Y'all Come Back Now, Ya Hear: A Reflection on Tourism and the Carnivalesque

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Y'all come back now, ya hear
A REFLECTION ON TOURISM AND THE CARNIVALESQE

KOLBY FORBES

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With the departure of manufacturing and industrial production from urban centers, contemporary American cities have turned to tourism as a method of turning the experiences and memories of a site into a commodity for public consumption. This pursuit of capital produces bubbles of pure spectacle that neglect historical events of significance through a series of simplications and reductions. The investigation of this thesis is to hyper accelerate these negations, creating spectacles of commodity fetishism into an absurdist event of carnival through a series of urban pavilions, similar to those produced in John Hejduk's Masque explorations, revealing the discrepancies and contradictions between crafted illusions and realities of experiences.
"Salvation lies no longer in "revolt", but in surrender without discretion."

*Architecture and Utopia, Manfredo Tafuri*
The architectural project has historically been aligned with a utopic intention or proposition. This endeavor was able to act as a catalyst of design, while propagating an optimistic outlook for the future of city planning. However, these proposals were often unattainable when presented with the realities of the urban condition. This became especially apparent when the urban fabric changed drastically from the pastoral landscapes described by Fourier and More to the industrialized metropolises of today. This failure was in large part due to the architect's ignorance to the prevalence of the ideology of capitalism. This thesis questions the possibilities of instead allowing ideology to become the project.

Manfredo Tafuri's *Architecture and Utopia* traces the relationship between the architectural project with that of the utopia, proposing that the ideology of architecture is in fact the ideology of utopia. "Utopia is therefore nothing other than 'a structural vision of the totality is and is becoming,' the transcendence of the pure 'datum,' a system of orientation intent upon 'breaking the relationships of the existing order' in order to recover them at a higher and different level." Tafuri illustrates the intellectual recognition that the architectural project of the urban had met a point of unproductivity in its ignorance to the real. This produced a shift in methodology, changing and redefining the scope of the architectural project.

Through this redefinition, the utopia is able to become a project that is no longer static, but one that is able to shift and change to possibly challenge existing institutions. However, by aligning ideology with utopia as project, the characteristics of ideology inherently become distorted. These entanglements transform ideology into that of the utopia, no longer reflecting the realities of capitalism and society.

During the modern movement the architectural object was abandoned, allowing the homogeneity of the city to dissolve it completely. The architect was no longer a producer of objects, but was instead marginalized to the role of organizer to a cycle of production. The architect had fully committed to the machine of the capitalist metropolis. But even by becoming fully engulfed in the process of production, there was still no unification to the patchwork of order that these master planners had orchestrated. The city remained fragmented. The chaos of the city rejected an order that could not be integrated.

This thesis seeks to no longer ignore the prevalence of capitalism and the pursuit of commodity, but instead embrace its qualities as a method of critique.
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"Areas that envelop the traveler so that he/she only moves inside secured, protected and normalized environments"

"Providing entertainment and excitement, with reassuringly clean and attractive surroundings"

*Constructing the Tourist Bubble, Dennis R. Judd*
In contemporary society, means of capital production are no longer restricted to the tangible product, but are instead based upon a commodity of experience and memory. In an effort to combat the historical perceptions of urban centers being places that are dirty, poverty stricken, and dangerous, municipalities have turned their attention to a reshaping of the city’s image. This shift has turned the city into a place of attraction and spectacle, starkly contrasting the realities of urban decay and political strife that may exist.

Governments now seek profit through a series of simplifications and reductions of culture, converting the cityscape into advertisement. This propaganda interprets the essence of a city, in turn telling visitors what they should do, feel, and even think given a particular stimuli or situation. Dennis R. Judd’s “Constructing the Tourist Bubble” describes these locations as acting similar to that of a theme park with particular components meant to orient visitors upon their arrival, establishing these as retail locations, bars, convention centers, sports complexes, restaurants, and hotels.
"Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences."

