different historical phases that run into the present, when the people had eventually become the protagonist. Another cathedral of Burgos should not be built again, Zozaya said, but instead “llenar los fundos de abono, de tractores y de regadíos” [farms should be filled with fertilizer, tractors, and irrigation systems]. The sowing cycle was more permanent and potentially eternal than the stones of a temple.

In this context, art would face two profound transformations. First, the scale would be reduced; the immense canvases owned by powerful people would shatter into small compositions for the enjoyment of humble families. Second, “el Arte se refugiará en la propia vida, embelleciéndola, haciéndola más idealista” [Art will find shelter in life itself, embellishing it, making it more idealist]. Zozaya did not specify what this finding shelter in life meant, but according to the logics of his argument, it can be inferred that the sowing, the crops, the opening of trade routes, and the fair development of industry were the new forms of art, rescued from the vileness that modernity had made of them.
Méndez, García Morales and Zozaya agreed in some key arguments — they were proposing options of monuments for a new historical phase yet to come, frontal opposition to reconstruction of previous monuments, and undesirable destruction as an opportunity for a new civilization. However, there were important differences between the three. Méndez never clarified what a monument to the heroism of the people actually was, according to him. It could be a housing complex for workers, a gigantic, Soviet-like building, a statute to militias, or the fair distribution of land. García Morales called to substitute churches for the humble lifestyle of Jesus Christ, although eventually suggested new grandiose monuments would be erected again. For Zozaya, the ashes and smoke of the “new architecture” would become the fertilizers of the fields, the true, new monuments to the people. Implicitly, they all accused stone of complicity with authoritarian regimes. Monuments should become common, shared practices. Memory should not be accumulated in stone reservoirs, but be activated, practiced, and made into work.

3.2. Cybele in the Palace of the Soviets

A few months after the burial of Cybele in Madrid, a replica was built in Valencia, and sent out from Spain to the East. Spanish AUS (Amigos de la Unión Soviética —Friends of the Soviet
Union)\textsuperscript{128} organized a militant pilgrimage for Cybele, who symbolically abandoned her shelter-tomb in Madrid and reappeared in the country of the Soviets. Many prestigious intellectuals and artists of Spain were members of AUS at the time, including some of the architects who were leading the protective projects of Cybele and other monuments in Madrid, such as Fernando García Mercadal or Luis Blanco Soler.\textsuperscript{129} During the war, AUS directed the pro-Soviet propaganda machinery in Spain, directly linked to the USSR Society for Cultural Relations to the Exterior (VOKS, Russian acronym).\textsuperscript{130}

Another agency involved in protection and preservation was the Spanish AERCU (Asociación Española de Relaciones Culturales con la Unión Soviética —Association of Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union), with a more scientific and high-culture approach. Its Secretary was Manuel Sánchez Arcas, another modernist architect member of the Generation of 1925. In June 1937, he was invited to the First Congress of Soviet Architects, organized on the occasion of the construction of the Palace of the Soviets. Months later, already back in Madrid, he received a letter from M. Kriukov, Dean of the Soviet Academy of Architecture:

\begin{quote}
Los bándalos [sic] fascistas con un odio bestial contra todo progreso y toda idea de democracia, querían destruir, no solamente a todos los presentes de la inmensa cultura del pueblo español, sino también a la cultura misma de toda su bella grandeza. (...) Nosotros, que sufrimos en otro tiempo también la intervención de los forajidos del ejército blanco y de los intervencionistas extranjeros, comprendemos perfectamente vuestro sufrimiento. Igual que vosotros, estamos bien seguros de que el grande y heroico pueblo logrará, en poco tiempo, reconstruir la España democrática, sabrá restablecer todo
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{128} Although the Spanish FUS was founded back in the 1920s, it was censored during the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, and only got official recognition in 1933, during the Second Republic, when Spain resumed diplomatic relations with the USSR. It reached its greatest expansion in 1936, with committees in almost all Spanish cities. Even President Manuel Azaña became a member (Payne 126).
\textsuperscript{129} Other members were Ramón M. Valle Inclán (its first president), Antonio Machado, Pío Baroja, Concha Espina, Federico García Lorca, Gregorio Marañón, Ramón J. Sender, and architects Luis Lacasa and Secundino Zuazo (see Sevillano San Román; Vázquez Liñán 2003: 66-77).
\textsuperscript{130} Kowalsky studied how VOKS used pro-Soviet associations and individuals in Spain to gather information before the civil war (350-364), and other details of its cultural campaign in Spain during the war (446-453).
lo que ha sido arruinado por los enemigos de vuestro gran país y sabrá igualmente elevar la cultura de España a un nivel todavía superior. Compartimos completamente vuestra certeza de que en el solar de los edificios y ciudades enteras destruidos, crearáis centenares de edificios y ciudades soberbias para el pueblo liberado de la libre España. (Garrido Caballero, cap. 5: n. p. My italics)

The vandal Fascists with their brutal hatred for progress and democracy would like to destroy not only all people practicing the immense culture of Spain, but also Spanish culture itself with all its beautiful greatness. (…) We, who also suffered the intervention of the White Army and foreigners in the past, perfectly understand your suffering. Just as you, we are also convinced the great, heroic people will be able to rebuild democracy in Spain shortly, reestablishing everything that has been ruined by the enemies of your great country, elevating Spanish culture to an even higher level. We share your certainty that in the plots left by destroyed buildings and cities you will create hundreds of superb, new buildings and cities for the freed people of a free Spain.

The tensions with regards to the opportunity of erecting a new kind of monument in Spain during the war were not new for the Soviets. Kriukov, representing the Soviet architects, defended the position of returning to stone, rebuilding what was destroyed, but more grandiloquent and magnificent, in order to symbolize the cultural and historical superiority of the pro-Communist regime: “elevating Spanish culture to an even higher level.” He emphasized number and scale: “hundreds of superb, new buildings and cities.” However, he also proposed a synthesis between this grandiloquent reconstruction with protectionism, since the letter started with a plea against Fascist destruction, and implicitly showed solidarity with the Republic protectionist campaign.

Steven Maddox has reconstructed the history of Soviet monumental protectionism during the first half of the 20th century, distinguishing between different phases with different attitudes toward the national heritage, and different forms of protection and destruction. In the first years

131 Kowalsky states that Sánchez Arcas was the connection VOKS had in Spain to collect numerous Spanish cultural materials for Soviet institutions (448).
after the 1917 Revolution, the situation was similar to Madrid in 1936-1937: a mixture of contradictory practices, ordering protection and destruction simultaneously, without clear criteria for which action should be pursued.

At the theoretical level, the dispute was between the Futurist avant-garde and Proletkult, which opted for the destruction of the relics of the past to build a radically new society with new monuments, against the defenders of building such new society upon the pillars of the national heritage. The latter was sustained by Commisar for Education Anatoli Lunacharski, among others. The protectionist argument was pedagogical: Soviet citizens should learn from these monuments the lessons of past regimes and the teleological development of history (Maddox 31-35). The emblem of this protectionism was the survival of the Bolshoi Theatre (Clark and Dobrenko 4). This ambivalent policy ultimately leaned towards destructionism during the 1928-1932 Five-Year Plan, when accelerating the modernization of the country was set as a priority. Those who were still defending the protection of monuments were considered “obstructionists” and prosecuted for maintaining bourgeois values (Maddox 37-38). The most emblematic demolition was that of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in 1931, whose plot was to be used to build the Palace of the Soviets.

In 1937, the twentieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution was celebrated both in the Soviet Union and Spain. It coincided with the first anniversary of the Battle of Madrid on early November, and the Spanish Republicans decided to declare a Homage Week for the Soviet Union.132 In Valencia, where a great part of the Prado collection had already been transferred, AUS organized a schedule of celebrations. An article published in the illustrated magazine

132 García García describes how this homage definitively changed the image of Madrid in war, now completely covered with pro-Soviet propaganda: “Madrid uses everything at hand as decoration and becomes a great monument, an art work, a huge collage to support the cause of the USSR” (310).
Estampa [Picture Card] informed that “el camarada Ferrer, presidente del ramo de abaniqueros, afecto al sindicato de la Madera” [comrade Ferrer, president of the fan-makers, part of Wood union] showed journalist Luisa Carnes some of the gifts elaborated by the union members for the USSR: fans, castanets, guitars, tambourines (Carnes, Luis. “Valencia envía su arte a la URSS” [Valencia sends its art to the USSR]. Estampa. 13 November 1937: 13) (Fig. 67). The master Fallas builders also joined this homage in a year when the erection of Fallas monuments had been very limited and controversial, with highly political content.
Oscar Martin—in his documentary *Las Fallas 1937,*—and Jo Labanyi (162) have characterized the 1937 Fallas as anti-Fascist. Organized by the Alliance of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals, with the collaboration of the Sindicato de Arte Popular (Popular Art Union, part of the anarchist CNT), four Fallas monuments with explicit references to the war were designed.\(^{133}\) However, none of them could be fully built and shown in the streets, because of fear that such provocation would make the Francoists intensify the air raids. In order to avoid such a provocation, only some ninots\(^{134}\) were shown in Valencia’s historic fish market.\(^{135}\)

When the Fallas replica of the Cybele was built in Valencia in November 1937, the original statue had been covered in Madrid since June.\(^{136}\) The entire international art community was looking at how Spain was dealing with the protection of its art treasures and monuments. Also in November, in a meeting of the International Museums Office (IOM) in Paris, Josep Renau presented a report later published on *Museion* under the title “L’Organisation de la Défense du patrimoine artistique et historique espagnol pendant la guerre civile” [The Organization of Defense of the Artistic and Historical Spanish Patrimony during the Civil War] (Fig. 68).

\(^{133}\) One of them, *La Catedral*, represented the cathedral of Burgos, capital of the Fascist side. Above I suggested Méndez’s vignette had some resemblance with the cathedral of Burgos, although this had not been severely damaged.

\(^{134}\) Each statue model composing a Fallas monument.

\(^{135}\) Francoists also built a falla in 1937, but in Toledo. It represented Miguelete, a popular symbol of Valencia, attacked by a monster with Communist iconography (Martín 11.40-12.43).

\(^{136}\) Martin affirms that the falla that was to be sent to the USSR was never built. According to him, the one devoted to the defense of Madrid, where Cybele was included, was meant to stay in Valencia, but was never built either. The article by Luisa Carnes, showing the image of the falla, is proof against Martín’s argument. García García does mention Carnes’s article and agrees that the Cybele falla was built (314).
I am not aware of what happened to the Cybele falla in the Soviet Union. The article did not specify whether it was sent to Leningrad, epicenter of the October Revolution,\textsuperscript{137} or Moscow, the Stalinist capital. Due to the relevance the Spanish Civil War had in the streets of Moscow, a possible journey through the streets of the Soviet capital can be recreated. This would allow establishing a contrast between the protectionist policies of the Spanish Communist Party, the Spanish philo-Communist associations, and the Soviet Union at that time. Madrid and Moscow were deeply united, understood as the two capitals were the future of the world proletariat was at stake (Clark 266; Kirschenbaum 2015: 83-89).

The conclusion of the contest for the construction of the Palace of the Soviets (1932) and the publication of the General Plan for Moscow (1935) have commonly been considered the definitive closing of the avant-garde initiatives of the 1920s, and the consolidation of Stalin’s monumentalist project (Kopp 154). The Soviet capital was approaching the culmination of the second Five-Year Plan, that included the construction of a new Moscow to lead the country out from its agrarian past, elevating the USSR to the stage of modernity reached by London, Paris, or New York. However, it had to differentiate itself from these bourgeois capitals by proposing new forms and landscapes that would represent the first proletarian capital of the world. Monumentality was key to achieve this purpose. In Stalinist Moscow, the gigantic scale prevailed: huge engineering projects were undertaken, monumental buildings that architectonically symbolized the USSR ideals of hierarchy, order, and efficiency. (See chapter I for a postcolonial interpretation of the monumental scale in Francisco Mujica’s *History of the Skyscraper*).

\textsuperscript{137} During the Second World War, Leningrad will suffer a similar situation as in Madrid, since both cities were under siege and bombed, developing different strategies to protect the monuments. In Leningrad, some were covered in protecting structures, while others were buried in the ground (Kirschenbaum 2006: 87).
The Moscow that Cybele would have encountered was an immense “construction site,” as Shlögel has described it (42-48), full of plots open after the demolition of temples and Czarist buildings, trenches for foundations, and scaffolding to raise the new monumental blocks or transform old façades, in an environment of repudiation of the previous avant-garde proposals. Thousands of workers were migrating to Moscow from all over the USSR, mobilized by state unions in order to construct the new capital. Also, Stalin’s prosecution of political enemies was at its peak, with anti-Trotskyist demonstrations, detentions and killings.

Moscow had a very determined policy of internationalization of socialism, and Spain was crucial to this policy. Schlögel has described the massive demonstrations in favor of the Spanish Republic that took place in the Red Square in the summer of 1936, gathering up to 100,000 people (98). According to Payne, during those weeks of the beginnings of the war, workers of many Muscovite factories donated 0.5% of their stipends to the Spanish Republicans (129-130). On the cover of Pravda, a map of Spain showing the evolution of the fronts was shown daily. The USSR sent vast numbers of books, pamphlets and films to Spain; Republican Spain sent artists, intellectuals and athletes to perform in shows, organize exhibitions, and play tournaments in the USSR (Payne 242-243). Clark reveals how the Soviet citizens registered in their diaries dreams of being in Spain fighting Fascism, and long lines were formed in movie theatres to watch the documentaries Roman Karmen filmed in Spain (Clark 243).

It is uncertain where the Cybele falla was exhibited, or whether it was burned, as is traditional. If it had been exhibited, it might have occupied a main square. Perhaps the Red Square, where the multitudes gathered to support Spain; perhaps near the future Palace of the Soviets, apex of the Soviet monumentalist project, located in the same plot occupied years earlier by the demolished Cathedral of Christ the Savior. In that moment, Cybele would have found
only an immense hollow, with workers building the foundations of the Palace. The Cybele falla and the Palace of the Soviets were opposed kinds of monuments. The Palace was the prime example of an epic monumental building built upon the ruins of past monuments—provoked ruins, not merely the result of war. A kind of monument designed by the state to be assumed by the people—the Palace of the Soviets—versus a popular monument, cyclically built, although appropriated by the philo-Communist associations—Cybele falla. The Fallas’ understanding of monuments rested in the renewal of social ties by the cathartic ritual of building together to destroy together. The opposition between the Palace of the Soviets and the Cybele falla was the opposition between the faith in stone as guarantor of a monument aspiring to eternity versus the precariousness of cardboard and wood, and the celebration of combustion.

As the USSR imposed this notion of top-down monument, different possibilities were still being discussed in Spain at war. The Cybele falla represented the reactivation of popular celebrations, which the state and intellectuals were trying to appropriate. In Valencia, the master Fallas builders did what they had done for centuries: create transient monuments, whose culmination was precisely their destruction during the cremá, or burning. Fallas monuments were precarious, duplicable, mobile, and replaceable. The key question is the one Labanyi formulates as central to understand the relationship between art and propaganda during the Republic: “culture by the people or for the people?,” (161) was this a spontaneous gift from the people of Valencia to the Soviet Union, or an appropriation of an ancestral tradition by intellectuals politically committed?

The Cybele falla was a commission by AUS, which was interested in turning the Fallas into a propaganda tool. This kind of practice was a sample of the paternalist cultural policies of the Republic, as Labanyi has put it, although she finds laudable the effort of the Republicans to
modernize popular culture (165-166). In March 1937, artist Josep Renau, a Communist Republican from Valencia appointed Director of Beaux-Arts, published an article in which he explained the utility of the Fallas for the Communist propaganda. According to Renau, Fallas were born in the sixteenth century, created by the carpenters as a “fiesta sindical” [union’s celebration] and only later did Valencians assume it as their own in order to vent frustrations by burning the effigies of their exploiters: “el comerciante ladrón, el alguacil déspota, el edil aprovechado” [the thief dealer, the tyrant bailiff, the opportunist councilor] (Renau, “Sentido popular,” [Popular Sense] n. p.). Over time, the mercantile bourgeoisie, aware of the revolutionary potential of this popular celebration, appropriated it to deactivate and turn it into a touristic, decorative attraction.\textsuperscript{138} Just as García Morales had called for Catholics to return to original Christianity, Renau urged the people of Valencia to return to the original character of the Fallas, “su sentido sensual y crítico, es decir materialista y revolucionario” [their sensual and critical sense, that is, materialistic and revolutionary]:

Lo accidental de la creación desaparece. Sólo queda en pie, como valor, la agilidad vital en su función dialéctica, que amanece cada año en formas nuevas (...) comunión colectiva en el optimismo de lo que se destruye, en el sentido plenamente revolucionario y viril que tiene el destruir lo que ocupa un lugar necesario para seguir construyendo. (Renau, José. “Sentido popular y revolucionario de la fiesta de las fallas” Nueva Cultura. Valencia, year 3, n. 1, March 1937: n. p., italics in the original)

\textsuperscript{138} Ariño studies the process of the conversion of the Fallas into a touristic attraction during the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and the Second Republic (155-213).
AUS shared this view and sponsored the Cybele falla, offered to the Soviet people as a gift, in a sort of potlatch where one side gave posters and other forms of ephemeral art, and the other side sent ephemeral monuments to be burned. As Anthony Vidler has argued, modern architecture celebrated mobility and above all speed (1996: 207-216). It is mobility but not speed that is at the core of the Fallas proposal, but transience, the demystification of stone, the precariousness of memory, the cyclical temporality of work, and popular creativity.

For the philo-Communist intellectuals such as Renau, the ancestral Fallas were modern. Fallas celebrated the state of exception that had liberated the monuments; they become mobile, made out of precarious materials, ephemeral. Choay affirms that the modern world was concerned with how to make progress compatible with preservation (1-4).\textsuperscript{139} Fallas resolved this challenge through the creation of copies that could and should be destroyed. This celebration showed a face of popular iconoclasm devoid of the destructionist threat; a radical, preservationist destruction of the heritage. The Cybele falla offered a reformulation of the modern question about how to build a new kind of monument for the working class, turned into the leader of historical change: by repeating the communal tradition of building together to destroy together, and in doing so renewing social ties. It vindicated the primitive relation between monument and memory, where the latter is not limited by the supposed perpetuity of stone, but liberated by the repetition of the ritual. Before the huge hollow the Palace of the Soviets was at that moment\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{139} For Choay, modernism only can be understood by its preservationist drive. Even Le Corbusier lead important preservationist campaigns. The first preservationist conference took place in Athens in 1931. In 1937, the First Commission of Historical Monuments was created in France. Even the General Plan for Moscow (1935) embraced some preservationist measures (Schögel 47).

\textsuperscript{140} One historian offers the hypothesis of the popular origin of the large-scale monumental project for Moscow. Lizon argues that the thirst for majestic palaces in gigantic scale is the result of popular taste, which had become conscious, taken power, and needed new symbols that represent their sumptuous aesthetic preferences (154). This hypothesis was merely pointed, but to my knowledge no further research has been done on it.
—it was never finished—\textsuperscript{141} the Cybele falla represented the patronage of philo-Communist associations that reclaimed the people as artists, the precariousness of the festivity, which lasts as long as the Fallas monuments; the popular festivity as monument; the popular monument as propaganda.

4. Conclusion

Despite the Francoist propaganda against vandalism and iconoclasm perpetrated by the “red hordes,” and modern architecture’s anti-academicist rhetoric, Spanish Communists, philo-Communist associations, and modern architects led the task of protecting the monuments in Madrid. It became a sort of final reconciliation between Communism and Modern Architecture with the past. Their project of protection was asserting, “These are not the kind of monuments we believe in,” “This is not the tradition we want to follow,” while simultaneously protecting those same monuments and that same tradition. For modern architects, this protection allowed them to experiment with new forms of monuments without need of getting rid of the old ones — iconoclasm without destruction. Likewise, they were able to show particular affinity with the area of Madrid built during the reign of Charles III, who also had faith in monuments to bring enlightenment to Madrid. For Communists, monuments were interesting not only to strengthen the bourgeois democracy that one day would lead to socialism, but to portray in the urban

\textsuperscript{141} The outbreak of the Second World War before the Palace was built made its construction impossible. The huge hollow was utilized as an open-air swimming pool between 1958-1994.
landscape the several historical layers that will eventually produce the conditions to establish a Communist society.

However, within the Republican side, some questioned this protectionism. These dissenting voices tended to agree in their teleological understanding of history, strongly influenced by historical materialism: the destruction of monuments was lamented, but since they were symbols of a previous historical phase, they should not be rebuilt. The substitution of stone monuments by cultivated fields or popular rituals were ideal proposals for a post-war world where the hypothetical victory of the Republicans would mean the progress towards a more advanced historical phase. That new phase would be characterized by a synthesis between the protectionism of the monuments of the past and a new kind of monuments based on the experience of destruction, and the celebration of the heroism, work, and everyday life of the people.

The Spanish Civil War ended on 1 April 1939. Four months later the Second World War started, and numerous monuments had to be protected from aerial bombardments from Leningrad to Florence to London to Amiens. Many protective screens of sandbags and parapets were built all across Europe, but I am not aware of a protection project that was used to produce an aesthetic statement in the way the one in Madrid did.

Back in Spain, the projects discussed in this chapter were characteristic of a war that produced utopian alternatives for the future, but it is impossible to know what kind of monuments would have actually been built in Spain, had the Republicans won the war. Years later, the exiled Republican Josep Lluis Sert co-published the road map for the new monuments of the Modern Movement: *Nine Points on Monumentality* (1943). During the war, Sert designed
the Spanish pavilion in the International Exhibition of Paris 1937, where Picasso’s *Guernica* was first shown. Sert spent the rest of his life into exile in the United States. The modern architects of Madrid split between those who died during the (Anasagasti), those who went into exile (Roberto Fernández Balbuena, who devoted his life in Mexico to painting) and those who stayed in Spain (such as Azpiroz and García Mercadal, who eventually built for Francoist institutions).

After 1939, Francoists imposed a Hispanist monumentality, melancholic for the imperial past, grandiloquent. Monuments returned to stone, specifically granite, in order to resurrect the imperialistic dream in the urban landscape of Madrid (see Muñoz Rojas). To leave Spain again, Cybele had to wait till the end of Franco’s regime. In 1980, another replica was sent to Mexico City to celebrate the exiles who moved there, following the classical practice —since the *Iliad*— of taking the gods and goddesses into exile to the foreign lands where the people decide to settle.
CHAPTER III
UNDERNEATH THE MONUMENT

1. The construction of Brasilia (1956-1960) and the narratives of the new city’s subsoil.

American writer John Dos Passos wrote two different representations of Brasília under construction: in the first one, Brasilia was portrayed as an archaeological site; in the second one, as a wasteland inhabited by a man digging his own grave. These two narratives encompass the two main arguments of this chapter: first, Brasilia was the paradigmatic case of a cartographic monument; second, the full exploitation of the cartographic value of monuments is a source of multiple repressions. In 1963, Dos Passos published Brazil on the Move, where he related the rapid transformations of the country thanks to the developmentalist policy of President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961), the promoter of Brasilia. Surprisingly, he compared the new city with Roman and Zapotec ruins:


143 Dos Passos was born in Chicago within a family of Portuguese Madeiran origin and was fluent in Portuguese. He visited Brazil several times (in 1948, 1956, 1958 and 1962).
As Dr. Israel [Israel Pinheiro da Silva, president of Novacap]\textsuperscript{144} piloted us through the future city we had trouble distinguishing what was really there from what was going to be there. It was like visiting Pompeii or Monte Alban, but in reverse. Instead of imagining the life that was there two thousand years ago we found ourselves imagining the life that would be there ten years hence. (76)

By comparing the new city with an archaeological site, Dos Passos provided an excellent definition of what a cartographic monument—a city-monument in this case—is: a reversed archaeological site, the traces of what the city and the country should be in the future, a glimpse of how life should look like in the next decades.\textsuperscript{145} The cartographic monument seeks to offer a peephole into the future, with the hope that the experience of looking through it would change the community by pushing it towards that future. Indeed, Brasilia sought to transform the way Brazilians lived—from labyrinthine colonial cities by the coastline looking towards Europe and traditional houses, to hyper-rationalist urban plan and dwellings in the interior of the country looking towards itself—and their reputation at home and abroad—from tropical, carefree and lethargic to energetic, efficient and committed.