The Image of the City, Kevin Lynch
This thesis establishes its exploration within the tourist bubble of Nashville, Tennessee, primarily focusing on Lower Broadway Avenue, the original port location of Nashville and current location of “Honky Tonk Highway”. This location also presents an axially relationship to the historic market square of the city, Market Street, now known as Second Avenue.

Nashville as site allows for a unique intersection of culture, commerce, and an economy now heavily based on tourism. Historically, Nashville is able to claim strong ties to the country music industry through its relationship to institutions such as the Grand Ole’ Opry and the Ryman Auditorium, as well as numerous recording studios. These elements of attraction are able to act as spectacle for visitors that wish to glean some semblance of this history upon their pilgrimage to Honky Tonk Highway. The bars and retailers seek to sell this experience and capitalize off the tourist desire to capture this memory. Allowing Nashville to act as the site of study in this thesis also presents opportunities for the historic narrative of the city to become a character of its own when seeking to introduce implementations and interventions into the established fabric.
"His aim is to distance the spectator from the action by disappointing his normal expectations, and so to steer his attention away from merely what happens on screen to how it happens."

_The Space in the Distance: A Study of Altman’s “Nashville”, Robert J. Cardullo_
"Their three-dimensionality is sufficiently suggested rather than fully realized, their existence defined more by the presence of people and things, in space, than by their own thoughts, actions, and interactions, in time."

The Space in the Distance: A Study of Altman’s “Nashville”, Robert J. Cardullo
robert altman's nashville

The capacity for a cityscape to produce narrative is examined in Robert Altman’s 1975 film Nashville, a film set in the country music scene of a 1970s Nashville. The production constructs an exaggerated notion of contemporary American society, reflecting on a culture now based solely on appearance and the curation of illusion as image. Altman seeks to combat this tendency by gradually revealing the nuanced contradictions between the perceived and the actual in given situations. This is achieved through deployment of a cast of 24 characters presented within the five day span of the film.

Altman crafts a film in which these characters are described spatially within the landscape of Nashville, rather than temporally. Given that the audience is instantly informed that the film will commence over this five day period, the aspect of time in terms of the depiction of events is rendered obsolete. Altman’s characters become objects within the medium through a flat characterization. There is no clear narrative or plot point, besides a final campaign event as the film’s climax, but this acts as a loose regulatory measure to the otherwise open landscape of the film. By depriving the audience of clear back stories or information regarding the characters, they are able to maintain a sense of anonymity. The audience is only able to extract bits of different character’s desires and intentions through their interactions and meetings with other characters and settings. By analyzing their reactions, the film is able to reveal the inconsistencies between how a character intended something to be perceived and the reality of his or her actions. In this way the situation and act of event is given precedent over any singular character. Altman’s film resists resolution by allowing a myriad of readings to be taken from the relationships between the objects that he has positioned within the landscape of Nashville.