While chapters I and II of this dissertation analyze archival material little studied or fully unknown, this chapter uses a canonic piece of Latin American modern architecture to address a paradigmatic manifestation of the cartographic value of monuments. Mujica’s Neo-Precolombian City of the Future was a project for a cartographic monumental city that never fully materialized, and the Spanish modern architects built transient cartographic monuments that were eventually

\textsuperscript{144} Companhia Urbanizadora da Nova Capital [Development Company of the New Capital], state company created for the construction of Brasilia.

\textsuperscript{145} Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector made a similar comparison, but without the projection towards the future. For her, the city was the archaeological remains of a lost civilization. “Olho Brasilia como olho Roma: Brasilia começou com uma simplificação de ruinas” (“Brasilia.” In: Todos os contos: 591).
disassembled. They represent two phases in the implementation of cartographic monuments: first, a project; second, a transient construction. Brasilia represented the third stage: the full completion of a cartographic city-monument.

Likewise, the previous two chapters have deeply analyzed the discourse of progress, development and future that this kind of monument promulgates. In this chapter, while taking that into consideration, the focus is on how the full completion of a cartographic city-monument produces radical repressions. To study those repressions, it proposes a collection of narratives of Brasilia’s subsoil created during the years of the construction (1956-1960) and up until the late 1970s. These narratives of what the city-monument hid underneath shed light on to what extent the full exploitation of the cartographic value was linked to imaginaries of tabula rasa, and how everything that was repressed by such tabula rasa returned in different ways. Just as the concealing of monuments in Madrid made the old monuments more present than ever, Brasilia’s emphasis on its radical newness and future-ness made what was being discarded from the past more present than ever.

Brasilia’s subsoil was addressed from a variety of points of view, but most often to challenge the official idea of a futurist city magically built in three years from scratch. Instead of writing about Brasilia’s monumental buildings and urban plan, national and international writers, artists and intellectuals such as Dos Passos wrote about Brasilia’s metaphorical underground. Even though many of the witnesses discussed here only got to see a construction site, they

As discussed in previous chapters, Lewis Mumford distinguished facts that actually happened in history and what he called idolum, the worlds of ideas and speculations (1922: 13). Tabula rasa was one of those ideas: an application of the characterization of John Locke, who understood the human mind as a blank slate without innate ideas, to history and urban planning. Indeed, tabula rasa has been a constant idolum in the history of humanity because it signified a desire of oblivion and fresh start. This is particularly true for the Americas, considered by the colonizers as a blank slate.
portrayed Brasilia as an archaeological site, the work of the killed in the extermination camps, a ruin submerged on the seabed, a catacomb, or an iceberg.\footnote{147}

The construction of Brasilia was a spectacle to be admired. The Brasilia Palace Hotel was the first building to be finished in the construction site in order to host notable visitors who came to admire the spectacle of building a city. The process of construction at a record pace and great

\footnote{147 All this comparisons with Brasilia are addressed in this chapter, but the one of the catacombs. The comparison with catacombs was due to Spanish literary critic and poet Guillermo Díaz Plaja also paid close attention to Niemeyer’s “underground mania.” Díaz Plaja was also prolific writer of travel books about Europe, Africa and the Americas. In \textit{Con variado rumbo. De la ruta de Mío Cid a la invención de Brasilia} (1967), he connected Brasilia to medieval legendary tales. In fact, Díaz Plaja’s travel started in old Castile, following in the footsteps of eleventh-century hero El Cid, and ended in Brasilia, which Díaz Plaja considered “in a very near future, the conductive axis of the whole South American continent” (289). Díaz Plaja argued that Brasilia challenges the pillars of the modern aesthetics:}

En líneas generales, lo que más sorprende de Niemeyer es que, contra lo que parece indicar la línea general de la arquitectura contemporánea, no es una estética de “vuelo,” un lirica geometría de la altitud, como podría definirse, en ultimo término el modulo “rascacielístico” de la construcción contemporánea desde Le Corbusier, sino que paradójicamente se ensaya la línea horizontal, a ras de tierra y, más sorprendentemente todavía, la línea subterránea. Es muy frecuente, en Brasilia, especialmente en las concepciones de Niemeyer, que la tierra sea removida y ahondada, y que una parte de la obra arquitectónica se nueva “en profundidad.” Así, por ejemplo, la catedral presenta la línea copular a la altura del suelo, previéndose el desarrollo espacial destinado a la función litúrgica en un ámbito subterráneo. (288)

[In general terms, what is most surprising in Niemeyer is that, contrary to what seems to indicate the general line of contemporary architecture, it is not an aesthetic of "flight," a lyrical geometry of altitude, as it could be defined, the skyscraper module of contemporary construction since Le Corbusier, what he is attempting is paradoxically the horizontal line, ground level and, more surprisingly, the subterranean line. It is very frequent in Brasilia, especially in Niemeyer's creations, that the earth is removed, and part of the architectural takes place deep inside the earth. Thus, for example, the cathedral presents the cupola at ground level, while the spatial development destined to the liturgical function is an underground chamber]

According to Díaz-Plaja, Brasilia surprisingly substituted altitude by depth, the skyscraper by the underground chambers. García Plaja saw that in Brasilia the paradigm was not the glass skyscraper, but the catacomb; not transparency, but secrecy; not air and sky, but soil.
efficiency was understood as a campaign of what Simon Anholt has called nation branding.\textsuperscript{148} That is the reason why it needed a national and international audience. Elegant receptions were held in the construction site with guests such as United States President Dwight Eisenhower, Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro, French Minister of Cultural Affairs André Malraux, writers Elizabeth Bishop, Aldous Huxley and John Dos Passos, architects Eero Saarinen and Richard Neutra, critics Bruno Zevi and Mário Pedrosa, among many others. Most of them wrote narratives using the opposing notions of visibility and repression, surface and subsoil.

The fact that Brasília was built as both a city and a monument is clear since its own conception. Indeed, its main architectural feature was monumentality. Lúcio Costa designed the urban plan as a huge cross in the middle of Brazil’s central plateau. The city consists of two axis called the Residential and the Monumental Axis. Every building designed by Niemeyer for the Monumental Axis (and to some extend for the Residential Axis as well) was monumental. Indeed, the word ‘monumental’ appears fifteen times in Costa’s project, even though it was a very brief text. He explained what he meant by ‘monumental:’

\begin{quote}
Ela deve ser concebida não como simples organismo capaz de preencher satisfatoriamente e sem esforço as funções vitais próprias de uma cidade moderna qualquer, não apenas como urbs, mas como civitas, possuidora dos atributos inerentes a uma capital. E, para tanto, a condição primeira é achar-se o urbanista imbuído de uma certa dignidade e nobreza de intenção, porquanto dessa atitude fundamental decorrem a ordenação e o senso de conveniência e medida capazes de conferir, ao conjunto projetado, o desejável caráter monumental. Monumental, não no sentido de ostentação, mas no sentido da expressão palpável, por assim dizer, consciente, daquilo que vale e significa. (Braga 164, underline in the original)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{148} The term ‘nation branding’ was developed by Simon Anholt in the early 2000s. Although it may sound anachronistic here, it is relevant to point out that the construction site was not only a building project, but also a marketing strategy to change Brazil’s reputation.
[It must be conceived not just as an organism able to fulfill satisfactorily and effortlessly the normal vital functions of any modern city, not just as urbs but as civitas; instead, it should have the attributes of a capital city. Thus, the urban planner’s intentions should be imbued with certain dignity and intention of nobility in order to be able to inflect the urban plan with the desirable monumental character. Monumental not in the sense of ostentation, but as tangible expression of what is worthy and meaningful (my translation)]

Brasilia should be monumental because capital cities have to be monumental, have to differentiate from other cities and become symbolic. The use of contrasting scales, the cross-shaped urban plan and Niemeyer’s modernist buildings created such symbolism. Costa further explained: “É assim que, sendo monumental é também cômoda, eficiente, acolhedora e íntima” (Braga 175) [Thus, while monumental, the city is also comfortable, efficient, welcoming and intimate” (my translation)]. For Costa, Brasilia was a monument to live in (see chapter I.2.4 on how Mujica solved this paradox regarding skyscrapers).

Brasilia was not only a city-monument, but a cartographic monument par excellence, built to produce a transformation in the country’s identity. However, even though its cartographic value was exploited to the extreme, there was also a dialectical relationship with its commemorative value. In this case, such dialectics took place through the symbiotic relation between the modernization Brasilia was meant to produce and the repetition of colonial gesture it performed. Apropos this, Benjamin Moser has called Brasilia an act of ‘auto-imperialism:’ “Em Brasília percebi como os próprios brasileiros viam o Brasil. Era com aquele mesmo olhar imperial que eu tentava evitar” [In Brasilia I saw how Brazilians themselves had seen Brazil with the imperial eye I had tried to avoid] (Moser 117). He continues: “Parecia uma sociedade que nunca se cansara de colonizar-se a si própria. E de encarar sua população e seu território como passíveis de exploração, controle, submissão, violação” [It was a society that had never tired of
colonizing itself: of looking at its population and territory as something to be exploited, controlled, subdued, raped] (Moser 118).

Benjamin Moser’s main argument is that Brasilia was indeed an act of self-colonization, the fulfillment of the old republican dream of Brazil’s manifest destiny of founding a capital in the interior of the country as a symbol of the definitive conquest of the desert plateau. The official narrative presented Brasilia as a utopian city for the future, a global model of urban planning, avant-garde architecture, efficiency and equality. As Holston put it, also in colonial terms: Brasilia was conceived as a “frontier city, (...) Eldorado of opportunity” (3).

In chapters I and II, two different uses of monuments in modernity have been discussed: as catalysts of aesthetic decolonization in the case of Mujica, and as producers of utopias during wartime in the case of the Spanish modernist architects. Here, monuments are studied as engines of development. In the late 1950s, most countries were engaged either in the later stages of reconstruction after the Second World War, in independence wars or in developmentalist strategies. For this chapter, the cultural characterization of developmentalism is relevant, since the city-monument became its kernel: developmentalism implied a teleological understanding of history (Brasilia will bring modernity), an acceleration of time (Kubitschek’s Plan 50 years in 5), and the aesthetic of labor and mobilization of resources (instigated by the construction of the city-monument). In Brazil, developmentalism was meant to be the bourgeois revolution the

149 Different forms of developmentalism were dominant after the Second World War in the Southern Hemisphere. Its formula for development was ISI: Import Substitution Industrialization. In Latin America, including Brazil, developmentalism was tied to Theory of Dependency, and based on the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)’s recommendations. Countries implementing developmentalist policies were trying to overcome their disadvantaged position in a world system that condemn them to produce only raw materials, remain pre-industrialized and permanently dependents of the manufactured goods produced by the developed countries. For Skidmore, Kubitschek’s particular approach to developmentalism was his nationalism: “It was Brazil’s ‘destiny’ to undertake a ‘drive to development’” (Skidmore 1967: 166-167).
country never fully had; but since it happened in the middle of socialist turmoil worldwide, it incorporated some elements of the socialist revolution, which it eventually negated.  

Two kinds of repression provoked by the cartographic monument are addressed: first, the repression of the authoritarian genealogy of monumentality, which some authors identified with Fascist architecture; second, the repression of the history of the construction, as an eventual erasure of labor in the bourgeois revolution that Brasilia meant to provoke.

In the first part of the chapter (section 2. Monumentality After Auschwitz), the topic of the return of Fascist architecture is recreated through a discussion indirectly held by André Malraux, Bruno Zevi, and Mário Pedrosa. Malraux portrayed Brasilia as the work of the victims of the exterminations camps, who had returned to life. This was his way of stating that Brasilia entailed that monumentality was possible again, and so the enlightened projects of new, better societies that the Holocaust had perverted. Opposed to this view, Zevi saw Brasilia as a repetition of the bombastic architecture of Mussolini, based on authoritarian monumentality, oppressive urban plans, and racial segregation. Finally, Pedrosa denounced that Brasilia had been kidnapped by the military regime after 1964, becoming a sort of watchtower of the bureaucratic regime, just as Stalin had done with the Soviet avant-gardes. Instead, Pedrosa proposed a notion of monument based on Trotsky’s theory that advocated for Brasilia as a perennial work in progress where the most experimental artists of the country would collaborate. In the three cases, these authors were addressing the same issue: the relation between monumentality and democracy, monument and revolution.

150 Crucial similarities with the position of the Spanish Communist Party during the civil war (see chapter II) will be considered.
In the second part of the chapter (section 3. The Erasure of Labor), the city-monument is portrayed as the nucleus of three social forces seeking to accomplish their own revolution: the bourgeois-developmentalist, the working class, and the military-traditionalist. It was discussed in chapter 2 how the Fallas were taken as a model for the modern construction of monuments where the communal ritual act of building together to destroy together was emphasized. Here, the erasure of the history of building together is analyzed. This erasure was executed for two reasons: developmentalism as a bourgeois revolution erased the history of the construction to avoid a socialist revolution; later, the military dictatorship erased it too to repress developmentalist democracy.

The narratives of Brasilia’s subsoil foresaw this repression of the history of labor. Once again, Dos Passos offers one example. When he first visited Brasilia, the capital was still a huge construction site, with tens of thousands of workers working endless workdays. However, he portrayed a very different scene —a mysterious, hallucinatory land populated by people who would eventually be swallowed by the city they were building. For him, the city looked like “great parallel ridges with nothing behind us but a wilderness of scraggly trees hung with the red lay nests of termites” (1959: nap.). In that wasteland, a ghostly apparition scared him. A human figure suddenly appeared from within the dust and made an uncanny confession:

he points out the tiny way down on the valley floor that’s his home. But isn’t that going to be at the bottom of the lake? The engineer asks.

The man grins and nods. Sure he lives at the bottom of the lake. The idea seems to delight him. (n. p.)
The man was a woodcutter from Mato Grosso who indeed lived at the bottom of the artificial lake he was helping to build by cutting the trees, just like digging his own tomb. He seemed “delighted” with this idea of living in an empty lake that would eventually flood his house.¹⁵¹

This is just one example of how the erasure of labor and workers was portrayed through narratives of the subsoil. Other will be found in the four sections of the second part of this chapter. In the first one, President Juscelino Kubitschek’s memoirs are studied. He depicted the construction site of Brasilia as a spectacle of mass labor: during the construction, labor was hypervisible. In the second part, the expulsion of the construction workers, known as candangos, coincided with the use of the term ‘candango’ to name the first cars produced in the country, as a sort of substitution of worker’s presence and demands for their fetichization as modern technology. In the third section, three different proposals for the construction of monuments to the candangos after the inauguration are debated. In the three cases, these monuments recognized the work of candangos with the condition of their absence and subduing their political demands. Finally, the last section uses Svetlana Boym’s notion of reflective nostalgia to interpret a 1964 painting by Oscar Niemeyer of his Alvorada columns in ruins; this painting represented the collapse of the classless utopia Niemeyer said to have experienced in the construction site, and ultimately the failure of the cartographic value of monuments.

As a canonic work of modernist architecture, Brasilia has been studied from a variety of scholarly perspectives: political, economic and social history; theory, history and criticism of

¹⁵¹ Dos Passos described this brief encounter with the woodcutter for an artist’s book by two graphic designers: Brazilian Alíosio Magalhães and American Eugene Feldman. It was an experimental book, with texts in three languages (English Portuguese and French) and a set of lithographies that showed a sort of haunted construction site: in some, Brasilia under construction looks like a wasteland, in others it looks like a forest, populated by unidentified figures that can be either a fungus or a bone, and inhabited by a pleiad of faceless workmen. The book was titled Doorway to Brasilia, and was published in Philadelphia in 1959.
architecture and art; ethnography and anthropology. The city roused much attention during its construction and inauguration in the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, after the 1964 military coup d’état, such interest declined, resuming in the mid 1970s, when its construction started to be considered a historical event, and issues of preservation took central stage. Later on, in the 1980s, there were two milestones in the research on Brasilia: in 1987, Brasilia was included in UNESCO’s World Heritage List, and in 1989 James Holston published his seminal book *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia.*\(^{152}\) Holston’s argument can be rephrased following the notions studied here: for him, Brasilia was built as *a monument to live in* that repressed other traditional forms of inhabiting.

In the 1990s and 2000s, most studies have addressed three main topics about the city: its architecture, its significance in the history of Brazil’s developmentalism, and the history of the communities formed there before and after the construction. In 2010 there was a boom of scholarship to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of its inauguration. In architecture, some publications focused on the technical and artistic achievements of Brazilian modernism. See, for example, Farès el-Dahdah’s *Oscar 102 / Brasilia 50. Eight Cases in Brazil’s Architectural Modernity* (2010), and Alessandro Balducci’s *Brasilia. A Utopia Come True (1960-2010)* (2010).

Historians of economy and politics continued articulating the role of Brasilia in developmentalism, as it was the case of the compilation *Brasilia aos 50 anos. Que cidade é essa?* (2010), and to some extend Barbara Weinstein’s *For Social Peace in Brazil: Industrialist and the Remaking of the Working Class in São Paulo (1920-1964)*, published earlier (1996).

\(^{152}\) Holston carried out fieldwork between 1980 and 82.
Cultural historians have also addressed this issue, as Nicolau Sevcenko did in the chapter “Peregrinations, Visions and the City: From Canudos to Brasilia, the Backlands become the City and the City becomes the Backlands” (In: Through the Kaleidoscope: the Experience of Modernity in Latin America, 2000).

Finally, anthropologists and ethnographers have followed Holston’s influential research in different directions. Some have dealt with the history of social movements in the new capital; for example A conquista da cidade. Movimentos populares em Brasília (1991, republished in 2010 with new essays). Others have been interested in recovering the oral history of the construction workers, such as Edson Beú’s Expresso Brasília: A História contada pelos candangos (2012). The construction site as a gendered space has been investigated by Larissa Pires in her dissertation “Gender in the Modernist City: Shaping Power Relations and National

Much of the academic research is produced in Brasilia itself, since Universidade de Brasilia has eagerly promoted it, often organized by Professor Aldo Paviani.

Some authors, such as Gameiro Miragaya, discuss Brasilia within the framework of developmentalism and CEPAL’s ISI policies, tracing the history of developmentalism back to Estado Novo. Others such as Weinstein found these origins even earlier, in the 1920s. Architectural modernism has been discussed as the aesthetic ally of Brazilian developmentalism. Holston discusses Le Corbusier’s theory of the house as a “machine to live in” in order to show how modernism fulfilled the requirements of rationalization, modernity and functionalism that populist-developmentalist governments were pursuing in Brazil (163-196). Brasilia’s unfulfilled promise of land reform has also been commented (cf. III.2, Oscar Niemeyer. Modern Arcthiecture and the Ruins of the Dawn).

Brasilia was also the cornerstone of much discussion about Brazilian identity. While Sevcenko argued for its inclusion in the history of Brazilian settlers in the interior of the country, Paviani and Wilfong argued for the original idealization of the city as drastically different from the rest of the country. In this respect, Holston accused the city of alienating Brazil: the capital of Brazil negated everything that Brazil stood for (Holston 23). All of them agree in considering Brasilia as a sort of detached place from where to evaluate the history and identity of the country. Anthropological approaches have been particularly rich: from Luciana Jacoud’s stories of social segregation, to Bicalho de Sousa’s studies on social movements, Edson Beú’s oral narratives to Larissa Pires’ gender approach. Finally, on the occasion of the evaluation of the successes and failures of the city during the 50th anniversary scholars have discussed the challenges the city is still facing: segregation and elitism (Cony Cidade), management problems (Netto Gonzáles), corruption (Cataldo), overpopulation and environmental issues (Flósculo). Despite these challenges, in the last years the spirit of Brasilia had also been invoked again to function as a moral incentive to successfully be able to build the infrastructure on time for the 2014’s World Cup and 2016’s Olympic Games.
Identity with the Construction of Brasilia” (2013).

This chapter is at the crossroads of all these issues, where the concerns for preservation, the experience of building and inhabiting a monument, and the use of monumentality by different political systems meet. Ultimately, this research seeks to debate the abuse of monumentality in democracy, which corresponds with the abuse of the cartographic value of monuments. In order to do so, the theme of alvorada [dawn] is used as the backbone of this analysis. Brasilia, as a cartographic city-monument, was considered a new dawn for Brazil. The columns of the Palácio de Alvorada represented the faith in monuments as catalysts for desirable futures, and were addressed to symbolize the two repressions studied here: from André Malraux’s comparison of these columns to the Greek ones, remarking that Brasilia would produce the most beautiful archaeological site of modernity, to Oscar Niemeyer’s painting of his Alvorada columns in ruins (1964).

2. Monumentality After Auschwitz

After the Second World War, most countries of Europe and many of Asia engaged in mass reconstruction, fostering philosophical discussions of what it meant to build, to reassemble, to inhabit. Probably the most famous reflection was Martin Heidegger’s “Bauen Wohnen Denken” [Building Dwelling Thinking], published in 1951, five years before the beginning of the construction of Brasilia. He equated these three terms since each entails the other: building is a form of dwelling, which is a form of inhabiting and acknowledging the world —the three involve a process through which the subject places him/herself in the world and experience reality.
Also in 1951, Theodor Adorno had controversially stated that poetry was not possible after Auschwitz, as an expressive way of condemning the reproduction of the aesthetic forms embraced by Nazism. But what about monumentality? French writer and Minister of Cultural Affairs André Malraux and Italian architectural critic Bruno Zevi were European intellectuals who were immersed in these debates, and raised important questions regarding this: after the experience of Fascist architecture—both the monumental neoclassicism of Mussolini and Hitler, and the construction of the concentration camps—, was monumentality a legitimate option for postwar democratic regimes? Or, more specifically, was monumentality a legitimate option to build a new society, as Brasilia promulgated?

Malraux had visited the construction site in August of 1959, invited by President Kubitschek. Zevi went to Brasilia a month later, to attend a conference of art critics organized by Brazilian art critic Mário Pedrosa. Malraux and Zevi faced the same landscape, but expressed opposed opinions: while the French found in the city under construction the return of optimism that the war had destroyed—monumentality was possible again—, the Italian felt the irremediability of destruction and the return of authoritarianism—monumentality should stay censored. These opposed views presented the city-monument as a symbol of regeneration of the enlightened project, and as a symbol of totalitarism, respectively.