The following exercise seeks to separate distinct frames of the film as the objects that they are intended to be within the production. After dissecting these piece, they are once again reassembled onto a grid referencing both the 160 minutes of the film and the five days in which they are activated through their interactions and collaged encounters.
1. HAL PHILLIP WALKER CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS
2. HAL PHILLIP WALKER ON BROADWAY AVENUE
3. HAVEN HAMILTON AT THE RECORDING STUDIO
4. LINNEA REESE AT THE RECORDING STUDIO
5. NASHVILLE AIRPORT
6. REPORTER AT NASHVILLE AIRPORT
7. DEL REESE WELCOMES AIRPLANE
8. BARBARA JEAN SPEAKS AT AIRPORT
9. TRAFFIC JAM ON HIGHWAY
10. OPAL INTERVIEWS TOMMY JONES DURING TRAFFIC JAM
11. LINNEA REESE SPEAKS WITH TOM
12. SUELEEN GAY GETS READY FOR SHOW
13. LADY PEARL SPEAKS AT BLUEGRASS BAR
14. BARBARA JEAN AT VANDERBILT HOSPITAL
15. WINIFRED AND KENNY FRASIER WALKING INTO TOWN
16. KENNY FRASIER SPEAKS WITH MR. GREEN ABOUT A ROOM
17. BARBARA JEAN AT VANDERBILT HOSPITAL
18. LINNEA REESE AT HOME WITH CHILDREN
19. DEL REESE LISTENS INTO PHONE CALL AT HOME
20. OPAL AFTER SLEEPING WITH TOM AT TOM'S APARTMENT
21. TOM CALLS LINNEA REESE AT APARTMENT
22. OPAL INTERVIEWS BUD HAMILTON AT THE HAMILTON PLANTATION
23. GRAND OLE' OPRY
24. TOMMY BROWN PERFORMS AT GRAND OLE' OPRY
25. HAVEN HAMILTON PERFORMS AT GRAND OLE' OPRY
26. HAVEN HAMILTON SPEAKS TO AUDIENCE AT GRAND OLE' OPRY
27. BARBARA JEAN AND BARNETT ARGUE AT VANDERBILT HOSPITAL
28. CONNIE WHITE PERFORMS AT GRAND OLE' OPRY AFTER PARTY
29. MARY SLEEPS WITH TOM FRANK AT TOM'S APARTMENT
30. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH SERVICE
31. SUELEEN GAY SINGS AT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH SERVICE
32. HAVEN HAMILTON SINGS IN CHOIR AT PROTESTANT SERVICE
33. BAPTISMAL AT BLACK PROTESTANT SERVICE
34. OPAL SPEAKS TO RECORDER AT AUTO JUNKYARD
35. NASHVILLE SPEEDWAY
36. BILL AND MARY ARGUE AT HOTEL
37. TOM ASKS NORMAN FOR PILLS AT TOM'S APARTMENT
38. HAL PHILLIP WALKER CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS
39. OPAL SPEAKS TO RECORDER AT BUS YARD
40. JOHN TRIPLETTE ANSWERS PHONE FOR CAMPAIGN PARTY
41. KENNY FRASIER SPEAKS TO MOTHER AT MR. GREEN'S HOUSE
42. OPRYLAND
43. OPRYLAND FOR BARBARA JEAN PERFORMANCE
44. BARBARA JEAN PERFORMS AT OPRYLAND
45. BARNETT CALMS AUDIENCE AT OPRYLAND
46. TOM CALLS LINNEA REESE
47. BUD H., DEL R., AND JOHN T. WATCH SUELEEN GAY STRIP
48. MARY AND TOM PERFORM AT BAR
49. SUELEEN GAY STRIPS AT CAMPAIGN PARTY
50. LINNEA REESE SLEEPS WITH TOM AT TOM'S APARTMENT
51. TELEVISION ANNOUNCEMENT FOR CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISER
52. HAL PHILLIP WALKER CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISER AT PARTHENON
53. BARBARA JEAN AND HAVEN HAMILTON SPEAK AT FUNDRAISER
54. AMERICAN FLAG BACKDROP FOR PERFORMANCE
55. BARBARA JEAN PERFORMS AT CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISER
56. KENNY FRASIER FIRES AT BARBARA JEAN
57. CROWD CARRIES OFF WOUNDED BARBARA JEAN
58. WINIFRED FINALLY PERFORMS
"Folk-festive culture had evolved specifically to combat this dread, and to bolster a 'true human fearlessness' via a celebration of the immortal, collective human body. Through folk laughter and symbolic degradation, the abstract terror of the unknown was 'made flesh,' transformed into a 'grotesque monster' that was to be laughed at and overcome."

Bakhtin’s Carnival: Utopia as Critique, Michael Gardiner
Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of the carnivalesque could be understood as a critical utopia in its efforts to reject a normalized hierarchy instead grounding its theories in a complete upheaval of social norms. The carnival is founded in the subversion of the class system. It acts as a collective event in which laughter becomes the equalizing proponent among the masses. This constructs a reversal of high and low, in which the jester is promoted to king. By situating his utopic visions within the framework of the masses, Bakhtin is able to critique ideology without completely removing himself from the collective. In producing a carnival, he is able to produce moments of temporary bliss in which the dread and unknown of daily life can temporarily be forgotten and diminished through parody and satirization.