Both will be responded by Pedrosa, who had been one of the main enthusiasts of Brasilia from within Brazil. However, his opinion changed over time: while in 1959 he saw the city as a feat of decolonial avant-gardes, after the coup he saw Brasilia as a hostage of the military-

154 As Marjorie Perloff pointed out, the rhetoric of destruction employed by Futurism prevented many post-war scholars of Modernism from pursuing a dispassionate study of the works Marientti, Appolinaire or Mayakovsky (xxiii). Destruction was almost a taboo topic after the war. Sebald’s On the Natural History of Destruction dealt with this taboo. For some European guests as Malraux and Zevi, visiting the construction site of Brasilia was an opportunity to actually talk about destruction.
bureaucratic system — his ideal of a city-monument was that of a collective work of permanent experimentation: the monument as a perennial work in progress.

These confronting views suggest a debate about whether the totalitarianism represented by Fascism, Nazism, and the Holocaust was a historical exception or an inherent symptom of modernity, particularly because of the relationship between monumentality and bureaucracy. Zygmunt Bauman extensively studied this question, and concluded that the Holocaust was the normal consequence of modernity:

> the Holocaust was not an antithesis of modern civilization and everything (or so we like to think) it stands for. We suspect (even if we refuse to admit it) that the Holocaust could merely have uncovered another face of the same modern society whose other, more familiar, face we so admire. And that the two faces are perfectly comfortable attached to the same body. What we perhaps fear most, is that each of the two faces can no more exist without the other than the two sides of a coin. (7)

Malraux and Zevi would have agreed with this: modernity was the struggle between two forces, Apollo and Dionysius, the pleasure principle and death drive, the forces of construction and destruction, attached to each other in an almost undifferentiated way. But they disagreed in the face they witnessed in the construction site of Brasilia: while Malraux saw peace and creation, Zevi saw tyranny and annihilation.

### 2.1. André Malraux: the Return of the Killed in the Extermination Camps

August 25, 1959. President Kubitschek hosted one of the most prestigious intellectuals and politicians of the world in the construction site of Brasilia: the French novelist and intellectual
André Malraux, who went to Brazil representing the French government of Charles de Gaulle as Minister of Cultural Affairs. There, Malraux delivered one of the most famous speeches endorsing the new capital:  

Dans cette ville surgie de la volonté d'un homme et de l'espoir d'une nation, comme les métropoles antiques surgirent de la volonté impériale de Rome ou des héritiers d'Alexandre, le palais de l'Alvarada que vous édifiez, la cathédrale que vous projetez, apportent quelques-unes des formes les plus hardies de l'architecture, et, devant les maquettes de la Brasilia future, nous savons que la ville entière sera la ville la plus audacieuse qu'ait conçue l'Occident. Au nom de tant de monuments illustres qui emplissent notre mémoire, soyez remercie d'avoir fait confiance a vos architectes pour créer la ville et a votre peuple pour l'aimer!

[In this city created by the will of a man and the hope of a nation, just as the ancient metropolises arose from the imperial will of Rome or the heirs of Alexander; the Alvorada Palace you are building and the cathedral you have planned bring some of the boldest architectural forms; and before the models of the future Brasilia we know the entire city will be the most daring one ever built in the West. On behalf of so many illustrious monuments that fill our memory, we thank you for trusting your architects to create it, and your people for loving it! (my translation)]

Malraux spoke on behalf of all classical and neoclassical monuments built in the past; as a French Minister of Culture and renowned French writer and intellectual, he spoke from the authority to assume such place of utterance. Indeed, this was a speech inflected by French spiritual neo-colonialism based on the notion of ‘Latinate fraternal.’ For him, Brasilia was the “résurrection du lyrisme architectural” of classicism: “le génie brésilien continue à la fois les perspectives de la Grèce, de la Rome pontificale, de Versailles et du Paris napoléonien, nous pensons que le mot si confus de latinité a peut-être au moins un sens précis: celui de fraternité” [the Brazilian genius continues the prospects of Greece, Pontifical Rome, Versailles, and

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155 Kubitschek, a Francophile, was moved by Malraux’s assertions. In Por que construir Brasilia, he called Western civilization “a idade de ouro do mundo” [the Golden age of the world] (129). Although not specifically referred to France, this opinion reveals how significant must have been for Kubitschek to receive’s Malraux’s support in the name of France.

156 The full speech can be found here: http://www.malraux.org/images/documents/brasilia.pdf
All quotations have been extracted from this source. The speech is not paged.
Napoleonic Paris; we think that the so confused Latin word has at least one precise meaning: fraternity. He set Brasilia in a neoclassical genealogy as a way of interpreting it as a continuation of the project of French enlightenment, interrupted by the war.

Malraux gave Brasilia its mythical nickname, “la capitale de l'espoir” [the Capital of Hope], because the city was being built from the ashes of the mass killings of Second World War:

Il n'y a pas de civilisation sans âme. Chacune des grandes religions avait apporté une notion fondamentale de l'homme, et notre temps s'efforce passionnément de donner forme au fantôme que leur a substitué le siècle des machines. D'autant plus passionnément, qu'avant les camps dextermination, avec la bombe atomique, l'ombre de Satan a repara sur le monde, en même temps qu'elle reparaissait dans l'homme: la psychanalyse redécouvre les démons, pour les réintégrer en lui. Mais dans un monde sans clef, où le Mal devient une énigme fondamentale, le moindre sacrifice, le moindre chef-d'oeuvre, le moindre acte de pitié où d'hérosme, posent une énigme aussi fascinante que celle du supplice de l'enfant innocent qui obsédait Dostoïevski, que tous les pauvres yeux humains qui découvrirent une chambre à gaz avant de se fermer à jamais: l'existence de l'amour de l'art ou de l'hérosme n'est pas moins mystérieuse que celle du mal. Peut-être l'aptitude de l'homme à les concevoir et à les maintenir invinciblement est-elle une de ses composantes comme l'est l'aptitude à l'intelligence, et le but de notre civilisation, dans l'ordre de l'esprit, devient-il, après avoir trouvé les techniques qui réintègrent les démons dans l'homme, de chercher celles qui y réintégreraient les dieux.

[There is no civilization without soul.

Each of the great religions had brought a fundamental notion of man, and our time passionately endeavors to give form to the phantom that has substituted these notions in the century of the machines. All the more passionately, with the extermination camps and atomic bombs, the shadow of Satan reappeared on the world at the same time as it reappeared in man: psychoanalysis rediscovered the demons to reintegrate them in man. But in a world without a key, where Evil becomes a fundamental enigma, the slightest sacrifice, masterpiece, act of pity or heroism poses an enigma as fascinating as that of the torture of the innocent child who obsessed Dostoyevsky; all the poor human eyes who found themselves in a gas chamber before closing forever behind them: the existence of the love for art or heroism is no less mysterious than that of evil. Perhaps man's ability to conceive and maintain them invincibly is one of its components, as is the aptitude for intelligence, and after having found the techniques that reintegrate the demons in man,
the aim of our civilization is to seek those techniques that help reintegrate the gods (my translation and italics)]

Modernity had shown its potentials for destruction (machines, extermination camps, and the atomic bomb), psychoanalysis asked men and women to face their evil. For Malraux, the human being had found himself both horrified and fascinated by its capacity of annihilation. Humanity deeply explored its capacity for destruction, whose most extreme manifestation was the gas chamber; Brasilia showed that after the interruption of war, now it was time again to explore its capacity of construction — civilization still had what he called a ‘soul,’ a life drive. The enlightened project had been repressed and perverse by Fascism; Brasilia’s monumentality was a sign of reparation.

Malraux used the same metaphor than the Spanish Republicans of Madrid: the reintegration of gods. In fact, he had explicitly supported the Spanish Republic, travelled to Spain during the war, and wrote a novel (1937) and made a film (1945) about the Spanish war that had the same name he applied to Brasilia: L’Espoir [Hope] and Espoir: Sierra de Teruel, respectively. Indeed, for Malraux Brasilia would be a sort of the completion of the cartographic monuments of Spain: a modernity based on the values of enlightenment, grounded in the French

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157 Postwar imaginaries of life underground and sanctuaries for nuclear wars were very common during those years, particularly in the United Stated, where several of the attendees came from (Cf. Monteyne, Rose, Cordle). As Sunil Bald has shown, Brasilia was not immune to this anxiety. Many New Age cults have established there since the years of the construction because they considered the place a magical shelter, due to its soil, the richest in crystal quartz in Brazil. The origins of Brasilia as Capital of the Third Millenium goes back to Costa’s urban plan, which presents itself as the realization of Dom Bosco’s dream of the birth of a city in the Brazilian Highlands. Bald reminds that Dom Bosco’s dream already acknowledged that the city will be built there because the people will come for the treasure the plateau hides underground: “When they come to explore the riches buried in these mountains, here will rise the promised land of milk and honey, of unconceivable wealth” (Bald 67, quoting Dom Bosco).
philosophical tradition. For him, the return of neoclassical monumentality\textsuperscript{158} was not only an opportunity to claim the return of the enlightened project, but that of French spiritual neocolonialism. He continued:

s’il existe un art des camps d’extermination, il n’exprimera pas les bourreaux, il exprimera les martyrs. "Lève-toi, Lazare!"\textsuperscript{159} Nous ne savons pas ressusciter les corps, mais nous commençons à savoir ressusciter les rêves, et ce que vous proposez aujourd’hui la France, c’est que pour nous tous, la culture soit la résurrection de la noblesse du monde.

[If there is an art of the extermination camps, it will not express the executioners, but the martyrs. "Rise up, Lazarus!" We do not know how to resuscitate bodies, but we are beginning to know how to resuscitate dreams, and this is what France encourages you to do today for us all: culture should be the resurrection of the nobility of the world.]

Brasilia was the art of the martyrs of the extermination camps, the art of the killed by Nazism and Fascism, who returned to life and built a new civilization after having experienced man’s capacity of destruction to its fullest.\textsuperscript{160} The best commemoration to the victims of the Holocaust

\textsuperscript{158} In chapter I, it was discussed how Mujica saw the return of monumentality as a decolonial strategy
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Lazare} was also the title of the memoirs Malraux published in 1974 about his own experience under treatment in a psychiatric hospital.
\textsuperscript{160} Derek Allan, in his seminal work on Malraux’s theory of art, affirmed that for Malraux “the human adventure, like the adventure of art since the earliest times through which it is affirmed, has no discernible, underlying meaning” (288-289, italics in original). This implied that the French novelist did not have a teleological understanding of history in general, and history of art in particular. Malraux had explicitly criticized Taine, Hegel, and Marx’s teleology in some of his speeches (Allan 288). In the case of the speech on and in Brasilia, Malraux was not understanding history of art in a lineal way, since he referred to returns of interrupted past projects. According to Allan, Malraux was a tragic humanist who understood art as a positive self-affirmation of humanity, but for whom the history of humans has no greater goal, God, or final purpose. In his Brasilia speech he posed the idea of history as a tension between two forces, closer to Freud’s pleasure principle and death drive (he explicitly mentioned psychoanalysis) than to Nietzsche’s Appolinean and Dionisean forces, and that he believed in the restoration of past’s events and ideals. He believed in the return of the repressed.

Malraux used the word “ressuciter” to refer to Brasilia. This was not a neutral word for him. Quite the opposite, since resurrection laid at the core of his theory of art. For him, art was intrinsically unstable, in a
was to recover the high cultural goals that totalitarian regimes perverted. For Malraux, almost fifteen years after the end of the war, monumentality was absolved, the dream of building new societies was legitimate again, and so the use of monuments to fulfill such purpose.

2.2. Bruno Zevi: a Hypertrophic EUR

In September of 1959, a few weeks after Malraux’s visit, the Congresso Internacional Extraordinário de Críticos de Arte: Cidade Nova: Síntese das Artes [Extraordinary International Congress of Art Critics: New City: Synthesis of the Arts] took place in the construction site of Brasilia,¹⁶¹ where some of the most influential architects, urban planners, critics and historians met to discuss the modernist city under construction. The narratives of Brasilia’s subsoil abounded, often to share Malraux’s opinion that Brasilia meant the resurrection of the enlightened values interrupted during the war. One example of that position was American architect Richard Neutra. Neutra found in Brasilia the praiseworthy goal of planning survival

continuous process of metamorphosis. Specific forms of art can apparently be forgotten, and then maybe return, if the conditions are appropriate, what gives it a sense of unpredictability and vulnerability (Allan 202).¹⁶⁰ Those returns are understood as resurrections. This idea of resurrection was present in the quoted passages in different forms: as “reintegration of the gods” and the “resurrection of the nobility of the world.”

¹⁶¹ Sixty-five delegates from Europe and the Americas attended eight different sessions: 1. The New City; 2. Urbanism; 3. Technique and Expressivity; 4. Architecture; 5. Plastic Arts; 6. Industrial Arts; 7. Art and Education; 8. The Condition of Arts in the City. It was an initiative of art critics Mário Pedrosa (Secretary-General of the Brazilian Section of the International Association of Art Critics, AICA), Sérgio Millet (President of the Associação Brasileira de Críticos de Arte, ABCA) and Mário Barata. They were supported by Simone Gille-Delafon (director of the AICA’s Paris Bureau), and the Presidents of the other national sections of AICA. The congress took place in three different locations: Brasilia’s construction site (September 17-19), São Paulo’s 5th Art Biennial (September 21-22) and Rio de Janeiro (September 23-25). It was the first time AICA organized its annual gathering out of Europe (The 6th General Assembly and Congress takes place in Istanbul in 1954), and the first time it hold an “extraordinary” congress for a specific architectural event — the construction of Brasilia. That same year of 1959 the 11th General Assembly took place in New York, where critics discussed on “Architecture and Contemporary Art in the United States.” For an account on articles produced after this congress in nacional and international magazines, cf. Camargo Capello.
against unfavorable conditions. To argue that, he said the new city was the redemption of humanity after the abominable sins of Sodom and Gomorrah:

Eu gostaria de estabelecer um contraste entre as perversões de Sodoma e Gomorra, as primeiras cidades de que se tem menção no mundo, e Brasília: Sodoma e Gomorra, célebres por terem pervertido a natureza; Brasília, célebre pela tentativa de restabelecer o que é biologicamente suportável. Todos sabemos que Sodoma e Gomorra e Brasília têm importância internacional. As duas primeiras terminaram num grande incêndio em que todos morreram, exceto Lot. (Lobo 41)

[I’d like to establish a contrast between the perversions in Sodom and Gomorrah, the first cities ever mentioned in the world, and Brasilia. Sodom and Gomorrah are famous for having perverted nature; Brasilia, for trying to restore what is biologically bearable. We all know Sodom and Gomorrah have an international significance, and so Brasilia does. The two former ended in a fire where everyone died, but Lot]

Although the perversion he referred were not historical but Biblical, and due to sexual relations (against what is “biologically bearable”) instead of war and ethnic cleansing, Neutra—from a Christian perspective—agreed with Malraux—from an enlightened perspective—that Brasilia became a reparation after an aberration that produced destruction.

Neutra did not share these controversial thoughts spontaneously, but as a response to the previous speaker, the Italian architectural critic Bruno Zevi, who had been particularly censorious with Brasilia. This is how Neutra began his intervention: “Estou satisfeito que o Sr. Zevi tenha falado em inglês, e quero agradecê-lo. Ainda assim, não pude compreender o que ele disse, e creio que nem vós. (…) sus palavras me pareciam ser em grego” [I am happy Mr. Zevi has spoken in English, and I really appreciate that. However, I couldn’t understand what he said,}

162 Speakers spoke in different language, but proceedings are published in Portuguese.
and I think neither could you. (…) his words sound Greek to me] (Lobo 40). Neutra addressed Zevi this way because the Italian had indeed shocked the audience with his harsh criticism.

Zevi was one of the city’s most fervent opponents since its construction and for years after the inauguration. He proposed a completely different genealogy of Brasilia’s modernism: instead of considering it the continuation of the enlightened project, he saw it as a pathologic return of the Fascist architectural sense, repressed in Europe after its defeat in the Second World War, but restored fifteen years later in the Southern Hemisphere.163

His invective focused on Costa’s urban plan, which he described as oppressive. He proposed to distinguish between two different kinds of urban plans: the open and the closed plan.164 The open plan was not dogmatic and allowed the city to grow and develop beyond what was planned. This was the case of every living city. On the contrary, a closed plan could only produce a closed city, wrapped up in itself, isolated and self-consuming. Zevi insinuated he could foresee Brasilia’s becoming an archaeological site:165

163 He explicitly said Brasilia would evolve towards an anti-democratic experience (Pozzi 30-31).

164 Zevi’s main objection was against Costa’s urban plan, and this idea of the close plan. He considered that the other options that competed against Costa — Rino Levi’s, Mindlin’s, Palanti’s — at least offered a plan that would allow the city to grow (1979: 184).

He had also something to say about Niemeyer. Zevi compared Brasilia’s to Chandigardh’s architecture and concluded the Brazilian suffered from inferiority complex (1979: 187).

He added that despite his radical critique, both Costa and Niemeyer’s were receptive to criticism, and their mistakes were beyond themselves, they were problems contemporary architectural culture was facing in general.

165 Also in 1959, writer and diplomat José Osvaldo de Meira Penna published a book about the construction of Brasilia, Quando mudam as capitais. Prologued by NOVACAP President Israel Pinheiro, it was a very suggestive essay in which Penna justified the construction of Brasilia by analyzing previous projects of construction of new capitals since Old Egypt (Memphis, Thebas, Akhenaton) to Madrid, Washington DC or Canberra. Penna invoked many great cities of Antiquity, which in most cases had turned into archaeological sites. A few succeeded, and although some of them do not exist today, at some point they were powerful civilizations. That was the case of Akkad, Babylon, Tyre, classic Athens, and imperial Rome. Others were Nineveh, Troy, Sparta, Syracuse, and Carthage. Penna used a different but related pairing: instead of discussing open versus closed plan, he compares natural capitals versus artificial capitals, which in a way echoes the discussion on organicism. As he admitted, his
Toda cidade é dinâmica A não ser que se trata de uma cidade arqueológica, uma cidade morta, toda cidade é dinâmica. (…)


All cities are dynamic. All, but archeological cities, dead cities,166 are dynamic (…).

The dynamics of the pilot plan. I haven’t understood yet if Lúcio Costa’s plan is open or closed. Maybe it is both things. Mr. Holford would say now that Lúcio Costa’s plan is open –by its form, it seems closed.

He was standing in an immense construction site for a new city; instead, he saw an apocalyptic landscape, a herald of future destruction —Brasilia becoming an archaeological site. The cause of this bad omen is the monumental nature of the urban plan: monumental not only because such is how Costa described it, as was pointed out earlier; but because preservation laws that normally applied to monuments were also applied to the urban plan: Brasília was born as a cross in the middle of the central plateau, and should continue being a cross for its entire existence; any construction subverting the original plan should be forbidden. Brasilia’s urban plan was as inflexible as a stone monument.

When Zevi shared these concerns, he was campaigning for an organic approach to modern architecture and urbanism with Frank Lloyd Wright as a model, and as an antidote to the

book was a propagandistic research meant to support with historical evidence the project of Brasilia (26). Penna’s main argument is that all capitals were originally artificial: “Afinal de contas, Roma também foi artificialmente traçada pelo arado de Rômulo!” [After all, Rome was also artificially drawn by Romulus’ plow] (11).

Manuel Mendes mentioned how Kubitschek’s political opponents used the comparison with a cemetery to discredit Brasilia: “Um dia um Deputado, irritado com a nova Capital, disse que Brasilia era tão sinistra que pessoas aqui moravam em quadras, como num cemitério” [one day a congressman irritated by the new capital said that Brasilia was so sinister that people here lived in blocks like a cemetery] (148). Mendes’ Meu testemunho de Brasília is analyzed below in this chapter (3.3. Os guerreiros, Werneck de Castro, and Manuel Mendes: A Monument for Oblivion).
monumentalist temptation grounded in Fascism. His main argument was that contemporary urbanism had degenerated into a dangerous rigidity, monumentality and contempt against the human scale. Brasilia was the maximum realization of this degeneration.\footnote{Other visitors from Italy echoed or coincided with Zevi’s comparison, although not always agreeing with him. Italian President Giovanni Gronchi visited Brasilia on 8 September 1958, and stated that “a futura Capital do Brasil é uma obra digna dos tempos romanos” [the future Capital of Brazil is a work matching up those of the Roman times] (Brasilia e a opinião mundial I, 45). An article from Il Calendario Del Popolo in Milan, published in January, 1958, addressed the topic of open cities (Zevi have called them ‘open plans’) to affirm that the current conditions of Brasilia assured that Brasilia would become an open city in the future: “A cidade ideal de hoje é aberta, de forma livre, harmonicamente organizada nas suas porções direcionais, produtivas, culturais, recreativas e residenciais: composições de edifícios altíssimos, de zonas verdes, de amplos e serenos quarteirões de moradia. Tal será Brasilia, ‘cidade ideal’ moderna” [The ideal city of today is open, free, harmoniously organized in its directional, productive, cultural, recreational and residential portions: compositions of tall buildings, green areas, large and serene housing blocks. Such will be Brasilia, the ideal modern city] (Brasilia e a opinião mundial I, 4). It should be taken into consideration that these opinions were collected by Brazilians and put together in a book that only registered positive international opinions on Brasilia.}

This was his argument in the 1959 conference. A few years later, the 1964 military coup d’état seemed to confirm his prophecy, and Brasília became the seat of a dictatorial government. Zevi kept on writing about Brasilia for years,\footnote{The most complete version of his critique was published in L’Architettura: Cronache e Storia (vol. 5, n. 51, 1960: 608-619) and compiled in Editoriali di architettura (1979).} and that is how he interpreted the course of the events: aesthetic forms produce political forms. Monuments were built because they thought to have a cartographic value, turning them into catalysts for the production of desirable futures. However, aesthetic forms are ambiguous, and such future sometimes were not the one expected by its builders. While Brazilians had faith in the city-monument as a provider of economic independence (Mujica thought likewise, see chapter I), it brought political authoritarianism. Zevi had warned against this.

Indeed, when the coup happened, Zevi interpreted it partially as the inevitable consequence of Brasilia’s monumentality, which instead of building a democracy was sowing the seeds for an authoritarian regime. He considered monumental classicism as a sign of political weakness and angst — regimes resorted to these architectural solutions when their political
situation was precarious, as was the case of President Kubitschek’s administration. But classicism and monumentality were traps, which produced the opposite of what they sought, and were condemned to fail: “Classicism is for cemeteries, not for life. Only death can solve the anxiety of uncertainty” (1978: 12).

For Zevi, democracy needed monuments, but not monumentality. It should be symbolized by human scale, realism, and humility. Brasilia was too monumental, grandiloquent and kingly to be democratic. Moreover, he saw Brasilia not only as the return of Fascist monumentality, but also as the return of the racial segregation that had produced the concentration camps:

Sicché, per paura che la nuova capitale sia inondata dalle folle di negri affamati, si esercita un severo controllo poliziesco della’immigrazione eterna.\(^{169}\) Fenomeno sintomatico di un artificio che l’Europa, con il suo carico di dittature, ben conosce. (1979: 185)

[So, because of fear that the new capital would be flooded with the craziness of hungry blacks, a severe police control of external immigration is exerted. Symptomatic phenomenon of an artifice that Europe, with its burden of dictatorships, knows well]

Brasilia was built as a space for white Brazilians, he thought. The Plano Piloto was a fortress built against the fear to the “hungry blacks,” who were left outside by the migration police. Even though those “hungry blacks” were most of those who had built the city, they were not allowed to inhabit it.\(^{170}\) Brasilia was the return of something that Europe already went through, and Zevi,

\(^{169}\) External to the city, but internal to the country: he meant Afro-Brazilians.
\(^{170}\) Read from the present, Zevi seems to be foreseeing the middle-class gated communities that are one of the most distinctive architectural and urban features of today’s Latin American cities.
as an Italian Jew, experienced in first person—authoritarianism, dictatorship, race segregation and potentially ethnic cleansing.