"Bakhtin argues that popular festivals and rituals carved out a "social life" for the people within the womb of the old society, a world where the normal rules of social conduct were (at least temporally) suspended and life was "shaped according to a certain pattern of play"...it held out the promise of a renewal of humankind on a more egalitarian and radically democratic basis, through the creation of a utopian sphere of abundance and freedom."
"Benjamin's goal was not to represent the dream, but to dispel it: Dialectical images were to draw dream images into an awakened state, and awakening was synonymous with historical knowledge."

*The Dialectics of Seeing, Susan Buck-Morss*
place that "dialectical image" which, by 1935, stood at the "mid
point" of the project: the commodity. Each field of the coor
dinates can then be said to describe one aspect of the physiognomic
appearance of the commodity, showing its contradictory "faces":
fetish and fossil; wish image and ruin. In the positioning of the
fields, those under the sign of transitoriness would need to be
affirmed. Display D represents this invisible, inner structure of the
Passagen-Werk.

The Dialectics of Seeing, Susan Buck-Morss
Dialectical images act as a medium to interpret interactions between the past and the present. These mediations enable the production of an other. Walter Benjamin considered this other to be powerful enough upon reception to awaken the masses from the all encompassing nature of false consciousness, a consequence cited by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels of capitalism. The idea of false consciousness is driven by the necessity of the masses to consume and contribute to the machine of capitalism. By juxtaposing the predictable nature of daily present life with the mythic qualities attributed to that of the past, Benjamin hoped to construct a result which undermined the “myth’s claim to express transcendent, eternal truth”.

In understanding the dialectical image as exercise, this thesis seeks to utilize this technique of allegorical image in understanding both the past and present histories of Nashville. By collaging aspects of past and present, the images produced seek to present the emerging alternative. This otherness constructs an in between in which the narratives of both instances begin to merge and mutate. These collages establish a landscape of Nashville which is no longer constricted temporally or spatially, remaining open to interpretations and resisting a clear sense of closure.
race relations in nashville

Lunch Sit-Ins (1960) vs. Black Lives Matter Lie-Ins
music as faith

Religious Services at Union Gospel Tabernacle vs. Music Performances at Ryman Auditorium
women's rights

Anti-Suffrage Publications vs. Current Women’s Rights Protests
Sure, it's located in Nashville, but 100 OAKS is a "neighborhood" shopping center for Franklin, Murfreesboro, Gallatin, Lebanon, Clarksville, Centerville, Shelbyville, Columbia, Madison...
the age of the automobile

Car Dealership Advertisements + Installation of Traffic Light on Broadway vs. Current Traffic
effects of prohibition

Reactions to Passage of the 18th Amendment vs. Commercialization of Moonshine Industry
white flight

Expansion of the City into Suburbia vs. Current Suburban Stagnation
“Exhibits represented commerce, agriculture, travel, and engineering. The Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 served as the model for Nashville’s grand design.”

Nashville Then & Now, Karina McDaniel
Expositions have historically been staged in cities as moments to display a distinct type of progress. This progress is usually revealed in a manner that seeks to contradict that of the past. These moments of exhibit go out of their way to ensure that there is no connection to the past, but instead, memorializes the great innovation and opportunities of the future.

The designs that I propose are meant to clarify the neglected traumas and occurrences of the past to demonstrate that these moments are not so far removed from the present consciousness as most people would consider. In this way, the pavilions attempt to act as lenses that provide an apparatus in which dialectical images could therefore be produced and experienced.
Performance venue staged to frame performers against the adjacent historic Ryman Auditorium.
Pavilion as installation meant to bring the iconographic nature of the suburban house to downtown, juxtaposing this structure with the new generic typology of the ubiquitous condominium.
A tower of platforms for general assembly, framing these public protests against the backdrop of capital hill, increasing visibility to passersby.
A modern interpretation of the speakeasy, taking the tunnel typology and carving an obscured volume within the structure, acting as a bar and social space.
A lunch counter with a communal table hung from above, requiring facing patrons to interact under the shared lattice structure.
A roundabout structure, acting as an updated drive in movie theater, framing the car dealerships in the distance against a playing feature film.
Greetings from Tennessee