Zevi’s most systematic critique of Brasilia was his article “Brasilia, sei volte sbagliata” [Brasilia, six times wrong], where he stated that the city was born out of “un artificioso ato d’imperio” [an artificial act of empire] (1979: 186-190). By ‘artificial’ he might mean ‘anachronistic;’ after the Second World War, and at the height of independence wars in Africa and Asia, the imperialism of taking the land and imposing the flag and the cross should not be allowed. In Zevi’s rationale, the commemorative and cartographic values of Brasilia as a city-monument coincided: it continued the ancestral Brazilian imperialism to promote a more imperialistic future.

The opposite of an organic city plan and architecture was a sick one. Many favorable critics of Brasilia such as Richard Neutra were keen to medical metaphors, interpreting Rio de Janeiro as a sick city, with a cancerous growing model: favelas. According to these critics, Rio

171 He had to leave Italy in 1938, moving first to London and then to Boston, where he studied in Harvard under Gropius.

172 Brasilia’s six were the political project, location, urban planning, the apartment blocks, the Praça dos Três Poderes, its functionalism, and the design of state buildings. His concluded: “Un monumento a sinistra, un monumento a destra, separati dalle torri. Quale messaggio veicola il complesso? Cosa è rimasto delle concezioni spazio-temporali, dinamiche dell’urbanistica moderna? Linguisticamente, siamo nell’Ottocento più retrogrado” [A monument on the left, a monument to the right, separated by the towers. What message conveys this? What is left of the notion of space-time, and the modern urban dynamics? Linguistically, we are in the most retrograde of the nineteenth century] (1979: 187).

173 Zevi was aware of the challenges of a country that had historically lived towards the ocean and neglecting its interior; he agreed Brazil needed a new city to develop the interior of the country, but he thought such city should not necessarily be a capital, much less a monumental capital—Chicago and Los Angeles were examples of big, industrial cities that were successful development hubs without being a capital (1979: 183-84). He introduced examples from Brazil to revert the official narrative of health attached to Brasilia: for Zevi, São Paolo and Belo Horizonte were cases of cities created “per impulso sano, non meramente politico” (1979: 183-84).
was unsuitable to continue being a seat of government because of that, and Brasilia, created by
President Kubitschek—who was a doctor—was a transplant of government to a healthier place
for a healthier country.

Zevi reverted this metaphor. He considered there was nothing healthy in separating the
seat of government from the rest of the population, which was mostly concentrated in cities by
the coastline. Democracy could not be based on separation, enclosure and monumentality.
That is why Brasilia was born sick.

Over the years and particularly after the military coup, Zevi continuously went back to
the comparison with Fascist Europe, and stated that Brasilia was an EUR—Exposition
Universale di Roma, Mussolini’s expansion project for Rome—on steroids: “Non risulterà una
specie di ipertrofico EUR, qualcosa di fieristico e scenografico, con i più la disgrazia di essere
permanente” [It might result in a sort of hypertrophic EUR, something exhibitionist and
scenographic, with the disgrace of being permanent] (1979: 184). Brasilia’s ministry buildings
were “involucri kafkiani” [Kafkaesque shells] (1979: 187), the plan was closed, a cross with a
sealed center in the form of “una piazza monumentale nel senso più anachronistico della parola”
[a monumental square in the most anachronistic sense of the word] (1979: 185).

Just as its inauguration sought to culminate 450 years of colonization by completing the
Brazilian march towards the West, Mussolini’s EUR was built to celebrate the twentieth

\[174\] The construction of the capital city redefined the national discourse on land and territory. Sophia Beal has
shown how before Brasilia, Brazil’s nationalism celebrated the beauty of the coastline and the jungle. The new
capital challenged this by re-writing the national identity on the previously disregarded red sand of the central
plateau (Beal 235).

\[175\] Just as Malraux saw in Brasilia an opportunity of promotion of French spiritual neocolonialism, Clelia
Pozzi has demonstrated that Italian critics produced a narrative of the ‘Italianization’ of the Latin American
architecture, due in part to the great number of Italian architects who emigrated to Latin America.
anniversary of the March on Rome. Just as Brasilia was often thought as the modern capital of the entire Latin America, EUR was the Fascist version of the capital of Europe, with an emphasis on the “romanità” [Roman-ness] and “mediterraneità” [Mediterranean-ness] of the European civilization. Moreover, EUR and Brasilia were both city-monuments built as poles of development. Both shared the Fascist ideals of symmetry, closeness, theatricality and gigantism. Despite its democratic and developmentalist purpose, Zevi argued Brasilia represented the return of the sense of monumentality that should have been forbidden after Auschwitz.

2.4. Mário Pedrosa: the Monument as a Work in Progress

Despite this consistent criticism, Zevi found Brasilia recoverable and proposed some partial solutions.177 First of all, Brasilia should liberate itself from the rigidity of its closed plan, and allow for constructions beyond the cross-shaped Plano Piloto: “o Brasilia é uma cite destinata ad essere abandonata (il che é improbabile, malgrado I numerosi precedenti), oppure, se sarà vitale, romperà lo schema statico, simmetrico, aprioristico” [Brasilia is either a city condemned to be abandoned (which is improbable, despite the precedents), or, if it survives, it will break with its static, symmetric, aprioristic outline] (1979: 198). Against monumentality, Zevi suggested a

176 Other authors and cultural artifacts have also noted the idea of Brasilia as modern capital of Latin America. For example, the 1961 Mexican film *Rumbo a Brasilia*, directed by Mauricio de la Serna, shows a group of Latin Americans migrating to Brasilia, presented as a promise land of modernity for the entire continent. The main characters are from Mexico and Brazil, fell in love in the trip, and stay together once in the capital.

177 He refused the proposal of the “neurotic” American critics, which was “reazionaria, evade il problema e la responsabilità dell’urbanistica moderna” [reactionary, it evades the problems and responsibilities of modern planning] (1979: 186-187). For Zevi, the Americans thought Cidade Livre’s “non-piano episodico, dimesso, caotico e sporco” [non-episodic plan, resigned, chaotic, and dirty] was the real Brasilia, and its urban dynamics should be applied to Brasilia.
“riscato humano” [a human rescue] (1979: 198) by making Praça dos Três Poderes [Three Powers Plaza] more flexible, and helping to create better conditions for communities in the superquadras. Also, while monumentality should be avoided, monuments were still possible, on the condition that they were a constant “work in progress”—the modern language of architecture (and so of monuments) should celebrate the unfinished (1978: 65).

The next intellectual contribution analyzed, those made by Brazilian art critic Mário Pedrosa, eventually arrived to similar conclusions than Zevi—Brasilia should always be a work in progress—, but had followed a completely different path. Pedrosa was one of the organizers of the 1959 Congresso Internacional Extraordinário de Críticos de Arte. He was one of the most important art critics of Brazil in the twentieth century, and had been a fervent supporter of Brasilia since its construction. That is why he found Zevi’s criticism particularly unfair and hurtful. Pedrosa called Zevi an “enfant terrible” (2015: 367), with a “petulant (and somewhat plebeian)” (2015: 370) point of view. For him, Zevi’s position was paternalistic and based on a European sense of superiority.

Pedrosa put together his own narrative of Brasilia’s subsoil this time to join the official discourse and those who saw the city as a hopeful struggle for survival. He claimed the city’s main challenge would be its lack of roots:

Porque é ali, naquelas células vivas [superquadras], que se terá de travar a verdadeira batalha de Brasília pela vida, pelo homem, pela comunidade, para que Brasília não fique como um exemplo de construção artificial que nunca pôde criar raízes. (Lobo 100).

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178 Brasilia’s main square with the three palaces of the three governmental powers: the executive (Palácio do Planalto), the legislative (National Congress) and the judiciary (Supreme Court Justice).

179 Pedrosa thought that Zevi—and other European critics—could not understand that Brazilians were essentially modern because they did not have the heavy load of history Europeans had to carry (Ferreira 19).
Because it is there, in those living cells (residential blocks), where Brasilia’s true battle for life, for men, for community, will take place, so Brasilia will not be an example of artificial construction unable to grow roots.]

He was addressing Brasilia as a monument to be inhabited, and adhering to the idea of the new capital as an act of colonization of the interior of the country, which was still empty, uncultivated, with no past, no history or memory, no precedents, rootless, but available for occupation.

Another guest to the 1959 conference collaborated in this discussion by explaining how his country was carrying out this process of self-imperialism and lack of roots. The question was about what should be given priority in a process of internal colonization: the settlement of people or the construction of monuments. (Another version of this discussion has been addressed in chapter II.3.1. Against Stone, specifically on Antonio Zozaya). Such guest was Israeli art critic and curator Haim Gamzu. For him, no monument should be built until the people were settled and had decent life conditions. Correlating with his own experience in Israel, Gamzu predicted that Brasilia would only succeed if it was able to monumentalize neither the President’s will nor the history of Brazilian colonization, but the life and spirit of its pioneer residents. He warned that in the current situation:

these people [the pioneer residents] will undoubtedly consider themselves not as men with a national mission to carry out, but as exiles who impatiently await retirement in order to return to their respective cities, which are already ‘old’ enough to be able to offer them the comforts they no longer have (quoted by Pedrosa 2015: 371).

Brasilia should be a monument to the modern settler. Gamzu’s prediction became true for the first bureaucrats who moved to the new capital after inauguration — they suffered deep nostalgia.
of their lives in the coastline, and many returned. He had given some recommendations to avoid this:

if the administration keeps in mind the unshakable principle that a city is made up not only of buildings but of men, of human beings, more complex than administrative organisms; if the builders of Brasilia engage themselves in shaping their city in this way, always bearing in mind the profoundly human element of the city in general and, most particularly, of the modern city, then Brasilia can become a promise of the future in which human beings can be proud of the work of their predecessors. (Pedrosa 2015: 371)

At that time, Israel was doing what Gamzu said — colonization started by sending the people, then letting them build the city they would populate, and eventually celebrating with monuments their colonial feat. But Brasilia had a different model: first the buildings, then the people, with the addition that these buildings were monumental from the very beginning, and the people who built were not the same that the people who were invited to live there.

Pedrosa did not address this criticism in the 1959 conference, but the echo of it seemed to resonate in him during the upcoming years, when he developed his ideas of what monumental Brasilia should be. Pedrosa had been a prominent Trotskyist his entire adult life and the understanding of monuments he ended up proposing was inflected by Trotskyism. In the 1967 article “Arte e burocracia” (1975: 103-107) he remembered what Zevi’s “voz desabusada” [brash voice] (106) predicted about Brasilia’s future: Lúcio Costa’s plan would not be respected.

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180 In the mid 1960s, after the military coup, his critical interest moved from the defense of concrete art and modern architecture toward tracing the relations between AfroBrazilian, Brazilian indigenous, and contemporary art. He was always interested in abstraction as a way of searching for a universal art. (Ferreira 15-18).

181 He had joined the Trotskyist movement in the late 1920s, and was very active in the following decade, particularly from exile during the Vargas regime. Under the pseudonym Lebrun, he attended the IV International in 1938 as the only representative of Latin America, in a moment when Latin America was growing in importance in the Trotskyist movement due to its favorable position during the war and the fact that Trotsky was living in Mexico (Coggiola 401).
Instead of conceding, Pedrosa doubled the bet in his understanding of Brasilia as a work of art that should be preserved.  

The article was about what happens when bureaucracy manages the art scene of a country. The first part was devoted to account for all the senseless decisions made recently by bureaucrats of the Brazilian military regime regarding the arts. He criticized how Niemeyer’s Itamaraty Palace in Brasilia was being furnished and decorated by diplomat Wladimir Murtinho. According to Pedrosa, Murtinho was mixing great works of art with very poor pieces, without critical criteria and contempt for the public opinion. This was an example of what Pedrosa considered the dangers of a “burocracia soberana” [sovereign bureaucracy] (1975: 106). No one really knew what was happening in Brasilia, the bureaucrats of the military regime had

\[\text{\footnotesize 182}\]

Also in 1967, he wrote another articles where the role of the art critic was addressed and the role of monumentality can be implied. It was titled “Do porco empalhado ou os critérios da crítica” [On the Stuffed Pig, or the Criteria for Criticism] (published in Correio da manhã, Rio de Janeiro, 11 February 1968, n.pag. In: Mário Pedrosa: Primary Documents. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2015: 218-222). He discussed the succession of self-proclaimed art movements in what he called the “law of acceleration of isms” (2015: 219). That was where critics should intervene:

The critic role is to define this process –or the process of a single albeit permanent revolution- in its totality. Through the study and recognition of this process, the critic is the only one who knows that everything is just a revolution. Indeed, permanent revolution is the only concept that encompasses our age more generally and profoundly. (2015: 219).

The critic was the one who deciphered any piece of art as part of a broader and higher purpose, that of a permanent revolution. The critic himself should also be in permanent revolution, and that is how critics of critics, such as Glória Ferreira, have understood the role of Pedrosa in the history of Brazilian art (Pedrosa 2015: 14). This characterization of the art critic would influence his idea of the city-monument as in permanent revolution.

\[\text{\footnotesize 183}\]

Pedrosa’s desdain for burocracy had to do not only with his anti-dictatorship position, but with his trips to Moscow, where he had unpleasant experiences dealing with government officials (see Pedrosa, Mário. “Vicissitudes do Artista Soviético” (1966)).

\[\text{\footnotesize 184}\]

He first criticized the existence of two Salões Nacionais de Arte —an academicist and a modern one— where very often the same artist was prized in the two of them in consecutive years. Two different competitions did not make sense, but they were kept this way because of bureaucratic routines (1975: 105).
kidnapped the city: “Brasilia interim é no plano cultural uma clandestinidade” [Culturally, the entire Brasilia is a ‘clandestinely’] (1975: 106).

Despite the original impulse to build Brasilia was truly revolutionary, the military regime had betrayed such original impulse and kidnapped Brasilia to transform it into a bureaucratic city, what Zevi and Gamzu had warned against. Trotskyst Pedrosa stated that what Stalin had done with the Soviet Union, the military dictators were doing with Brasilia. But Pedrosa insisted in the preservation virtues of a closed plan, particularly during the military dictatorship:

Hoje, é o que se verifica, o plano fechado de Brasília não foi respeitado. E o crescimento da cidade, se fizer, abrirá brechas cada vez maiores naquele plano. Se não se der, porem, esse crescimento, a Capital vegetará como um aglomerado de arranjos e improvisações, ao gosto do burocratismo cívico-militar que a tem prisioneira e isolada no ecúmeno nacional. (1975: 106)

[This is what happens today, the closed plan of Brasilia was not respected. And the growth of the city, if ever takes place, will open ever-greater gaps in the plan. However, if this growth is not achieved, the Capital will vegetate as an agglomeration of arrangements and improvisations, to the liking of the civic-military bureaucracy that has it prisoner and isolated in the national ecumen (my translation)]

He was writing during the consolidation of Brasilia’s satellite cities. For Zevi, the closed plan was a symptom of authoritarianism. Instead, Pedrosa used the idea of the closed plan to argue against what had been the military’s main argument to seize power through a coup: the restoration of order before the threat of potential Communist chaos. Order was the motto of the military, the promise they made to the Brazilian people. Instead, Pedrosa equated the military to anarchy and bureaucratic disarray. If they could not maintain order in Brasilia, where the closed plan made it easy, how could they bring order to the rest of the country?
Pedrosa seemed to make an implicit comparison between Stalinism-Brasilia under the military regime versus Trotskyism-what Brasilia should be. Trotsky’s theory of the permanent revolution was composed against Stalin’s project of socialism in just one country, the Soviet Union. For Trotsky, Stalin had betrayed the universal destiny of Communism by turning the Soviet Union into a huge fortress and giving up to the internationalist project. The theory of the permanent revolution recovered that original impulse of externalization of the Revolution, and considered its enterprise would not be completed until the entire world would be under the sign of Communism.

Likewise, the original drive to create Brasilia was truly revolutionary, an act of self-affirmation and modernity. Roads were built to communicate Brasilia and bring such revolutionary drive to the rest of the country. Pedrosa thought Brasilia could radiate its revolution even further, to the rest of the world. Similarly to what Malraux thought, Brasilia had the potential to restore the confidence in the power of art worldwide. Its final purpose was universal—Brasilia was built to be a sort of a contagious and permanent artistic revolution.

However, the 1964 military coup happened, and the revolutionary drive was hijacked. While the most innovative artists were working in the streets, squares and gardens of Brazil, Brasilia remained cloistered in the interior of the country, controlled by bureaucrats, and alienated from the most innovative Brazilian artists. The military had expelled the experimental artists of Brazil from Brasilia:

Brasília é mantida, entretanto, em escandaloso anacronismo, fora de seu hálito irreverente, e por isso mesmo entre os palácios e mármores, lagos e jardins, de Brasília, limpos ou despovoados, nada existe que respire o calor do drama cultural de hoje. Os artistas jovens (não apenas de idade) e revolucionários de nossos dias estão marginalizados, conservados bem a distância dela, em quanto burocratas, confinados no seu isolamento, tratam de montar ali uma arte oficial, a seu gosto e pequena dimensão,
fora do compasso da atualidade, indiferente ou estranho ao que se faz hoje no Brasil de mais arriscado, de mais vivo, e de mais… brasileiro. (Pedrosa 1975: 106-107)

[In the meantime, Brasilia is kept in scandalous anachronism, out of its irreverent breath, and therefore among the clean or uninhabited palaces and marbles, lakes and gardens of Brasilia, nothing exists that breaths the heat of today's cultural drama. Young (not only in age), revolutionary artists of our day are marginalized, kept well away from it, while bureaucrats, confined in their isolation, try to set up there an official art, to their liking and small world, disconnected from the current situation of the arts, indifferent or alien to the artistic projects of today in Brazil, which are the riskiest, the most alive, the most… Brazilian]

For Pedro’s, Brasilia had originally been an irreverent artistic construction. It was built against the odds: political opposition and foreign criticisms. But the military deactivated such irreverent character. In 1967, he claimed the capital city should liberate itself from the laziness and bad taste of bureaucrats, and become a permanent, communal work of art, by attracting the many dissenting artists who lived in other parts of Brazil because the capital was never offered to them.

This solution is similar to Renau’s use of the Fallas festival as model for modern monuments, as discussed in chapter II.3.2. In the case of Pedrosa’s Brasilia, destruction was not part of the ritual. Instead, he still believed in stone monuments, which should gather the most experimental artists of the country to create in a communal environment the most experimental monument of the times—a monument that should never be considered finished. Brasilia should work as a magnet for the boldest artists, who would peregrinate to the heart of the country to construct alongside other artists. Building an experimental monument together as an example of building an experimental society together, and pass on this experimental breath to the rest world.
Although they had disagreed fervently in the past, by the late 1960s Pedrosa and Zevi were arriving to similar conclusions: monuments should be a work in progress. As a monument in permanent revolution, the issue of inhabiting was clear for Pedrosa, who thought it was possible to live in a monument of this kind because it meant to live in a laboratory of innovation and creativity, with irreverent youth who created art to change the world.

3. The Erasure of Labor

Deep below the Earth’s surface lays the workers’ city

*Metropolis*

This history of the erasure of labor in Brasília started with another history of the subsoil, shared by another guest to the 1959 conference. The guest was Finnish-American architect Eero Saarinen, who shared the following impressions:

> a tarefa gigantesca que é fazer toda esta cidade, o que diz muito bem de todos aqueles que têm ajudado o Sr. Niemeyer. É um trabalho que se parece, digamos, como um iceberg, com tudo o que está por baixo dele —tudo aquilo que não se vê e que torna possível a cidade. (Lobo 42)

> [building all this city is a great task, which is to the credit of those helping Mr. Niemeyer. It is a work resembling, let’s say, an iceberg, because everything underneath, everything useable, is what makes this city possible]
The Scandinavian architect used this metaphor of the iceberg to give credit to those who do not normally receive it: the architect’s team and the construction workers. Saarinen showed a rare concern for the anonymous workers; rare in the 1959 conference, where this was the only remark heard about the workers, although the art critics were completely surrounded by them. Even before the inauguration, Saarinen was foreseeing what it would happen after the inauguration, the second repression of Brasilia: that of the history of its own construction. Candangos, as the construction workers were called, were progressively expelled from the city after the inauguration, because just like the bottom of an iceberg, they made the city possible but were not meant to be seen.

The repression of the history of labor had different forms, promoters and purposes, sometimes opposed, sometimes convergent. It had to do with two self-proclaimed revolutions: the bourgeois-developmentalist one carried out by Kubitschek, and the traditionalist counter-revolution pursued by the military.

On 23 February 1960, United States President Dwight Eisenhower visited Brazil. He did not like the idea of meeting Kubitschek in the construction site, but the Brazilian President insisted: “disse a Eisenhower que o recebia num ‘campo de batalha,’ que era Brasília, e que o meu governo vinha se batendo por uma política de desenvolvimento no hemisfério” [I told Eisenhower I was receiving him in a “battlefield,” which was Brasilia, and that my government was fighting for a developmentalist policy in the hemisphere] (Kubitschek 2006: 313). Kubitschek thought Brasilia as a trench, a war by other means, the battlefield for development.\textsuperscript{185}

\textsuperscript{185} Sometimes understood in religious terms: developmentalism was a crusade, as he said when referring to the construction of the Belém-Brasilia highway:
—a bourgeois revolution in the times of socialist revolutions that sought to dwindle the power of landed oligarchs, empower industrialists, incorporate workers while deactivating their subversive potential and keeping the country free from socialism.\textsuperscript{186} So he told Eisenhower.\textsuperscript{187}

Construction workers helped to activate such revolution, but were incorporated merely as efficient, industrial workers. Eventually, they were meant to be expelled of the city they built. The subsequent government of President Goulart, closer to socialist convictions, despised Brasília, and did not show a commitment to the demands of the candangos. That was the first erasure of labor.

Later on, the military regime was also interested in erasing the history of the construction, but for other reasons: in order to impose oblivion on democratic developmentalism and the bourgeois revolution, and pursue a traditionalist counter-revolution that eventually would assume an authoritarian developmentalism.\textsuperscript{188} They argued that industrialization and modernity could only be achieved by authoritarian means, and consequently needed to erase Kubitschek’s democratic experience of mass labor.

Homens de todas as classes apresentaram-se, alistando-se na cruzada. Operários e mateiros, medicos e engenheiros, motoristas e trabalhadores brasileiros, caçadores e técnicos agrícolas, britadores e serradores — enfim todas as categorias profissionais — congregaram-se para formar um verdadeiro exército de mão de obra, tendo por objetivo penetrar a floresta, rasgá-la de Norte a Sur, de forma que a estrada se fizesse. (117)

According to Weinstein, a main goal of Estado Novo was to achieve social peace (101). To Kubitschek, this goal continues as a myth of social collaboration.

Kubitschek thought that although the Communists were a minority in Latin America, anti-American feelings were prevalent. He urged Eisenhower to change his position towards the South, becoming less a police and more an ally that would promote development through credit, using developmentalism to shortcircuit any attempt of socialist revolution. That would be the pillar of what Kubitschek called Operaçao Pan-Americana (2006: 192-201).

Paradoxically, the candangos got some recognition during the military regimes, when the satellite cities consolidated.
All these erasures shed light on the fragility of the cartographic value of monuments. While this value relies on aesthetic forms to suggest and promote a desirable, potential future, there is no certainty that such equivocal reference would eventually materialized as expected. Such reference to the future can be reinterpreted, distorted, redirected. In the upcoming sections it will be analyzed how two key figures in the construction of Brasilia, President Kubitschek and Oscar Niemeyer, faced the failure of the cartographic monument as they had conceived it.

The erasure of labor was caused not only for political reasons, but also for aesthetic reasons. Mark Wigley has studied how modernist architecture is based on “a form of purification”, “an architectural hygiene” (3), a mysticism of pulchritude and tidiness, requiring buildings to be constantly as brand-new, and hiding everything that may challenge their appearance of cleanliness and newness. Labor and workers would have ruined this mysticism.189 Differently from the Cybele falla (see chapter II.3.2), in the case of Brasília the discourse of building the monument together was emphasized at first, but to be negated at last. The history of the construction was considered debris to be concealed, destroyed or forgotten; substituted by what Arturo Escobar (1995) and Ana Fernández-Cebrián have called fables of developmentalism: after inauguration, the history of the construction of Brasilia was often hidden behind a narrative that presented the city as if it had just spontaneously sprouted as a flower out of nothing in the middle of the central plateau. This fable was the materialization of the dialectics of concealment that takes place in all cartographic monuments; in this case, it worked as an attempt to hide not only the past of the country, but the history of the construction of the new, modern Brazil in order to sustain a discourse of efficiency and pulchritude.

189 In “Phantom. Mies as Rendered Society” (2013), architect Andrés Jaque has recently addressed this issue.
The scholarship on the social movement led by candangos to get the rights to stay and build their houses in the satellite cities of Brasília is very rich (see particularly Holston 1989: 197-318).\textsuperscript{190} Instead, this part of the chapter addresses the different and subtle cultural processes employed to oppose them and achieve their repression. It has four sections: first, Kubitschek’s 1975 memoir *Por que construo Brasilia* —rewriting of his 1962 *A marcha do amanhecer*—, where the President presented the construction site as a stage, and labor as a spectacle, both for a national and international audience, as a way of incorporating workers to his bourgeois revolution. The second part addresses the progressive expulsion of candangos after the inauguration coinciding with their fetichization and transformation into the most modern machines of the country—the first cars ever built in Brazil were called Candango DKW-Vemag. Third, a discussion of different proposals for monuments to the construction workers as monuments for oblivion, since they were proposed to substitute the workers’ political demands. Fourth and last, a rare painting by Niemeyer showing the columns of his Alvorada Palace in ruins is used to discuss the fragility of the cartographic monument, and indeed the failure of the cartographic value of Brasilia as understood by its architect.

### 3.1. Juscelino Kubitschek: the Spectacle of Labor

The presentation of the construction site of Brasília as a spectacle has an explicit example in the encounter of President Kubitschek with André Malraux in 1959. Kubitschek wrote about the conversation they had one night after dinner. From that account can be implied the President understood and used the construction site as a stage:

\[190\] For a broader approach to this issue encompassing all Brazil, see Holston 2008.
Percebi, em dado momento, que ele [Malraux] afastara de todos e se deixara ficar junto a uma das janelas do salão, contemplando o cenário de Brasília. (...) A cidade, apesar da grandiosidade das construções em andamento, continuava sendo, e tão soa meinte, um imenso e impressionante canteiro de obras. Surpreendi a emoção de que estava possuído. Depois de olhar demoradamente aquele cenário, ele, segurando-me o braço, disse-me quase com unção: ‘Como o senhor conseguiu construir tudo isso, Presidente, em pleno regime democrático? Obras como Brasília só são possíveis sob uma ditadura…” (2006: 242-243, my italics)\footnote{191}

[At one point, I realized that he (Malraux) had moved away from everyone and stayed by one of the windows of the room, contemplating the stage of Brasilia. (...) The city, despite the grandeur of the construction in progress, was still just a huge and impressive construction site. I found him thrilled. After looking at that stage for a long time, he took me by my arm and told me almost with unction: 'How did you manage to build all this, President, in a full democratic regime? Works like Brasilia are only possible under a dictatorship ... ’"]\footnote{192}

In Portuguese, the word cenário refers to a theatre set, a stage. Malraux was indeed staring at a scene in full movement even late after dinner, since Brasília was under construction around the clock. Although he did not address this in his official speech analyzed above, Malraux also was surprised a democratic regime could have built Brasília —Zevi’s concern. Kubitschek did not answer Malraux’s question explicitly in his memoirs, but it can be inferred he thought that Brasília was possible under a democratic regime because it embraced the aesthetics of labor of a socialist revolution (and making workers temporarily hopeful) to provide a development pole

\footnote{191}{Malraux was interested in the relationship between the production of culture and the production of infrastructure (Kubitschek 2006: 18). See Sopha Beal for further reading about literature and public works in twentieth century Brazil. Michael Rubenstein has addressed these issues in the case of Ireland. For the relationship between architecture and broader Brazilian culture, see Fernando Lara, Adrián Gorelik.}

\footnote{192}{During his presidency, Kubitschek had been very careful to take care of to the army’s demands. That was one of the keys that explain his ability to stay in power during all five years (Skidmore 1967: 171).}
and make industrialists happy) while postponing land reform (and keeping landowners happy).\textsuperscript{193}

Por que construí Brasília was published in 1975, during the military dictatorship (1964-1985), as his way to argue that developmentalism could also be carried out by a democratic regime. As Robert Alexander has affirmed, Brazilians were trying to find a way to return to a democratic system, and Kubitschek’s government in the late 1950s offered the closest and best example (Alexander 387).\textsuperscript{194} These memoirs can also be read as an example of how developmentalism—as the bourgeois revolution of the “underdeveloped” countries—and Modern Architecture and its mysticism of pulchritude required the celebration of labor to eventually erase it.

When Kubitschek published his memoirs, philosophers were also trying to grasp the way in which modernity was characterized by the destruction not only of the past and tradition, but also of modernity’s own path and traces. For example, in 1979 Giorgio Agamben published

\textsuperscript{193} Since the beginning of his political career, Kubitschek had a reputation of a committed builder. As mayor of Belo Horizonte (1940-1945), he pursued a comprehensive project of modernizing the city, which earned him the nickname “prefeito-furação” [mayor-hurricane] (Cohen 75). He also updated the transportation and power-generating infrastructure of his home state, while he was Governor of Minas Gerais, in 1951-1955 (Skidmore 1967: 165).


\textsuperscript{194} When the military took power in 1964, Kubitschek was preparing his candidacy to President of Brazil for the elections of 1965. He always saw himself as one of the main victims of the military regime: “‘3 de abril de 1964 – ‘Essa revolução foi feita contra João Goulart. Mas 72 horas depois ela se voltou contra mim!’ –costumava dizer JK a seu amigo Adolpho Bloch” [This revolution was made against João Goulart. But 72 hours later it turned against me! ’- JK used to say to his friend Adolpho Bloch] (Cony 107).

Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience,\textsuperscript{195} where he reflected on the linguistic nature of experience by tracing the etymology of in-fancy [with no language].\textsuperscript{196} Kubitschek had celebrated labor during the construction, and started the process of erasure after inauguration; however, by the mid 1970s he needed to recover such history again —Brasilia’s infancy— in order to claim his own legacy and argue for a democratic developmentalism.\textsuperscript{197}

For him, developmentalism was a spectacle to be performed for a national and international audience: a bacchanal of deep ditches and immense scaffolding, of moving land and digging lakes, of crossing jungles and creating industries, of mass migration and nation building; a state performance of activating all natural, industrial and human resources of the country, concentrating them in the same place, and transforming the interior into an engine of growth and development, while remaining a democratic country —a spectacle of “audácia, energia, confiança” (242, Kubitschek quoting Malraux) for Brazilians to see and believe, and for

\textsuperscript{195} First published in Italian as Infanzia e storia in 1979.
\textsuperscript{196} Skidmore defined Brasilia as Brazil’s coming on age (1967: 168).
\textsuperscript{197} The compatibility of developmentalism and democracy became a hot topic in the 1970s, under military rule. Brazilian elites were mostly skeptical about that possibility (Alexander 388-399).
\textsuperscript{198} Videssot (2009) has studied the portrayal of the image of Brasilia between 1956 and 1960 in popular magazines, professional journals and documentaries. During those years, the official rhetoric was one of emphasizing the epics of construction, and connecting it to the origins of the country by praising the bandeirante [rusher] attitude and the desbravador [pioneer] gesture. Videssot established some differences between publications: O Cruzeiro emphasized the construction of Brasilia as an ethical need to modernize the country, the connection with the Brazilian traditions despite its modernity, and the conquest of the interior. Manchete focused on the optimism, the vertigo of the new path to progress, the Plano Piloto and the vastness of Planalto. Finally, Brasilia, the Novacap journal supervised by Niemeyer, published all the presidential speeches and monthly reports on the different stages of the construction.

She also analyzed the documentaries directed by Jean Manzon and Sálvio Silva, and compared the architectural photography by Mário Fontenelle and Marcel Gautherot.

The Brazilian government collected positive opinions about Brasilia during the construction, from both visitors and international press. It later published them in four volumes as Brasilia e a opinião mundial. References to this collection also appears in João Almino’s Cidade Livre (2010), where the father of the protagonist is in charge of writing o livro de ouro de Brasília [the golden book of Brasilia].
foreigners to admire and respect. The construction of Brasilia was meant to change Brazilian’s opinions of themselves, and foreigners’ opinions of Brazil: building together a futurist monument would produce a futurist country: the Brazil of the future should look like the construction site of Brasilia: ordered, efficient, controlled.

The spectacle of construction had two main characteristics: 1. making geography profitable; 2. the candango as new the Brazilian man.

Making geography profitable

In his classic *Raizes do Brasil*, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda affirmed the Portuguese were never interested in settling in Brazil, but in becoming wealthy very quickly through adventure and rapid exploitation instead of hard work (Buarque 46). That was changing right at the time when Buarque published his book in 1936. Getúlio Vargas pursued the creation of a new Brazilian identity based on labor in a process known as *trabalhismo*. Kubitschek continued this purpose

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199 In 1959, Pedrosa agreed with this idea of the construction site as a spectacle. In “Lições do Congresso Internacional de Críticos”, he quoted one of the guests, Georg Schmidt, director of the Basel’s Kunstmuseum, who said that “the city’s presence has an impact on even the most wary [he had just mentioned Zevi]. To the qualified global elite, it is *a living and spectacular thing*” (Pedrosa 1975: 364, italics are mine).

200 According to Ângela de Castro Gomes, the Brazilian Republic never tried to establish a communication with the working class until the 1930s. The novelty of the Vargas’ Estado Novo lies in the creation of a new form of state based on a symbiotic relationship between the President and the people (de Castro Gomes 229-256). In a *trabalhista* state, the people worked and the President granted rights and other gifts. The labor legislation did not come as a result of worker’s mobilization, but as a President’s endowment to the workers. The President saved the workers from the violence and social unrest by anticipating their demands. He also established direct communication to the people through the new media such as radio shows, and a calendar of national holidays. The most famous radio show was “Hora do Brasil,” broadcasted by all radio stations from 1931 to 1945. Ministry of Labor Alexandre Marcondes Filho had a weekly section called ‘Falando aos trabalhadores brasileiros’ [Speaking to the Brazilian Workers], with pedagogic explanations of their duties and rights. This was the first time in Brazilian history that the people, mostly illiterate, was addressed this way by a member of the cabinet (De Castro Gomes 230). In some cities of the interior of the country, this radio show was broadcasted through speakers placed in a central square.

Regarding the calendar of national holidays, the most prominent were Vargas’ birthday (April 19), the anniversary of the Estado Novo (November 10), and the International Workers Day (May 1).
and Brasilia was conceived as the culmination of such new identity, although with some differences.  

The premise of Kubitschek’s narrative was that the central plateau was an empty space. Brasilia would trigger “uma conquista mais larga, mais profunda, porque tinha por objetivo a posse da terra e a transformação de bens geográficos em bens econômicos” (2006: 83). Kubitschek wanted to make geography profitable, and in order to achieve that he needed everyone in the country to get to work. A city-monument was built to eradicate the empty, the static and the mute:

Todo aquele tumulto, que parecia desordenado, mas era harmonioso, falava de um Brasil diferente. De um novo país que acordava de um sono centenário e sacudia os músculos, preparando-se para seu grande futuro. (...) O gigante encontrara-se, por fim, a si mesmo, e montava sua tenda no Planalto, de onde comandaria os movimentos do seu imenso corpo. Luzes, ruído, atividade —eis as vozes que anunciavam uma nova era na existência do Brasil. (Kubitschek 2006: 113)

[All that tumult seemed disordered, but was harmonious, and spoke of a different Brazil. A new country awaking from a hundred-year-old sleep and getting her muscles moving, preparing for her great future. (...) The giant had finally found herself, and set up her tent

201 Kubitschek’s account followed a chronological order, which can be divided into three phases: 1. moving land (1956-1957); 2. building “uma metropole em estrutura” [th estructure of a metropolis] (1958-1959); 3. the “rush inauguratório” (1959-1960). The experience of growing up in and being governor of Minas Gerais, a landlocked state, helped Kubitschek to think the country from its interior (Skidmore 1967: 164).

202 Saramago has studied the construction of the notion o sertão since the European conquests of South America, Africa and Asia in the sixteenth century. Sertão derives from the term dessertão, “a large desert or a scarcely inhabited and mapped area.” To Saramago, o sertão was “a void for the European view in the early modern period” (255). In fact, they were not empty spaces, but their content was unknown to them. Sertão is a moving category that implies depth, remoteness, inaccessibility, secrecy: um outro geográfico (cf. Antonio Carlos Robert Moraes), “um vazio povoado de imagens construídas a partir dos elementos existentes no seu imaginario” (Mader 19, quoted by Saramago 258).
on the plateau, from which she would command the movements of her immense body. Lights, noise, activity — these are the voices heralding a new era in Brazil's existence.

Brasilia was an awakening giant\textsuperscript{203} who brought the spectacle of “luzes, ruído, atividade.” Brazilian theoreticians of developmentalism have extensively reflected on these attributes regarding the country’s transformation. For example, in 1960, Álvaro Vieira Pinto described the “revolução nacional do desenvolvimento” [national developmentalist revolution] as the advent of light to the Brazilian consciousness: the development of a “consciência lúcida” (Vieira Pinto 92).\textsuperscript{204}

Light was particularly important for Kubitschek. In his more than two hundred trips to Brasilia during the construction, he often saw the site at night, the only time he could travel from Rio after working hours. At night, Brasilia was a spectacle of lights, with thousands of workers working efficiently 24/7. The construction site was a spectacle measured in kilowatts:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{203} This metaphor of the giant went further. For example, President of Nocacap Bernardo Sayão considered the new highway Belém-Brasília as the backbone of the new country, from where more highways should be constructed, as if they were the ribs of the giant (Kubitschek 2006: 126).

\textsuperscript{204} According to Vieira Pinto, the national consciousness was naïve during colonial times; it became self-aware later, leading to developmentalism (Vieira Pinto 92).

Most intellectuals of developmentalism, such as Vieira Pinto, developed their research in Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (ISEB), created by President Café Filho in 1955 and dissolved by the military regime in 1964.
[The amount available in 1955 [3,148,500 kW] was still a weak starting point, compared to the requirements of a country willing to break down the barriers of underdevelopment to achieve her continental dimension (...) As early as 1958, her generation capacity raised up to 3,993,100 kW, and in 1960 it had reached 4,800,082 kW. As a direct consequence of this effort, generation capacity in 1961 should have grown up to 5,205,152 kW and in 1963 up to 6,355,068 kW]

The cartographic monument of developmentalism was all about energy, power, electricity; the city-monument should resurrect a dormant body and making it walk.²⁰⁵

The construction’s “break-neck pace” (Skidmore 1967: 167) was what Kubitschek repeatedly called “o ritmo de Brasilia” [Brasilia’s pace] (Kubitschek 2006: 335). Brasilia’s pace was a record pace, a pace of permanent competition (Kubitschek 2006: 368), producing a feeling of vertigo (2006: 161). As a developmentalist city-monument, Brasilia had to accelerate time and history, building a bridge to the future and crossing it. Kubitschek promised to advance 50 years in 5, and the construction of Brasilia was the catalyst to achieve this purpose. As a cartographic monument, Brasilia had to awaken in Brazilians the desire of wanting to cross such bridge.

O candango as the new Brazilian man

Beyond lights, noise and activity,²⁰⁶ the spectacle of the construction site had human bodies at the forefront: they were construction workers, candangos. With the exception of Saarinen and to

²⁰⁵ Kubitschek was indeed trained as a doctor and practiced as an urologist for a number of years. The metaphor of health and medicine was often used to explain Brasilia. The official narrative blamed Rio as a sinful, sclerotic, sick city, unsuitable for the nation’s government. In the 1959 Conference of Critics, architect Richard Neutra referred to Kubitschek as a doctor and Brasilia as a surgical intervention in the nation’s body; by separating government from the decadence of Rio, Brazil would get healthier and ready to enter modernity. Zevi disagreed. To him, there was nothing healthy in separating government from the rest of the country and building a city merely for bureaucrats.
some extend Zevi, few critics of the 1959 were concerned with what would happen with them. Kubitschek repeatedly called them a harmonious turmoil (2006: 113). In *Por que construi Brasilia*, they were portrayed as a human mass who work.

He said that Brasilia was “a maior concentração obrera do mundo em 1960” [the biggest concentration of workers of the world in 1960] (2006: 368), in a moment immediately after the success of Fidel Castro in Cuba, when a concentration of workers could easily mean a revolution. But Brasilia was a mobilization that sought to restrain a socialist revolution.

Kubitschek enjoyed the view of Brasília from up in the helicopter, where he repeatedly said the construction site looked like “*um formigueiro humano*” [a human anthill] (2006: 82). This is a colloquial expression in Portuguese referring to a big conglomeration of people, for example during carnival or in the beach. But the construction site of Brasilia was a different kind of *formigueiro humano* than carnival or Copacabana beach in Rio. In fact, Brasilia was created to

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206 The static was indeed oppressive. In one of Kubitschek’s trip flying over the Amazon, he could see down the jungle looking as static as the sky above. This apparent motionlessness made him anxious. Brazil should not be as immutable as the sky. From the helicopter, he confirmed his diagnosis of the country — the problem of Brazil was the ancestral paralysis:

O avião parecia estar parado, dada a uniformidade do grandioso cenário que o cercava. Em cima, era o céu — este céu brasileiro, imenso, transparente, luminoso—, que dava a impressão de uma descomunal bola de vidro. Embaixo, o ceano da floresta tropical — cerrada, densa, ameaçadora. Aquela floresta não constituía um adorno, uma franja de natureza, para emprestar maior definição ao cenário. Era uma pressença opressora, que se estendia por três quartos de território do país. Vista do alto, infundia medo e causava apreensão. (Kubitschek 2006: 83)

[It seemed the plane was not moving, given the uniformity of the grandiose scenery surrounding it. Above, was the sky — this Brazilian sky, immense, transparent, luminous— that gave the impression of a huge glass ball. Down below, the rainforest ceilings — closed, dense, menacing. The forest was not an adornment, a fringe of nature. It was an oppressive pressure that stretched across three quarters of the country's territory. Seen from above, it infused fear and caused apprehension]

He sought to turn that “grandioso cenário” of lethargy into a vibrant stage full of movement.

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Kubitschek’s metaphor emphasized the agglomeration of people, the nature of the ants as hard-working, devoted insects, and the animalization of candangos, to restrict their political awareness. Anthills are architectural artifacts made by one of the most complex social structures in the animal kingdom. They are the quintessential examples of what animals can achieve in terms of social complexity. Just as an anthill, the construction site of Brasilia was a colossal hole in the center of Brazil: a huge training facility for potential industrial workers.

Kubitschek said his project was to relentlessly challenge national taboos and premises. Such taboo was labor. The anthill referred to a new kind of society more complex and unified through labor and state mandate, whose members were redeemed through work. The anthill also meant family cooperation, following the trabalhista idea of Brazil as a family with the President as father —Vargas called himself o pai dos povres [the father of the poor], while Kubitschek preferred to be considered o pai dos candangos [the father of the candangos], to emphasize the idea of the new Brazil where President and people work altogether towards the same ends.

Labor was the great taboo Kubitschek fought. “Foi um luta titânica contra tabus —o tabu da incapacidade realizadora do brasileiro, o tabu da impossibilidade de se realizar uma grande indústria, o tabu da inexeqüibilidade de qualquer plano do integraçao nacional, o tabu da irrecuperação das zonas flageladas do Nordeste” (Kubitschek 2006: 433-434).

Kubitschek said he liked to be close to the workers and motivate them. In this way, he acted as a pre-industrial master of a craftsmanship, challenging modern separation between workers and employers. This is one of the characteristics of what Buarque de Holanda famously called “o homem cordial” to explain how Brazilians approach public relations using intimate manners. But Kubitschek’s position was very ambiguous in this regard. He was simultaneously close and far.

Rubem Braga has described Kubitschek’s passion for aeroplanes: “esse presidente volante que sorri cada dia em um municipio, dá abraços, come seu frango ao molho pardo e angu, inaugura um troço qualquer, diz coisas otimistas. (...) Por mim, eu prefiro um presidente voando a dois na mão. Voando, ele é um anjo federal, que não faz mal a ninguem (...) Voai, presidente, voai!” [this flying president who smiles every day in a municipality, gives hugs, eats his chicken in the brown sauce and angu, inaugurates whatever, says optimistic things. (...) For me, I
The construction of the city-monument was characterized as an act of self-mutilation, where the price or remaining independent from foreign influence would be the sacrifice of national workers.\textsuperscript{210}

Tratava-se de um desenvolvimento que tinha por alvo a prosperidade nacional. Pelo fato de ser nacionalista, não deveria endereçar-se contra ninguém. Só existiam dois meios de se realizar aquele desenvolvimento: bater de porta em porta, nas nações estrangeiras, para solicitar ajuda financeira; ou lutar com as nossas próprias forças, cortando na carne e exigindo sacrifícios do país. (Kubitschek 287)

[It was a development that aimed at national prosperity. Because it was nationalist, it should not be carried out against anyone in particular. There were only two ways of accomplishing this development: knocking from door to door in foreign nations to apply for financial aid; or fight with our own forces, cutting our own flesh and demanding sacrifices to the country.]

This way Kubitschek used patriotism to incorporate the workers to his bourgeois revolution. Developmentalism was an ideology of self-\textit{antropofagia} [self-cannibalism]. The cannibal was the iconic image coined by the 1930s modernist artists, particularly Oswald de Andrade, to signify how Brazil was creating a new culture by devouring and transforming foreign cultures. In order to see how \textit{trabalhismo} and modernism as national ideologies and aesthetics had changed since the 1930s to the late 1950s—as recalled by Kubitschek in the 1970s—, another mythical image can be evoked: the ouroboros.