The Volunteer State
The act of collecting and archiving is synonymous with the idea of traveling and the experience of an attraction. The artifact, whether this is text, image, or object, that is brought back from a trip in some cases can become more significant that the trip itself. The artifact is remarkable in its ability to crystallize the memory of a place. These objects become imprints of the original place, however the memory is able to attach traces of significance from an experience that differ from owner to owner. These traces allow the artifact's consequence to accelerate over time, strengthening the memory of the place as well as the projected memory of experience.

For this reason, I attempted to represent the resulting experience of the pavilion within the context of the site as a form of artifact, the result being that of the postcard. Postcards as a medium are expected to be taken from their original locations. They are able to act as an idealized window into the conditions of a particular location. By utilizing this medium as a form of communication, my aim is to allow for the traces of my designed experience to reach unexpected constituents and locations, eventually adding to the overall narrative direction of the project.
race relations in nashville

Program: Shared Lunch Counter
music as faith

Program: Performance Venue, Framing the Ryman
women's rights

Program: Eyes to Capital Hill
the age of the automobile

Program: Drive ‘Round Movies
effects of prohibition

Program: Reimagined Speakeasy
white flight

Program: Framing the Condominium
Halloween (1978), John Carpenter
"And what we seem to fear above all else is the breaching of the walls that separate the unknown from the known, the coming of the stranger to our midst."

"Anonymous and having nothing, they sought only to attach the status quo and undermine the comfortable routine of those who felt they knew themselves and what they had."

*Killing Space: The Dialectic in John Carpenter’s Films, Robert E. Ziegler*
They Live (1988), John Carpenter
John Carpenter's films operate within the realm of fear. However, unlike most films that utilize fear as a mode of entertainment. His fear is decidedly more sinister because it is established through the breach of spaces that society has recognized as domesticated, safe sanctuaries. He peels back these walls of security, revealing the absurdity in the public’s attempts to regulate the chaos of the unknown. Carpenter’s films feed off the moment in which its characters realize that all of institutions and structures in place are destroyed by an entity that does not recognize the same ideology that they live their daily lives by. His films are largely based upon thresholds, boundaries established to maintain an imagined order. Once these thresholds have been violated, it is at this moment where violence and terror ensues.

Carpenter’s films produce an anxiety that is based in reality. He presents characters that have been ostracized and labeled as the maniacal other. These characters often come back with a vengeance, as is the case in his debut picture *Halloween* (1978). The main character Michael Myers, once a contributing member of the suburban community, is now presented as a lurking menace, disrupting the social order. These characters are so frightening because their motives cannot be quantified by a society that has put its faith in an unseen set of rules, an illusion of order, which Carpenter reveals can be easily dissolved through the actions of a singular figure.

In his 1988 satirical science fiction horror, *They Live*, based upon Ray Nelson's 1963 short story, “Eight O’Clock in the Morning”, Carpenter explicitly presents the regulatory nature of society as a series of posters, billboards, and propaganda scattered throughout the landscape of a fictionalized Los Angeles. By applying his main character, John Nada, with a pair of sunglasses, the hidden nature of this signage becomes visible. In this way, Carpenter is making a disguised ideology visible. Without the sunglasses, Nada simply sees the usual scenery of city life with its color and activity. However once the lenses are applied to his vision, Nada is transported to a black and white world, where he is bombarded with propaganda that tells him to obey, consume, and conform. Capitalism is no longer a shining advertisement, but instead simply replaced with command.