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prefer one flying president flying than two presidents in the hands. Flying, he's a federal angel, who does no harm to anyone. ... Fly, president, fly! "] (Cohen 173). Indeed, Kubitschek enjoyed visiting the construction site from his helicopter. His favorite point of view was from above, he was “o homem que gostava de ver Brasil de cima” [The man who liked to see Brazil from above] (Cohen 161). Up there, his view was more detached, abstract and encompassing, a mix of what Martin Jay described as Cartesian perspectivalism, with a divine, paternalistic, mystical dimension.

\footnote{The President portrays himself as the first candango: “Constatava-se que o povo e o governo se uniam para uma tarefa de interesse nacional” (Kubitschek 103).}

\footnote{This was a rhetorical stance; Brasilia was actually built thanks to huge loans provided by American banks.}

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The ouroboros is the esoteric image of the dragon eating its own tail as a symbol of self-awareness. Instead of devouring whatever comes from outside, the ouroboros represents self-mutilation as constant renewal and growth. Kubitschek considered progress and development would only be possible through introspection and self-sacrifice; his model of modern Brazil was not the cannibal anymore, but the ouroboros.

Oswald de Andrade had said: “Só me interessa o que não é meu” [I am only interested in what is not mine] (1928: 3); instead, the developmentalist Brazilian of the 1950s would say “I am only interested in what is mine.” The cannibal was “preguiçoso no mapa mundi do Brasil” [lazy on the world map of Brazil] (1928: 3), while the ouroboros was conquering the map and making geography profitable. For the cannibal, Brazil moved following “uma rítmica religiosa” [one religious rhythm] (1928: 3); for the ouroboros, Brazil was heading the future at a record pace, “ao ritmo de Brasília” [at Brasilia’s pace]. The anthropophagous proclaimed “subsistência” [survival] (1928: 3); the ouroboros desired growth. Andrade finished his Manifesto Antropófago with a diagnosis: “A nossa independência ainda não foi proclamada” [our independence was never proclaimed] (1928: 7). For the ouroboros, such situation was not tenable anymore: independence should be now.211

The candango was such ouroboros. While the cannibal was characterized above all by prejudice [laziness], the candango was hard working, energetic, dynamic, industrious. He did not devour the other to acquire his attributes; instead, he sacrificed his own flesh to overcome underdevelopment. For Kubitschek, the candango’s ultimate goal was to eliminate the lazy

211 According to Marleine Cohen, Brasilia was made to Kubitschek’s image and likeness. He was the Ultimate ouroboros, “o arquiteto de si mesmo” [the architect of himself] (Cohen 140).
cannibal, but without the dangers of mass politics and radicalization. Indeed, what Kubitschek really meant by self-sacrifice was this exhibitionism of labor during the construction that would eventually be negated and concealed after the inauguration: they were building a city-monument and a modern Brazil they would not be allowed to inhabit.

As Carlos Guillermo Mota put it, developmentalist ideology from Vargas to Kubitschek was the form of pursuing and consolidating the bourgeois democracy in Brazil, against the landed traditional power (155-156). Consequently, the candango was the ideal worker for the bourgeois democracy. He should sacrifice his flesh, build the monument alongside other candangos, and leave.

3. 2. DKW-Vemag: Candangos Become Cars

On 21 April 1960, Brasilia was inaugurated.

A gradual process of dismantling the construction site started. The most important aspect of this repression was the expulsion of the construction workers from the new capital. It was a very ambivalent process, because it came along public homage of different kinds, such as a parade and laudatory speeches by Kubitschek.

One day after the inauguration, the Institutior Brasileiro de Opinião Pública e Estadística (IBOPE) published the following image in different newspapers:

\[\text{\footnotesize {\textsuperscript{212}} For Skidmore, this radicalization started at the end of Kubitschek presidency, particularly in the countryside (1967: 184), although the President always tried to restrain both radical left and right politics (1967: 171-172).}
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\[\text{\footnotesize {\textsuperscript{213}} About segregation in the construction site, cf. Reis Júnior} \]
Fig. 69. IBOPE’s advertisement in homage to the candangos. *Correio da Manhã*, 22 September 1960: 9.

It appeared with the following message:

Foi ai por volta de 56, em meados de Novembro, que ele chegou ao lugar onde máquinas iniciavam uma cidade. Sergipano, viera lá de longe, de Propiá, onde muito se falava numa tal de Brasília. Seu nome: Zeferino Bezerra da Silva. Sua bagagem era quase só a esperança. Três anos e que se passaram, e ante meus olhos admirados uma cidade tomou forma. Era toda uma bela Capital, que suas mãos de hábil pedreiro ajudaram a modelar, hoje parcela importante de sua nova vida. A todos os zeferinos bezerras da silva —sergipanos, cearenses, bahianos, mineiros, gaúchos— candangos cujo pioneirismo construiu Brasília, nosso louvor, nossa homenagem.
[It was around 1956, in mid-November, when
he arrived at the place where machines were starting to build a city.
From the state of Sergipe, had come from afar, from Propiá, where
people talked a lot about a certain Brasilia. His name: Zeferino Bezerra da Silva.
His baggage was only hope.
Three years passed by, and before my amazed eyes a city
took shape. It was a beautiful Capital, which his hands of skillful
mason helped to model, today an important part of his new life.
To all zeferinos bezerras da silva –from Sergipe, Ceará, Bahia,
Minas, Rio Grande do Sul - candangos whose pioneering spirit built Brasilia,
our praise, our homage]

Although published after the inauguration, this advertisement took the readers back to the
beginning of the construction to summarize the feat of the candangos. The text and the image
referred to November of 1956, when Zeferino Bezerra da Silva, a common name of a common
man, arrived to Brasilia. Construction work had just started, a few workers can be seen, a couple
of houses in the background. Trees had already been cut and the moving of land had begun.
Zeferino brought a light luggage, because he did not own much and did not need much. IBOPE
suggested that with only his hands and determination, Zeferino built an entire capital city in little
more than three years.

The advertisement hid the imminent process of expulsion. One of Brazil’s main problems
was the semi-nomadic nature of the numerous illiterate, insufficiently skilled, poor workers,
particularly in the Northeast, highly affected by the droughts, like the one of 1958, which
brought many of them to Brasília. But the plan of the city-monument never considered the builder could stay. It reinforced their semi-nomadic life conditions.

It is not clear who is talking in the vignette. Initially, the candango is referred in third person (foi aí, ele chegou, seu nomen, sua bagagem). However, a first person appears, singular and plural (meus olhos, nosso louvor, nossa homenagem). It seems to be IBOPE as a company the one who is narrating — maybe in the name of all Brazilians —, but the first person singular (meus olhos) is ambiguous: was IBOPE in the construction site seeing the city take shape? Or was it the candango who is briefly talking here, his voice unexpectedly inscribed?

If the former is true, the candango made an attempt to speak for himself after the inauguration but eventually failed: his first person, which refers to his own body (meus olhos) was quickly interrupted by the third person, he is objectified again, and went back to silence. The candango had a name but no face or identity other than that of an efficient, heroic but docile, quiet worker. This advertisement is both homage and an act of oblivion. It was both a celebration of his construction feat and a celebration of his departure, which should be quiet and ordered. Indeed, it was only because Zeferino was going to leave quietly and orderly than he could be celebrated.

* * * * *

This is at least what IBOPE and the government expected, but the reality was more complex, and candangos organized to create resistance movements and demand land rights (Holston 1989: New York Times journalist Tad Szulc Tao Dzu called them “refugees” (“Brazil’s Drought Spur Migration”. New York Times, April 20th, 1958: 116).
But while the government pursued a hard-power campaign of expelling workers and destroying their settlements, companies engaged in soft-power campaigns that asked for the fetichization of candangos in absentia. Thus, in the early 1960s one of the first cars ever created in Brazil were named Candango DKW-Vemag:

![Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

**Fig. 70.** Candango DKW-Vemag advertisement. *Correio da Manhã*, 22 September 22 1960: 9

The Candango DKW-VEMAG\(^{215}\) was the new name of the jape DKW, produced since 1958. It was an all-terrain vehicle, built by the Brazilian company VEMAG S.A. (*Veículos e Máquinas*

\(^{215}\) There were two models: 2 and 4, depending on how many wheel drives
Agrícolas [Agricultural Cars and Machinery]) as an imitation of the German Munga-4. The automotive industry in Brazil was created in 1956, and the Candango DKW Vemag was one of its first products. This image came with a text listing its attributes —*forte, moderno, útil* [strong, modern, useful]— which were also the attributes of the builders of Brasilia: “suas qualidades excepcionais bem representam o homem realizador do Brasil actual! Ele enfrenta os obstáculos e os vence com a coragem de quem conhece a própria força” [its exceptional qualities represent the man who builds Brazil today! He faces and overcomes obstacles with the courage of those who know their own strength]. These attributes were detached from the candangos, whose process of expulsion continued in Brasilia, and were applied to this pioneering example of the results of the industrial revolution in Brazil.

The Candango DKW-Vemag was another form of epitaph that celebrated the efficiency of the workers, but without the workers. The candangos went from being barefoot but (uncomfortably) visible to run on four all-terrain wheels but being (comfortably) invisible.

During the late 1960, other advertisements appeared:
[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

**Fig. 71.** Candango DKW-Vemag advertisement published on *O Cruzeiro*, 10 October 1960, n.p.
[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

**Fig. 72.** Candango DKW-Vemag advertisement published on *O Cruzeiro*, 22 October 1960, n.p.
In the first one, there is a description of the motor and a photograph of the vehicle in the lower side. In the second one, the Candango DKW-VEMAG is shown in use, driven by a man with at least two companions. This encompassed the mythologies of developmentalism. First, the car was a celebration of virility. Just as Brasilia was a “passo viril” [virile step forward] (Kubitschek 2006: 113), strength, modernity and usefulness were related to masculinity. Women had no place on board, not even as co-pilots. It was a rough car for rough grounds, those that had not been paved yet and remained semi-explored. The target consumers of this new car were rural landowners, that should be kept happy, even though the bourgeois revolution was carried out to great extend against them and their static way of life. Despite this, Kubitschek was always concerned with keeping them calm and avoid a traditionalist counter-revolution. This first advertisement spoke to them: the candango became a car, driven by the old, conservative landowners. Land reform was not only indefinitely postponed, but also the candango explicitly became a technological tool made in Brazil for the old, rural landed oligarchs.

216 “Se não há esquinas, onde ficam as prostitutas de pé fumando? Ficam sentadas no chão?” [If there are no corners, where do prostitutes stand to smoke? Sitting on the ground?] wondered Clarice Lispector in her short story “Brasilia” (598). The government dissuaded women to go to the construction site. Prostitution and the role of women who came to the construction site with their husbands or independently has been addressed by a number of academic and literary works in the last ten years. In 2010, Tânia Fontanele-Mourão and Mônica Ferreira Gaspar de Oliveira published Poetra e batom no planalto central: 50 mulheres na construção de Brasília, where they collected stories of women who participated in the construction. In 2013, Larissa Pires defender her dissertation on the role of women in the construction site, arguing that while some remained in their traditional roles, others took advantage of the distance from other cities to challenge gender roles and pursue their emancipation. Prostitution and the role of women in general is also one of the main topics of João Almino’s Cidade Livre (2010).

Other authors studied in this chapter addressed the issue of gender and sexual orientation in modern architecture. For example, Richard Neutra considered Brasilia the redemption of Sodom and Gomorrah (XX); in his 1959 article “O paradoxo concretista,” Mário Pedrosa compared modern architecture and functionalism to a monastery where monks were taught puritanism and the ornament was the worst of the sins; in 1973, Bruno Zevi equated homosexuality to Fascist architecture in Il linguaggio moderno dell’architecture, including a specific reference to South American dictatorships (17).
The second advertisement has a different slogan, but the same developmentalist mythology: the candango was an “encurtador de distâncias” [shortener of distances]. Just as the candangos had built Brasília and the roads that connected the capital to the rest of the country, the Candango DKW-Vemag made Brazil to seem smaller, better connected, no matter how harsh the ground conditions were. In this case, the car is not in wild territories, getting dirty with mud, but parked in a small, clean town. The owner seems to be the man holding the briefcase, dressed as a liberal professional, maybe a doctor, a businessman or a bureaucrat, getting used to the new life in the interior —Brasília was precisely built to attract the bourgeoisie to the backlands of the country.²¹⁷

There is a general sense of happiness in this campaign. Everyone smiles in both images, but one person, the man accommodating something in the car of the second image. He might be either a personal assistant of the car owner, or a store assistant—a subordinate. Socially, he was the closest to the original candango, the construction worker. These advertisements were celebrating that modernity had arrived without social tensions. Social structure remained the same. The lowest part of the social pyramid had made something unprecedented in Brazil: thousands of construction workers had built a new city-monument in a record time. But such a revolutionary accomplishment did not produce a social earthquake. Landowners, industrialists and bureaucrats were still happy: the first advertisement was a celebration of the traditional colonization of the interior, while the second celebrated the new colonization perpetrated by developmentalism. The candango was named and celebrated but did not appear in the

²¹⁷ This image emphasizes the wheels, succeeding in this difficult ground. This was a key contrast with the representation of the candango, particularly its most paradigmatic example, the nordestino: barefoot, with marred feet, often shoeless and nomadic.
advertisements. Instead, candangos were fetichized into modern technology as an attempt to restrain their political demands.

In this happy narrative, the construction workers were forced to leave the new capital, and their nickname became a fancy jeep for the most traditional social class of Brazil, the rural oligarchy, as well as the social classes of modernity, bureaucrats and industrialists. There is a slight resonance of slavery in these advertisements. The powerful social classes could now literally own a candango.\(^{218}\)

3.3. Os guerreiros, Werneck de Castro, and Manuel Mendes: A Monument for Oblivion

From the beginning of the expulsion of candangos from Brasília, several projects of monuments to commemorate them were proposed. Just as in the case of the advertisements, candangos could be celebrated with monuments precisely because they were leaving. These monuments were sort of gravestones, monuments in absentia. Since they were expelled, candangos became a haunting presence. Thus, these monuments sought to neutralize such pervading absence. The dialectics of concealment worked here by making candangos visible in stone as monuments, while celebrating their departure and desired invisibility in the city.

The most notorious monument to the candangos was Bruno Giorgi’s sculpture, which can still be seen today in Brasília’s Praça dos Três Poderes. It was initially called Os guerreiros [The Warriors]. As Luisa Videssot has studied, there are three different versions of the history of this

\(^{218}\) Videssot studied other automobile marketing campaigns appearing in Manchete magazine in 1959, whose slogan was “Seu carro ‘também é gente!’” [His/Her car is also people!] The campaign was made by car’s service points Atlantic (2009: 87).
monument: 1. it was originally created with no relation to Brasília; 2. it was created for Brasília to symbolize the warriors that would defend democracy in Praça dos Três Poderes; 3. it was created for Brasília as gravestone for two candangos who died buried in a avalanche of sand. 219

The statue was ready by 1957, when it was shown in the São Paulo Biennial, as can be seen in the pages of this magazine:

[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

Fig. 73. Bruno Giorgi’s Os guerreiros exhibited in 1957 São Paulo Biennial. O Cruzeiro, 16 November 1957: 84-85.

In these pages, they are introduced as “um pequeno exército” [a small army]. According to Videssot, the statue was built with no relation to Brasília. But after it was shown in the Biennial, Novacap, probably guided by Lúcio Costa, acquired the piece and took it to Brasília to

219 In 2009, fifty years after the events, it was inaugurated a monument to the candangos killed by the Guarda Especial de Brasília (GEB) in the camp of the construction company Pacheco Fernandes, in Vila Planalto. This killing was the result of repressing a revolt of construction workers, who protested against the quality of the food they were provided.
place it in Praça dos Três Poderes to represent the guardians of the democratic government. By leaving the exhibition halls, and moving to the public square, the statue became a monument. However, it got fully resignified. Soon, no one called it Os guerreiros anymore, but Os candangos. Videssot has compared Giorgi’s piece with Portinari’s 1944 Retirantes and the classical Greek sculpture of the tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton: the nomadic, poor people of the Northeast have gone from being a thread to democracy to incarnate the new man of modern Brazil, builder and guardian of the democratic institutions.

The history of this appropriation is not fully told —it is not clear whether it was the candangos who saw themselves represented by the monument and provoked its resignification, or it was the government who instead of placing the monument next to the entrance of the government palace, located it to the center of the square, shifting the symbolism of the figures from warriors to construction workers. What is clear is that the monument fit the official narrative of the candango as warriors-workers, who were the heroes of the developmentalist crusade, and should be commemorated, but in absentia —Giorgi’s Os candangos is a sort of stone ghost at the heart of Brasilia’s main square.

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Giorgi told that it was him and Niemeyer who decided place it further from the entrance to Palácio de Planalto, more towards the center of the square, as isolated figures in the void of the Praça dos Três Poderes. He also maintained the sculpture was conceived from the very beginning to celebrate the candangos, but the chronology seems to say otherwise.
In March 1960, a month before the inauguration, the famous writer and editor-in-chief of *Última hora* Moacir Werneck de Castro published a series of four articles under the title “Brasília, março de 1960 — A verdade nua e crua” [Brasilia, March 1960 — The Naked Truth], where he acknowledged that in the new city “o operário sem nome (…) sera o gran ausente” [the nameless worker (…) will be the great absence] (*Última Hora*, 10 March 1960: 3.). The article is entitled “Operário desconhecido deve ganhar monumento” [Unknown worker deserves a monument]. Echoing the monuments to the unknown soldiers, this was the same official rhetoric than above: the army of construction workers commemorated in absentia.

However, Werneck de Castro went beyond this, and collaborated with a campaign that explicitly presented the candango as a misfit to the modern city-monument he built, and argued that candangos would *voluntarily* leave after the inauguration. In order to do this, he first defended the morals of the construction workers, which some had called into question because of their lifestyle of Far West. According to Werneck the Castro, candangos were responsible, discreet and puritan, focused on getting the city built on time, and not interested in the brothels surrounding the construction site. However, once they were defended, he could argue that their idiosyncrasy made them unsuitable for the new modern city they built.

For Werneck de Castro, most candangos were originally peasants and as soon as they saved some money, they wanted to return home. By arguing this, he could have revealed than the official narrative was merely misleading propaganda: the experience of building together would not transform candangos, neither ultimately all Brazilians. To avoid this contradiction, he found in the expulsion a purpose to implement the cartographic value of the city-monument: by leaving, candangos could channel the new spirit of Brasilia to the rest of the country. Their expulsion — addressed by Werneck de Castro as a voluntary departure — had a nationalistic
purpose: candangos could not stay in Brasilia but would take Brasilia with them back to their hometowns all around the country.  

Werneck de Castro understood the monument to the candango within the framework of the bourgeois revolution that sought to avoid a workers’ revolution. He advocated for a counter-revolutionary monument, meant to replace political demands. Candangos should leave, while a stone monument to them would remain in their place. They would not see that monument, since they would not inhabit the city anymore. Although it would represent the candangos, the monument would be for the visual consumption of the bureaucrats who would inhabit Brasilia, learn who built the city for them, and breathe a sigh of relief by realizing the social order was not disrupted.

* * * *

Chapter II ended with a reflection of utopian ways of understanding how the monuments of the future should be, as exposed by Spanish Republicans. Those reflections need to be understood in the extreme context of war, very suitable for experimental projects. Brasilia represented the other side of that reality: construction in times of fragile peace that sought to avoid war and socialist revolution. If Josep Renau saw in the Fallas festival a model for recovering the original sense of memory and community of the monument by building together to destroy together, such building together of Brasília was quickly repressed, and the builders got excluded from the monument as

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221 He compared the candangos to the main character of Vittorio de Sica’s movie Il tetto, released in Brazil around the time of the inauguration of Brasilia.
soon as the monument got inaugurated. Years later, one of his builder, candango Manuel Mendes, wrote a book against this exclusion.

Mendes’ *Meu testemunho de Brasilia* (1979) was an autobiographical narrative of his experience in Brasilia between 1957 and 1979, when he worked as a storage manager for the government’s IPASE (Instituto de Pensões e Assistência dos Servidores do Estado [Institute of Pensions and Assistance for State Servants]), a freelance journalist for the United Press International and Correio Braziliense, and, after the inauguration, in administrative positions in Pan American World Airways and Varig airlines.

Even though he was not a construction worker—that is why he could stay and make a living in Brasilia after inauguration—, he wrote from the perspective of the builders of the city. He said he wrote *Meu testemunho*... to tell the truth about the construction and used personal photographs to support his truth. To great extend, he wrote against Kubitschek’s *Por que construí Brasilia*, published only four years earlier, since his purpose was to recover the history of the communities of workers, who — unlike Kubitschek, despite what the President stated in the title of his book— were the true builders of the city. Mendes advocated for what can be understood as a restorative monument to the candangos, following what Svetlana Boym has called “restorative nostalgia” (41-48).

Boym distinguished two types of nostalgia —restorative and reflective: “Restorative nostalgia stresses ‘nostos’ and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in ‘algia,’ the longing itself, and delays the homecoming wistfully, ironically, desperately” (xviii). The former one seeks correction, cure, while the latter is absorbed in its own pain. Mendes experienced the former, but there are two characteristics of his
narrative that do not seem to fit with nostalgia: first, although he sometimes wrote nostalgically, his overall tone is more assertive than longing. Just like in a pamphlet, he presented himself as the owner of truth, in a context where truth had been kidnapped by a number of social and political entities. Second, nostalgia is the desire to return to the original home, but he was still living in Brasilia when he wrote *Meu testemunho*..., he was not one of those candangos expelled after the inauguration, but a privileged government worker, who could remain in the city and built a family life there.

Regarding the first characteristic, Boym addressed the relation between nostalgia and truth by arguing that restorative nostalgics do not necessarily identify themselves as nostalgics. Instead, “they believe that their project is about truth,” which is often infused of conspiracy theories (41). Indeed, Mendes created his truth against the overall silence and scorn Brazilians who participated in the construction had to endure once the capital was inaugurated. He was critical to Kubitschek for getting the credit as if he were the one and only author of the capital city. But he also considered the democratic governments after Kubitschek—with President Quadros (1961) and Goulart (1961-1964)—treated the builders of Brasilia with suspicion and disregard.

During those years, the labor movement had grown extensively in Brazil, and Mendes felt alienated from the new politically-conscious workers, very different, even opposed, to the late 1950s’ ideal of the good public servant he embraced: the modern, efficient, but docile worker, patronized by the government. When Mendes wrote *Meu testemunho*... in the late 1970s, he felt alone, the last survival of an extinguished kind, in possession of the truth of the construction, and called to share that truth with the world. He embraced the identity of the docile construction worker ideal for the bourgeois revolution and proposed a restorative monument that
should be built against different and opposed entities: Kubitschek’s appropriation of the history of construction, the labor movement that had transformed workers, and the military regime that was never able to commemorate the candangos.

Mendes wrote nostalgically of the 1957-1960 period, when the construction workers were obedient, bureaucracy was very limited, the city did not need police, and the President could walk freely around the construction site. The city was young and the future was still exciting. He wanted to restore the national climate of late 1950s developmentalism, at least symbolically. His ideology was that of the good public servant, based on order, stability and class structure.

His project of restoration had two parts: first, the search and preservation of the remains of the construction site; second, the ex-nihilo construction of a commemorative monument to the candangos.

First of all, he pursued an archaeological exploration, looking for traces of the construction site. It was the late 1970s, almost two decades after the inauguration. He could not find anything:

Antes de começar a escrever este livro, voltei a percorrer o acampamento da Novacap, o velho Hospital do IAPI e o Núcleo Bandeirante, procurando descobrir vestígios daqueles dias pioneiros. E senti um profundo abatimento, uma imensa tristeza, principalmente ao caminhar pela área onde outrora estavam os dois grandes barracões com a Direção da Novacap, o cérebro que fez construir Brasília. Os barracões já não existem e os velhos caminhos estão esburacados e cobertos de capim. E penso como teria sido bom para a cidade a sua história se aqueles barracões tivessem sido conservados, tal como estavam no seu período áureo, como um monumento. Que atração turística, que reliquia

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222 The construction site was controlled by Guarda Especial de Brasília (GEB), incorporated to the military police of the Federal District during the military dictatorship. Almino has portrayed it as very violent and repressive in *Cidade Livre*.

223 This paragraph also proposed a different chronology of the history of Brasília. While the construction was taken by the official narratives as preface, pre-history, infancy of the capital city, Mendes made it its golden age,
[Before beginning to write this book, I went back to the Novacap camp, the old IAPI Hospital and the Núcleo Bandeirante, trying to find vestiges of those pioneering days. And I felt a profound dejection, an immense sadness, especially as I walked through the area where once there were the two large barracks with the Direction of Novacap, the brain that built Brasilia. Those barracks no longer exist and the old roads are bumpy and covered with grass. I think how good it was for the city to tell its story if those barracks had been preserved as they were in their golden age, like a monument. What a tourist attraction, what a historical relic they would represent now! But we Brazilians are like this. It seems that we are in a great hurry to get to the future and soon forget or despise what happened]

The last lines summarized how developmentalism made use of the cartographic monument: as a shortcut to accelerate history and portray an image of modernity not yet corresponding to the political, and socio-economic conditions of the country.

The grass had grown and hid the former roads of the construction site. Since he could not find anything, writing his memoirs was his way of unearthing the repressed past.225 Meu

because it embraced the best values of the times in a complex way: both dreams and sacrifices, adventure and pain. All that came after the inauguration was decadence: it was the return of bureaucracy (about the utopia of a city-construction site without bureaucracy, see Costa Couto 102.) and crime. The politicians who came did not really want to move there, the feat of construction was silenced. What differences pre-history from history is the written narratives, so he was providing that narrative. He gave language to a story that lacked it.

He also stated that Americans are keener to the idea of preservation than Brazilians: “O americano conserva, até hoje, cidades inteiras construídas em sua marcha para o Oeste. Nós perdemos uma grande oportunidade. Daquela época salvou-se apenas o Catetinho” [The American has preserved to this day entire cities built on its march to the West. We missed a great opportunity. From that time only the Catetinho was saved ”] (Mendes 21).

However, in 1990 the Museu Vivo da Memória Candanga [Living Museum of Candango Memory ]was created restoring the only remains of the accommodations the candangos used during the construction, that of the original hospital of the construction site. It was protected by national laws in 1995.

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testemunho... is an archaeology search of the construction site, and ultimately an archaeology of self, since the experience of the construction was the backbone of Mendes’ identity.\textsuperscript{226} He was aware of the repression produced by the cartographic value of Brasilia, as he stated in the last sentence of this excerpt. That is why he proposed to preserve the remains of the construction site “como un monumento” [like a monument]. A full cartographic monument, a modernist monument, a developmentalist monument tends to erase the history of its own construction.

Mendes imagined the remains of the camps turned into a preserved monument that served as a tourist attraction. Following Riegl’s classification, Mendes was prioritizing the historical value of the camp, instead of the artistic value, generally used to privilege the Plano Piloto.\textsuperscript{227} For him, the preservation of the camps as monumentalized documents would be able to tell the truth about Brasilia and its construction, and would consequently become a pedagogical tool to teach visitors about the men who made possible the epic of developmentalism.

\textsuperscript{226} The experience of alienation produced by the fragmentation and mechanization of modern labor has been one of the main philosophical topics of continental philosophy since Locke (Morach Shiach 16-17). Thought in Marxian terms, Mendes still inhabited the product of his labor, Brasilia, and that is why the experience of alienation had no place in his testimony, even though he acknowledged the oblivion of the construction workers.

\textsuperscript{227} In A Retórica da Perda (1996), Santos Gonçalves made a comprehensive account of how the late 1970s was a crucial moment for the understanding of the national patrimony in Brazil, symbolized by the appointment of Aloísio Magalhães as director of Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (SPHAN) [Service of Historical and Artistic National Heritage] in 1979. He changed the name of the institution to SPHAN/Pro-Memória, and had a more anthropological approach to the notion of heritage. His main concern was to make sure that development and cultural diversity were compatible. He put Amerindian and African cultures at the center — the had been previously ignored —, and focused more on human practices than in stone monuments. He was more interested in the present than that past, in rituals and communities than in ruins, in popular culture than in high culture. When Mendes was writing his memoirs, even though he was probably unaware of this debate, protectionist intellectuals were slowly moving away from a definition of patrimony based on material, stone monuments, towards a protection of intangible cultural heritage. His proposal to protect the remains of the construction site would have fit this new sensitivity.

Magalhães was the same author who published with American artist Eugene Feldman the book-art Doorway to Brasilia in 1959, commented above.
For Boym, “restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time” (41). But Mendes did not only linger in the ruins of the construction site, since his ultimate purpose was to build a monument to candangos and pioneiros. He was asking for the institutionalization of nostalgia as a restorative treatment.

Boym cited Pierre Nora’s idea that official commemoration — ‘lieux de mémoire’ — appears when environments of memory are not possible anymore. Mendes suggested a similar case, since the people who could create such environments of memory had been expelled from the city years earlier and those who could stay were dying — the community of memory was disappearing. As a restorative nostalgic, Mendes believed he could reconstruct the construction site at least symbolically, and had great faith in the power of monuments to fill this void. However, his restorative monument was not only meant to commemorate the construction workers, but also to erase the history of their eventual politization.

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In this section, four different monument proposals had been analyzed: the resignification of a monument built for other purposes, the construction of a monument celebrating the supposed voluntary departure of candangos, the preservation and monumentalization of the remains of the construction site, and the construction of an ex-nihilo monument that celebrated the developmentalist construction workers but rejected its subsequent radicalization. Either from an agreeing or critical perspective, these cases addressed the fact that the modernist city-monument
was built under the conditions of erasing its own history of construction, and in all cases they proposed monuments for oblivion: a commemoration of the departure of candangos and a disregard of their political mobilization.

3.4. Oscar Niemeyer: The Ruins of the Cartographic Monument

The last section of this chapter addresses the two repressions carried out by the cartographic city-monument. In 1964, Brasilia’s architect Oscar Niemeyer made a painting that remained hidden from the public eye for decades. It represented the columns of the Alvorada Palace in ruins, suggesting a conversation with both: the ruin value Albert Speer implemented in his designs of Nazi architecture, and the collapse of the future Niemeyer had hoped Brasilia would produce by boosting its cartographic value. This is the painting:

[Image temporarily unavailable for copyright restrictions]

Fig. 74. Untitled. Oil on canvas. Oscar Niemeyer, 1964.
It was an intimate piece never meant to be exhibited. His family kept it private for decades until it was publicly shown in the 2010 exhibition *Brasilia - Síntese das Artes* for the fiftieth anniversary of the capital city. Niemeyer’s numerous sketches are well-known, but this particular painting is a rare one in his collection, because of the technique he used — oil on canvas — and the apocalyptic theme in an architect known for his vitalist sketches.

The composition is divided into two different depths. The background shows a section of five columns, linked and standing next to each other, ordered and in good shape, although some slightly superimposed on the next one. In the foreground, three columns appear separated at a certain distance, each of them showing a different perspective: the one on the right is frontally depicted, the one in the middle lays on the ground, and the one on the left shows its lateral side. Because of their number and disposition, none of these sections corresponds to a complete section of the Alvorada Palace. All columns float in a dark, ethereal atmosphere, surrounded by the eerie presence of phantasmagorical objects or beings.

For Denise Mattar, the curator of the exhibition, Niemeyer painted this disjointed arrangement of columns to conjure a powerful memory that had impressed him for years: André Malraux had connected Brasilia to the great empires of Antiquity, and arguably said the columns of the Alvorada Palace were the most interesting architectural features invented since the Greek columns. Malraux concluded with a Romantic evocation to a future failure: if Brasilia fails, the city would produce the most beautiful ruins of modernity. According to Mattar, five years after

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228 In Centro Cultural Banco de Brasil, Brasilia, between April 20th and June 27th, 2010.
229 The Alvorada Palace’s frontal side has sections of four (plus two halves) and two (plus two halves) columns, and the back side has ten columns.
Malraux’s visit, Niemeyer wanted to make this evocation visual by painting his own Alvorada Palace in ruins.

This chapter proposes an alternative interpretation. Instead, Niemeyer might have painted what Brasilia was for him in 1964: the ruins of the cartographic monument, that is, the ruins of what Brasilia promised but never got to produce. The memoirs he published three years before the painting seem to corroborate this. In Minha experiência em Brasília [My experience in Brasilia] (1961), he portrayed the construction site as a sort of utopia of a classless community of workers —for Niemeyer, Brasília would potentially produce this kind of society in the future after the inauguration. However, if the Alvorada Palace was announcing a new beginning for a new society (‘alvorada’ means dawn), by 1964 Niemeyer’s utopia had gotten an abrupt interruption: the military coup. This painting was an intimate portray of how he felt the failure of the cartographic value of his city-monument.

The representation of ruins by the regime’s official architect draws us back to the first part of this chapter, where the construction of Brasilia was discussed as the return of Fascist architecture, whose monumentality had been inspired by classical ruins. In the case of Brasilia, President Kubitschek had pushed Niemeyer to take the notion of monumentality to the extreme. When Niemeyer presented his first proposal for the Alvorada Palace, Kubitschek was disappointed. The building was not monumental enough. He asked Niemeyer to reconsider his project and come back with a more monumental design. Specifically, Kubitschek requested a monumental palace that would still be admirable one hundred years later (Kubitschek 2006: 68).

The President’s approach to monumentality seemed to echo Nazi architect Albert Speer’s theory of ruin value: in both cases, they were thinking of designs for the future, considering how
grandiose the building would still be centuries later. As discussed above, Zevi had pointed out to these similarities. However, in Brasilia, future ruins were never an explicit part of the equation.

The metaphor of the bridge appears in both Kubitschek’s and Speer’s notions of monumentality. Speer sought to build a “bridge of tradition” (56) in the same way that the ruins of old monuments serve as a bridge to communicate the glories of the past to the present. A crucial part of his design process was to imagine what kind of ruins his buildings would produce in the future. To show his proposals to Hitler, he sketched not only the buildings, but also the ruins they would produce, to suggest the majesty they would retain centuries later. In Hitler’s opinion, this ruin-based monumentality would also “restore to each individual German his self-respect,” (Speer 69) equating the Third Reich to the great empires of the past. 230 Speer was thinking in preservation beyond fall and destruction, preservation as ruins. 231

Despite the apparent similarities, Kubitschek understood monumentality in a different way. If Nazism wanted eternity, Brazilian developmentalism wanted above all acceleration —50 years in 5. The future should be now, because the rest of the powerful nations were already living in that future, while Brazil was fifty years behind. The city-monument would serve to synchronize Brazil to the rest of the world. The new capital should function as a bridge to the future, but a bridge to be crossed, stay there and never come back. Brasilia was a quintessential cartographic monument because it was not built to communicate with a civilization that did not

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230 Speer deprived his monumental buildings of any ornament or superficial features, vulnerable to the test of time, in order to make sure he controlled as much as possible the kind of ruin that building would become. His monuments were the epitome of gigantism in architecture, enhanced by the staging, also designed by him: generally composed of a “veritable orgy of [Nazi] flags” (substituting the German flag, because the former one was more dramatic) and golden ribbons (Speer 60).

231 Inspired by the Pergamon Altar, Speer drew a “romantic drawing” of his Zeppelinfeld stadium, and showed it to Hitler (56). It depicted the stadium one thousand years later, in ruins and covered with ivy. Many criticized this drawing because it foresaw a future when the Third Reich would have fallen.
exist yet, but to announce and become such civilization. Kubitschek wanted the Alvorada Palace to be admired one hundred years after its construction, not as a ruin, but still looking brand-new.

Despite Malraux’s suggestion that Brasilia would give the most beautiful ruins of modernity, the new capital city of Brazil made everything possible to avoid becoming ruins. British urban planner William Holford was one of the members of the jury who selected Lúcio Costa’s plan. He said: “nos todos, do júri, estávamos pensado em conservação em seu verdadeiro sentido histórico, ou qualquer coisa que constituísse um foco ou um centro estable, não só para a região mas para o país” [all of us, the jury, were thinking about conservation in its true historical sense, about anything that constitute a focus or a stable center, not only for the region but for the country (my italics)] (Lobo 36).

Preservation before construction: according to Holford, Costa’s plan was chosen among other reasons because it was the one that seemed to offer greater guarantees of preservation. Brasilia was built to remain pristine forever, to negate its potential failure and destruction. Becoming a ruin would mean that development, modernity and progress were merely a mirage in the middle of the desert plateau; would mean the failure of the bourgeois revolution, and that of the cartographic monument.

Holford had been part of the jury who picked Lúcio Costa’s plan. In this intervention, he addressed the survival of Brasilia, arguing that the election of Costa’s plan was due to “conservação em seu verdadeiro sentido histórico.” Thus, the concern of its preservation preceded its construction. In his regard, Brasilia belongs to the long history of classical utopias. As Lewis Mumford has shown, the concern for preservation is at the core of utopian thought since Platon (1922: 30-32), who made one of the three social classes of his Republic devoted exclusively to preservation: the warriors. In the case of Brasilia, the main thread against preservation was neither foreign armies, nor the climate —very mild in Goiás—, as much as isolation. Carioca bureaucrats would not resist Brasilia’s remoteness and distance from the sea. The new capital city might feel like an open-air confinement for them.
Indeed, Niemeyer’s ruins were essentially different from Speer’s. His painting was not a design to be approved by Kubitschek, but an a-posteriori creation he made for himself, a work of introspection. The years between the inauguration of Brasilia (1960) and the military coup (1964) were among the most agitated in Brazilian history: it had two brief, unstable democratic governments, a growing labor movement, and an eventual military coup. The painting was signed in 1964, but there is not specification of the month —the coup took place in April, but there is no certainty Niemeyer painted it after, as a reaction to the end of the democratic regime, or before the coup, as a meditation about this agitated political situation, since the democratic government of Goulart (1961-1964) was also reluctant to implement the project of Brasília.

In *Minha experiência em Brasilia*, Niemeyer portrayed Brasilia as a crusade to redeem the interior of the country and build a more egalitarian society. The life in the construction site was a sample of the new society to come:

Não se tratava apenas de uma oportunidade profissional, embora da maior importância, mas de um *movimento coletivo*, de um empreendimento extraordinário que suscitava e exigia devoção e entusiasmo, unindo os que dele participaram numa verdadeira cruzada […] E isso, precisamente, criou um espírito de luta, uma determinação que antes desconhecíamos, *estabelecendo entre chefes e subordinados, operários e engenheiros, um denominador comum que a todos nivelava, uma afinidade natural que as diferenças de classe, ainda existentes entre nós, tornam quase impossível de estabelecerse.* (1961: 10, my italics)

[It was not only a professional opportunity of great importance, but a *collective movement*, of an extraordinary undertaking demanding devotion and enthusiasm, uniting those who participated in a true crusade (…) And precisely this created a spirit of struggle, a determination that we previously did not know, *establishing a common denominator among all chiefs and subordinates, workers and engineers, a natural affinity provoking that the differences of class, still existing among us, became impossible to establish*]
A collective movement. Niemeyer said the President and him avoided political discussion because they had different ideas of what Brasilia should be. While Kubitschek pursued a sort of bourgeois revolution, Niemeyer, who had collaborated with him for decades, was affiliated to the Brazilian Communist Party since the 1940s and remained a prominent Communist his entire life, even becoming President of the Brazilian Communist Party in the 1990s. In 1963, he received the Lenin Peace Prize, granted by Soviet President Nikita Khrushchev.

Despite his political convictions, he was not naïve about Brasília. However, this commitment with socialism made him to experience the construction differently from Costa (who remained in Rio and barely visited the site) and Kubitschek. Niemeyer did indeed live in the construction site, in a shack alongside construction workers; his wage was like the one received by any other high-ranking government worker, without any extras. He presented this experience as an epiphany: the experience of patrons and construction workers living and working together should set an example that would ideally change Brazilian social structures. The cartographic value of Brasília should go beyond what its architectural forms inspired; the experience of building together should serve as a model for a new social paradigm.

233 This is how he explained this situation:

Raramente falei com Juscelino Kubitschek sobre política, receoso de importuná-lo com minhas opiniões de homem de esquerda, sentindo não encontrar nesse assunto a receptividade que sempre me dispensou. Limitava-me, como seu amigo, a aguardar, apreensivo, suas decisões na política externa, sabendo-o não raro mal assessorado e cercado de obstáculos de toda ordem” (Niemeyer 1961: 33-34).

[I rarely spoke to Juscelino Kubitschek about politics, afraid of annoying him with my opinions as a leftist man, feeling that I did not find in that subject the receptivity he always gave me in other matters. As his friend, he limited me to anxiously await his decisions in foreign policy, knowing that he was not well advised and surrounded by obstacles of all kinds]
There are not many contemporary testimonies to contrast Niemeyer’s idealistic account, since most candangos were illiterate and did not leave written accounts of their experience. An exception was José Marques da Silva’s *Diário de um candango*, published in 1963. Marques da Silva was not a construction worker, but a bar owner in one of the camps, who wrote his daily events and feelings in his ledger, alongside his bar’s accounts.\(^{234}\)

Although there were brief glimpses of optimism in Marques’ diary,\(^{235}\) the dominating feeling of his narrative was despair. Marques talked about losing his job at the Brasilia Palace Hotel, police brutality, becoming a *favelado* [in his context: slum dweller], leaks, lack of hygiene, his rat-infested bar, suicide attempts, deep melancholy, fires in the barracks, his inability to connect with women, death of prostitutes, unemployment, inflation, and tediousness.\(^{236}\)

Marques da Silva had a disaffected interpretation of Brasilia’s architecture. He understood the entire city as a house, whose layout was detrimental for candangos like him. He

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\(^{234}\) Niemeyer’s and Marques’ narratives were written contemporarily. Although Marques’ was published two years later, it was a diary he wrote between 1958 and 1961. Just as Niemeyer’s 1964 painting, Marques’ *Diário* was a private account, in principle meant to remain unpublished: “É um diario, são as ocorrências, uma pobre crónica de um pobre dono de um botequim” [It is a dairy, my occurrences, the poor chronicle of a poor bar owner] (15).

\(^{235}\) Such as when he wrote about exceptional peer collaboration in cases when he gave food for free to the tired workers who were starting to lose their jobs after the inauguration.

\(^{236}\) Niemeyer was aware of this situation, and addressed it in his writing. *Minha experiência em Brasilia* was not a monolithic praise to the experience of the construction. He also endured some of the difficulties the candangos faced. For example, he commented on the emotional anguish of moving to the desert plateau: “Primeiro nos veio a depressão da mudança, muitos de nós saídos de uma cidade adiantada para aquêle imenso sertão. Depois, a nostalgia da distância, a ausência da família e dos amigos, do ambiente em que vivíamos; daí decorrendo problemas, os mais íntimos e irreprimíveis” [First came the depression because of the moving, many of us came from an advanced city to that immense backlands. Then the nostalgia due to distance, absence of family and friends and the environment in which we used to live; hence the problems, the most intimate and irrepressible] (1961: 18). Nostalgia was indeed a very egalitarian feeling, but the contrast between Mendes and Niemeyer makes clear that the living conditions were definitely different for the architect and the candangos, despite Niemeyer thought that living in a shack was enough to join the candangos as a community in a egalitarian manner.
used to live in Vila Planalto, one of the construction camps, located between the Alvorada and the Planalto Palace, that is, between the presidential and governmental palaces. Marques pointed out how Brasilia was reproducing colonial architectural structures. “Minha casa mais pierce uma senzala” [My house rather looks like a senzala (slave’s quarter)], Mendes wrote (40). For him, Brasilia was not different from traditional Brazil, where the master (in this case the President) stayed in *casas grandes* (the Alvorada and Planalto Palaces) and the slaves in *senzalas* (barracks as those of Vila Planalto) built nearby:

> Aqui não se vive, aqui a gente medra como a vegetação rasteira nos sertões nordestinos.
> Lá, a vegetação; aqui, o povo, essa humanidade espezinhada pelo capricho do governo. (Marques da Silva 28)

Here life is impossible, here people get ahead just like the undergrowth in the Northeastern backlands.

There, the vegetation; here, the people, this humanity trampled by the caprice of government.  

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He felt like a prisoner in Brasilia (21), chained to loans and with no future. He even said being a candango was the worst thing in the world (60) and wrote down a poem a client recited in his bar, preventing other poor workers from all corners of the country to migrate to Brasilia:

> "Deixo bem claro o aviso:
> Se você tiver juízo
> E não tiver profissão,
> Fiquei aí onde está,
> Paraíba ou Ceará,
> Pernambuco ou Maranhão
> Lutando feito um lão
> Na sua terra natal!
> Deixe a coisa melhorar,
> Não venha a Brasilia, não!" (57)
“Brasília para nós foi uma ilusão” [Brasilia was just an illusion], concluded Marques da Silva (148).

Niemeyer would have never accepted the idea that the buildings of the Plano Piloto were a return of the casa grande while the worker’s camps were the return of the senzala. That would mean to accept that the cartographic city-monument was proposing for the future a continuation of colonial structures, disguised in modernist forms. However, he implicitly conceded, explaining that if Brasilia could be finished in only three years, it was because the work relations were not that different from a plantation, whose master was Israel Pinheiro. Pinheiro was the President of Novacap, the government company that built Brasilia, and the Governor of Brasilia between 1961 and 1962, when Niemeyer’s Minha experiência was published. This is how Niemeyer described him:

[I make a very clear warning:
if you have judgment
and have no profession,
stay wherever you are,
Paraiba or Ceará,
Pernambuco or Maranhão
fighting like a lion
in your homeland!
Wait for things to improve,
Don’t come to Brasilia, don’t!]

This poem is a melancholic chant against the discourse of national integration that Brasilia embraced. It is also an anti-entrepreneurial chant, against the government’s propaganda encouraging poor workers of Brazil to move to the central plateau to change their life conditions for good. Mendes was accusing the government of presenting the migration to the backlands as a nationalistic entrepreneurship —that was a tramp, he thought. Instead, Mendes just recommended to wait for better times, the passive attitude Brasilia was meant to change.
entre seus defeitos incomodava-nos principalmente o espírito personalista que não permitia fossem os assuntos debatidos regularmente, o trato áspero, *quase de senhor de engenho* (...) Mas para a obra de Brasília Israel Pinheiro foi sem dúvida um grande auxiliar de Juscelino Kubitschek, e suas intransigências foram-lhe possivelmente úteis na execução da mesma, evitando as discussões e consultas que, embora necessárias à unidade dos trabalhos, talvez prejudicassem o ritmo que Brasília exigia. (1961: 37-38, my italics).

[Among his faults, we were particularly troubled by his personalistic spirit that did not permit to debate regular subjects, by his rough manners, *almost like a sugar mill master* (...) But for the construction of Brasilia, Israel Pinheiro was undoubtedly o f grand help for Juscelino Kubitschek, and his intransigence were possibly useful for the execution of the city, since they allowed to avoid discussions and consultations, which are necessary to the unity of the works, but would have hurt the pace that Brasilia demanded.]

Pinheiro was the modern reincarnation of the colonial slave owner. The government did not only indefinitely postpone the agrarian reform, but also Brasilia was built to a great extent by a sort of master of a sugar mill. It was not the unprecedented feat of the construction workers what made Brasilia possible, but atavistic authoritarianism and extreme exploitation of workers. Niemeyer first presented the construction site as an egalitarian society of workers, and then as a sugar mill managed by a traditional master. This contradiction shows the tension between what

238 Niemeyer addressed the issue of land reform in different sections of *Minha experiência...* He dreamed of the distribution of lands and free agricultural workers, but knew it was not going to happen:

Incomoda-me, principalmente, ver que medidas que se impunham no caso são proteladas ou esquecidas, como a desapropiação dessas terras e a adoção de uma reforma agrária inteligente, com a previsão de núcleos de apoio agrícola. E as imagino já trabalhadas, cobertas de densa vegetação e o colonista livre da exploração em que se debate —mais alegre e confiante— sentindo a terra generosa e a vida mais justa para todos. (1961: 21)

[I am especially troubled to see that measures that have been proposed for this case are postponed or forgotten, such as the expropriation of these lands and the adoption of an intelligent agrarian reform, with the prediction of agricultural support centers. I imagine them already cultivated, covered with dense vegetation, and the free settler —more joyful and confident— feeling the generous earth and the fairer life for all.]
he desired Brasilia to be and produce (what he wanted “alvorada” to mean), and what he thought the city really was.

In chapter II, it was discussed how Antonio Zozaya questioned the monumental drive in any sort of utopian Communist-like system. For him, land distribution and the improving of living conditions for workers should become the new monuments; palaces and triumphal arches should wait for later or even not be built anymore. Likewise, above in this chapter it was addressed how Israeli art curator Haim Gansu proposed the modern form of colonization should prioritize the settlers over the monuments. Niemeyer desired all this, but knew that was not the case of Brasilia. He realized neither the architecture of the city-monument, nor the experience of working together had the potential to change society:

Vimos, com pesar, que as condições sociais vigentes colidiam nesse ponto com o espírito do Plano Piloto (...) mesmo apelando-se (...) para uma arquitetura social que a nada conduz sem uma base socialista. Compreendíamos, assim, que a única solução que nos restava era continuar apoiando os movimento progressistas que visam a criar um mundo melhor e mais feliz. (1961: 57)

[We regretfully saw that the current social conditions collided with the spirit of the Pilot Plan (...) even if calling for a social architecture that would not get anywhere without a socialist base. Therefore, we understood that the only solution left was to continue to support progressive movements aimed at creating a better and happier world.]

This conflict escalated since the 1961, the year his memoirs were published, and 1964, the year he made the painting. Le Corbusier had famously said that architecture could prevent revolution, while achieving the same goals. In 1964, Niemeyer had experienced the failure of that hope: revolution did not happen, the candangos were expelled, land reform was unsuccessfully
attempted by President Goulart, and the military carried out a coup. He understood the cartographic value of his city-monument not only as a group of architectural forms that would make Brazilians hope for a modern future, but as an experience of collaborative construction that should extend to the rest of society, and produce a most egalitarian country. But all that failed.

Eventually, he even used one of the fables sustaining developmentalism, as studied by Escobar and Fernández-Cebrián, to collaborate in the erasure of the history of construction. In the case of Brasilia, those fables presented the city as a magical construction spontaneously

239 Niemeyer and Costa were supporters of Ligas Camponesas, and land reform was always part of the rhetoric of the new capital. However, as Niemeyer lamented, such reform was only possible once democracy returned and still to a very limited extent. For Holston, the modernist city just achieved the opposite of what it claimed: Brasilia made surrounding landed oligarchs richer than what they were before Brasilia (1-29).

240 John Dos Passos questioned Niemeyer’s commitment to democracy based on his architectural designs. By the early 1960s, the American writer was already a convinced anti-Communist, and Niemeyer’s political preferences were a concern for him. His 1963 book Brazil on the Move is to a great extent a panegyric of Kubitschek, whom he could interview in Rio. Although he supported Brasilia as a whole, he was very critical to Niemeyer’s buildings. For example, he pointed out that some people thought the presidential chapel resembled a urinal, and considered the congress building “a conspicuous failure” (130). Dos Passos provided a detailed description of the aspects he disliked and an explanation for these flaws based on Niemeyer’s political activism:

The interior [of the congress building] is cramped and ill-planned for its purpose. There is a frivolous ugliness about the exterior hard to explain in a designer with such great talent for sculptural effects. Jefferson used to call architecture the most important of the arts “because it showed so much.” Possibly the design of the congress hall expresses the faithful Communist’s scorn about representative democracy. (130)

Dos Passos questioned the democratic nature of the monumental project, but in a different way than Zevi. While Zevi focused his critique on Costa’s plan, Dos Passos found Niemeyer’s buildings more suspicious. He had been a Communist sympathizer in the past, but after the Spanish Civil War, when his friend and translator José Robles Pazos was murdered presumably by Soviet forces, he broke with Communism. For him, a Communist architect can never build a functional, beautiful democratic building, because he does not believe in democratic values. Brazil on the Move was published in 1963, the same year that Niemeyer was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize. For Dos Passos, Niemeyer was forcing himself to build for democracy, but the results were inevitably a failure. Dos Passos also related this democratic insincerity to a discourse of death, ruins and underground life. He mentioned “Niemeyer’s mania for underground entrances” (77), feature he found incongruent in a pupil of Le Corbusier because of its anti-functionalism. According to him, the underground entrances created awkward spaces, such as the one of the lobby of the Palace Hotel. For him, Communism might disguise itself in democratic shells, but the result would always be malfunctioning and aesthetically unpleasant.
sprouting from the red soil of the central plateau: “uma cidade que surgia como uma flor naquela terra agreste e solitária” [a city rising like a flower in that wild and lonely land] (1961: 18-19). The poetry of the birth of a flower substituted the history of labor.

Niemeyer’s 1964 painting was set in an oneiric atmosphere. The Alvorada columns were the emblem of the cartographic monument, the symbolic entrance to the promised modern future. But such symbol appears disjointed and laying on the floor. The entrance to a utopian future was not accessible anymore. The new alvorada never happened; Niemeyer’s dream was interrupted at midnight. In 1964, the potential classless society of Brasilia would soon become the seat of a military government.

In this painting, Niemeyer made use of some surrealist inspiration to reflect on his own faith in modernist monumentality. (In chapter I, it was discussed how surrealist painting was often used as a critique of modernist architecture while addressing Mujica’s use of the term ‘atavistic’). The ruins are either out of place, or the plateau has deeply transformed. Even more striking, some enigmatic figures float around. One of them resembles a jellyfish passing by and stroking the column that is lying on the floor. This composition echoes Brazil’s most powerful millenarianism prophecy: “o certão virará praia e a praia virará certão” [the backlands will turn beach, and the beach will turn backlands], as the religious leader of Canudos Antônio Conselheiro said to announce the end of the world in the late nineteenth century.241

241 Quoted by Euclides da Cunha in Os Sertões (223). Da Cunha described o sertão as the rubble produced by the eternal conflict between sea and earth. He presented his narrative as the history of “Como se faz un deserto. Como se extingue un deserto” [How to make a desert. How to extinguish a desert] (87). The topic of the end of sertão as the beginning of modernity goes from Euclides da Cunha to Guimarães Rosa to João Almino.
The desert will get flooded, and the sea will dry up. Some had interpreted Brasilia as the apocalyptic end of a way of life, that of the backlands. For example, writer João Guimarães Rosa presented different versions of these ideas in short stories such as “As margens da alegria” and “Os cimos.” But Niemeyer’s painting pointed out in a different direction. He used the symbolic Alvorada columns in ruins to portray what Brasilia symbolized for him: the end of the utopian world he said to have experienced in the construction site, which would be the preface of what Brasilia should become, a classless society of workers. This painting was an acknowledgement that the cartographic value is a projection of the hopes builders and communities put onto monuments, but its realization is always uncertain. Sometimes, it even produces opposed results.

4. Conclusion

In order to address what a paradigmatic example of cartographic monument represses, this chapter has proposed to think Brasilia through a series of narratives of its subsoil appearing since the years of the construction: the city-monument was understood as a reversed archaeological site —Dos Passos—, a graveyard of construction workers built by themselves —Dos Passos again—, a work of art created by the killed in the extermination camps —Malraux—, the redemption of the razed Biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah —Neutra—, the resurrection of Fascist monumentality and racial ghettos —Zevi—, a rootless city —Pedrosa—, an iceberg —Saarinen—, a ruin of its own construction site —Mendes—, a ruin lying in the depths of the sea —Niemeyer.
These narratives have illustrated how the full exploitation of the cartographic values erases not only a great part of the history the country seeks to leave behind, but its own history of construction. The mutual understanding of modern architecture, bourgeois revolution, developmentalism, and the cartographic monument produced at least two kinds of repressions that these narratives of the subsoil sought to bring back to light. They stretched the tension between different meanings of what a monument is, and the relationship between monumentality and democracy.

Each part of this chapter addressed a fundamental question: in “Monumentality after Auschwitz,” the authors questioned the connivance between monumentality and authoritarianism, while in “The Erasure of Labor,” the key issue was the role of the history of construction ——and, therefore, of workers— in the monument they built. Implicitly, there is a reflection on how the limits of the cartographic value of monuments in a democratic context: it requires a top-down imposition of oblivion and change, independently of the socio-economic conditions; it is a shortcut for transformation that can easily go wrong; it privileges the power of aesthetic forms over political forms to accelerate time.

Most testimonies collected in this chapter came from renowned intellectuals and politicians; just two were workers ——Marques das Silva and Mendes——, but none construction workers. This is due to the fact that many of these construction workers were illiterate and the cartographic city-monument eventually concealed them, since they were needed for the construction, but not for the future modern Brazil the city announced. “Deep below the Earth’s surface lays the workers’ city,” says a famous maxim of the 1927 German movie Metropolis, which addressed very similar topics than those discussed here. Indeed, in Brasilia the
construction workers still inhabit deep below the Earth’s surface, and there they left their thoughts about the cartographic city-monument.

In 2011, maintenance workers of the national congress in Brasilia opened a ditch to a room that was closed with concrete since 1959 to fix a leakage coming from there to the Green Room in the congress. Buried in that room, numerous graffiti painted before the inauguration of the city were found. A couple of them were signed: “Nelson”, “José Silva Guerra” —candangos. Their messages were far from monolithic. Some enthusiastically embraced the official narrative of the cartographic monument: “Só temos uma esperança, nos brasileiros de amanhã” [We only have one hope, in the Brazilians of tomorrow]; others were a bit more skeptical, and demanded recognition and justice: “Que os homens de amanhã que aqui vierem tenham a compaixão dos nossos filhos e que a lei se cumpra” [May the men of tomorrow who come here have compassion for our children, and may the law be enforced].
What is the best medium to predict and produce the future?

Literature or Architecture? Writing or ruins? Texts or monuments?

From Plato’s *Republic* to More’s *Utopia*, to Marx and Engels’s *Communist Manifesto*, to Orson Wells’ *Men Like Gods*, there is a long tradition of utopian literary and political writing in the West. By showing desirable futures or parallel worlds, they sought to influence ideas and the direction of events. They have constituted a whole genre, that of utopian writing. This dissertation has explored the potentialities of monuments to do the same. It has argued that in the twentieth century not only literature but also monuments have been used to predict and produce the future. That is what a “cartographic monument” does.

There seems to be a main difference between monuments and texts regarding the production of futures: monuments are always built to embrace and become catalysts of desirable futures, while literature can also be written to warn against undesirable futures. That is why there is also a considerable tradition of dystopian literature. However, different from literature and other forms of writing, monuments seem to function exclusively under a utopian premise.

This may be due to the fact that although monuments can portray allegories and abstract forms, they have limitations to distinguish between desirable and undesirable fictions. Monuments are pedagogic, instructive, even dogmatic. The cartographic monuments studied in this dissertation are an actualization of the literary genre *principum specula* applied to mass society. Just as the *principum specula*, or mirrors for princes, set a behavior standard for what the
prince should become, the modern cartographic monuments were built to become a mirror in which the people can examine themselves, an aesthetic standard to achieve, implying political, economic and social transformations.

Even though cartographic monuments function under a utopian premise, dystopian outcomes sometimes follow. In fact, the ideal future the cartographic monument seeks to embody is always controversial, open to interpretation. This is due to two reasons: first, the desire of the builders is not always the same than that of the communities; sometimes, builders and community are the same entity, sometimes they are not, sometimes they are but builders get eventually expelled from the monuments. In terms of its construction, the hierarchical nature of monuments do not depend whether the cartographic value is more emphasized than the commemorative. In this regard, cartographic monuments can be just as authoritarian as any other monument. The second reason is that monuments are at least as ambiguous —perhaps even more— than literature, particularly when they entrust their narrative to abstract forms and shapes, always available for appropriation, redefinition and distortion. This is a consequence of the fact that aesthetic forms and shapes have their own complex history and set of references.

The three monuments analyzed in this dissertation worked as condensers of a myriad of political and social energies. They all produced narratives of alluring futures referring to divergent political aspirations. While skyscrapers were built as capitalist work spaces due to real estate limitations, Mujica addressed them from an anti-materialist point of view, and saw them as temples to the new modern Pan-American identity, rooted in Meso-American teocallis. He exploited the skyscraper’s disconnection between façade and interior to emphasize form and disregard use. In the case of the Spanish Republicans, the architeets agreed in a protectionist future, but each had a different political agenda ranging from bourgeois democracy to socialism,
which explains their different trajectories after the war: from definite exile to incorporation to Franco’s regime. Likewise, the two main promoters of Brasilia, President Juscelino Kubitschek and architect Oscar Niemeyer saw the city-monument so differently that they even explicitly avoided political conversations about it: for Kubitschek, Brasilia was a development pole that would trigger a definite bourgeois revolution and restrain socialism, while Niemeyer expected the city-monument to prompt land reform and lead the way towards a more egalitarian society.

Despite these ambiguities, the cartographic monument shows a renovation of monuments that sought to overcome the crisis manifested in their loss of venerability (Rodriguez Gutiérrez 2014: 19), malfunction and inefficiency (Widrich 2014: 2) in the twentieth century. In a time of cult to the future, progress and modernity, monuments exploited their cartographic value to regain relevance, and by doing so, they deeply transformed their nature. Indeed, cartographic monuments were not only tasked with transforming the identity of the societies who built them, but they were only possible after a profound process of self-transformation: from artifacts of commemoration to catalysts of change, from an exemplary projection towards the future to a cathartic mutation.

The exploitation of the cartographic value was also consequence of changing ideas of space and time. The collapse of the notions of absolute time (with Einstein’s theory of relativity) and space as a stable environment (see, for example, Henri Lefevbre’s ideas of production of space) opened the way to propose experimenting notions of history and geography (Kwinter 52-100). Here, these experimenting notions are addressed through the relation every monument establishes with the undersoil, understood as both a spatial —physical undersoil— and temporal —metaphorical undersoil. The former implies a continuum from preservation to destruction, while the latter entails a specific dialectics between past and future.
This notion of the undersoil is inflected of psychoanalytical theory. Each chapter has used a different model to express how these architects, artists, writers and intellectuals understood the relation between space and time through the building of cartographic monuments. Mujica’s model is that of the *writing magic pad*, since his utopian future was based on the idea of the — sometimes spontaneous, sometimes instigated — return of the architectural repressed: nothing can be fully “buried,” concealed, destroyed, since traces are always left and they are capable of returning to the surface. The architects of Republican Madrid conceived the city as a *reversible palimpsest*, because they created two layers of monuments — the neoclassical and the modern —, but the layer of modern, protective monuments was transient and could be disassembled. Brasilia was a case of *contested tabula rasa*, where the official discourse of starting from scratch in the middle of nowhere was challenged by narratives of the underground that recovered repressed stories, both national and international.

The cartographic monument becomes a catalyst for a new future, but at the same time it is localized in a specific point of the urban map. Thus, it turns into a spatial catalyst too, a nucleus of transformation at the core of the city. The cartographic monument is not built after a historical achievement, but before: it seeks to become such achievement, a core that inspires and transforms the rest of the city. It produces an acceleration of history and triggers a spatial transformation, the avant-garde of exploration of an uncharted territory and time. It imposes a transformation of its surroundings, it requires the city to adapt its landscape to the new monument. The modern cult to cartographic monuments is a cult to the future, to becoming, to transformation; and to a new landscape, to a re-writing of history in the built environment.

If modernity invites to dream with the future, the cartographic monuments is a quintessential modernist artifact. One of the manifestations of the decadence of monuments in
the twentieth century was their invisibilization, their inability to catch the people’s attention, be respected and venerated. Builders of cartographic monuments put this challenge at the forefront. Cartographic monuments are talismans requiring beyond an attentive perception: they seek to awake desire and therefore need a desiring gaze. They are made to be looked at attentively, and they also look back at the community and demand change. Their allurement asks for visual consumption and contagion: looking at the cartographic monuments should result in wishing to fit the monument, to become as modern and future-looking.

In this regard, Mujica did not build any of his pyramidal skyscrapers, but his emphasis on exterior form over use pointed out in this direction. For him, skyscrapers were temples of modernity and aesthetic decolonization that should be looked at and venerated. The protective structures of Madrid became monuments themselves, and were used as inspirations for poems and political propaganda, fostering public debates about how the urban landscape should look like in the future —they became hypervisible. The construction of Brasilia was staged as a great spectacle for national and international audiences that would change the identity of the Brazilian people and the foreign opinion of Brazil —the cartographic monument used as a mass-media device for nation re-branding.

Another thread going through the three chapters is the process of de-materialization and re-materialization that monuments went through in the twentieth century, as Widrich has studied. Stone is questioned, but not precisely from the point of view of its capability of storing memories, but because of its authoritarian nature, its understanding of eternity as immutability. Mujica’s skyscraper should symbolically be built from the stones destroyed by the Spanish conquest and the Mexican blindness after independence, which privileged foreign over autochthonous forms. His stones were decolonial. The modern protective monuments of Madrid
were a celebration of transience and precariousness, which promoted a public discussion about the relations between monuments, their builders and communities. Brasilia’s faith in stone took place meanwhile the origin of experimentation with performative public art, which had one of its most brilliant episodes in Brazil. Indeed, Mário Pedrosa was aware of this, and in that context should be understood his claim that these experimental artists should migrate to Brasilia and turn the city into a perennial monument-in-progress.

The reflections on materialization and de-materialization go alongside the controversial issue of scale—monumentality. This is where the difference between the Latin American and European countries are more notorious. The Mexican and Brazilians architects addressed here claimed monumentality as a sign of decolonization and identity, although they did it in very different periods and from very different perspectives. Mujica embraced monumentality as an essentialist characteristic of art in the Americas opposed to European art based on human-scale; he did this contemporarily to the rise of Fascism, but using Meso-American teocallis as model, and far away from neo-classical inspiration. The case of Brasilia was more controversial; it took place after the Second World War, when monumentality could easily be understood as a reference to Fascist and Nazi architecture, particularly when using neoclassical or modernist apparels. This is the core of the discussion of Malraux and Zevi: whether it was time to reclaim monumentality after the experience of Fascism in Europe or not. The case of Spain is more uncertain, since its experiments and projects need to be contextualized in wartime: it is open to speculation whether, after a hypothetical victory of the republicans, architects would build monumental or not: gigantic Soviet-like buildings, statues to militias, or the fair distribution of land?
The discussion of the cartographic value of monuments has particular relevance in the present to address two crucial debates: the first one is about the preservation, intervention or destruction of monuments representing regimes or values we do not agree with anymore in the present; the second one is about the relevance of cartographic monuments today. For example, in recent years, there have been heated controversies about what do to with statues, stained glasses, paintings and buildings built in college campuses in homage of slave owners. Although comprehensive historicization of the construction of each monument should always be the first step before taking any decision about their fate, this dissertation proposes to take into consideration that every monument ever built did not only refer to the past as an act of commemoration, but also to the future, either by setting a moral example or by proposing a new identity for the community. Old monuments always interpellate us in the present. The case of college campuses is just one example of many: there is still controversy of what do to with monuments of dictatorial regimes almost everywhere in the world.

The consequence of this is the acknowledgement that we inhabit the spaces our ancestors dreamed for us. Most of our built environment was created by our ancestors based on a cosmovision, identity and desires we may or may not feel represented by, and we should constantly negotiate with that heritage. The way we inhabit those places, observe, ignore or subvert specific artifacts of the built environment is a way of establishing a relationship with the past. To intervene a monument —through destruction, vandalism, preservation, redefinition— is to negotiate with past values, aspirations. Consequently, the relationship between a — national/local/ethnic/racial…— community and its historical monuments is always of estrangement. The historical monument poses a question to the community about how the values and desires it embodies has changed over time: does the community acknowledge that such
values and desire are still relevant? How have they changed? Have they transformed the community? How can the desire symbolized by a monument be updated? Ultimately, this dissertation advocates for a higher level of awareness in how we experience the built environment.

Regarding the relevance of cartographic monuments today, this dissertation can be understood as a study of the origins of the so-called Bilbao-effect, that is, the construction of iconic monumental buildings (Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in the case of Bilbao) as an attempt to re-brand cities and countries. Indeed, far from establishing a rupture with the past, post-modern architecture of this kind, based on the urban interventions of starchitects, is today more topical than ever. Governments worldwide have hired these architects to build monumental buildings as catalysts for development and growth, generally seeking to attract tourism and transform their cities. In Spain, the financial crisis that started in 2008 was to a great extend a real estate crisis, and it has been partially explained by the construction of this kind of monumental buildings practically in every city. In a way, it was a crisis provoked in part by the excesses of cartographic monuments.

As a paradigmatic cartographic city-monument, the construction Brasilia has been addressed in recent years to explain the phenomenon of starchitects and monumental buildings worldwide. One of the most famous architects of recent times, Zaha Hadid, used to refer to Oscar Niemeyer as one of her great inspirations. Likewise, the construction of infrastructure for the Brazilian 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games in Rio brought back the myth of the construction site of Brasilia: the new stadiums and sport centers would be finished on time just as the Brazilians did not miss the deadline of the inauguration of Brasilia. But also, just as happened in Brasilia, the opening ceremony meant the erasure not only of the process of construction, but
especially of the construction workers and their neighborhoods, that were hidden behind shining billboards because they did not have a place in the developed and powerful Brazil that the Olympic Games were meant to present to the world.
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