Similar to the investigations of Walter Benjamin, Carpenter introduces an aspect of other to disrupt societal norms. His films allow these frictions to produce an exaggerated chaos, demonstrating the futility of our belief that our walls and products will be enough to protect us from the impending doom of the unknown.
"We have to first chop up the old world into squares and triangles and circles and put them back as hair and beaks and funnels and hooded eyes because these last are more promiscuous as visual elements, more likely to aggregate into unpredictable constellations, to sponsor unprecedented uses."

Hejduk’s Chronotope, K. Michael Hays
John Hejduk’s *Masques* projects demonstrate the ability to fuse both narrative, architecture, and memory. Hejduk produces objects and subjects for a landscape but once these works are designed and plotted within the context they no longer belong to him. These designs begin to change and mutate with contact and interactions with each other, the environment, as well as the people of the place. The mobility of these designs is especially intriguing because their narratives are no longer reliant on their creator. They are instead autonomous forms that are given freedoms and liberties to change.

Hejduk establishes his role as facilitator as he brings these works along his journey, but ultimately it becomes the decision of the object to leave with him as he continues on his journey or continue mutating and changing within its context. By presenting his designs as a cast of characters within a troupe rather than stagnant structure, Hejduk introduces opportunities for multiple readings and interpretations, successfully resisting the closure that time and space can establish in the context of the site.

In his introduction to *Vladivostok*, Hejduk writes, “I have established a repertoire of objects subjects, and this troupe accompanies me from city to city, from place to place, to cities I have been to and to cities I have not visited. The cast presents itself to a city and its inhabitants. Some of the objects are built and remain in the city; some are built for a time, then are dismantled and disappear; some are built, dismantled and move on to another city where they are reconstructed. I believe that this method/practice is a new way of approaching the architecture of a city and of giving proper respect to a city’s inhabitants. It confronts a pathology head-on”. 

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**the masques of john hejduk**
"The ideal situation for me would not be to exclude being included above everyone else. I need separation from people below me with transparency and enclosure. The layered arrangement of a series within a series, for me to be separate from the negation of in-between space of the building, yet the dynamic of Robert's relationship. I always found it so much more comfortable than all that usual open space."
In thinking about a representative process for the depiction of the dialectical pavilions that I have proposed, I found the graphic styles represented opposite especially powerful. In understanding the black and white axonometrics, the objects are given an autonomous quality through their page placement as well as the monochromatic styling. These drawings seem to be waiting to be infused with narrative to activate the quality of the space, which becomes important as I seek to activate my pavilions with the existing conditions of tourism in Nashville.

In the lower precedent drawing, the objects that were once depicted singularly become grouped, creating a network. This continues the narrative motif but now accelerates these qualities as the objects begin to interact and are now can be understood as parts of a whole.

In the other set of images, I found the colors utilized especially intriguing in their ability to demonstrate the fracturing on different urban typologies. By setting these objects on a continuous blue backdrop, the city as an urban condition is unified and made both ambiguous and anonymous. By allowing these urban objects to break out of this framework, their autonomy is reinforced and secured.
tactfully, and even the owners can feel this each time they visit.

Jones and Partners
"The introduction of time as a constituent part of the architectural artifact has reinforced the narrative dimension of designs, which via a functional prosopopoeia, design narratives, projects, and buildings often become characters of their own stories (buildings move, bend, tilt, touch, clinging...)

Narrative, Koldo Lus Arana
In understanding the graphic narrative as both a generator of design and mode of representation, it becomes a welcome alternative to the ubiquitous photorealism of most design projects. These images create an idealized context for their projects that in most ways seems to be in direct opposition to the actual narratives of the place in which the architect plans to intervene. This separateness creates a universe of utopic quality that strives to reject the realisms of the other and chaos of the actual. It also ostracizes sects of the community from the project’s conception.

Graphic narratives as an exploration in architectural representation seems to combat these tendencies or at least seeks to make an attempt at an alternative. These pieces of documentation can be read as both architectural drawing, while also relaying information that is not usually recalled in standard methods of architectural documentation. By applying aspects of narrative to a project, a more complete image of the city infused with the nuances that are not easily detected can be realized and considered.

Without the restrictive quality of time in the linear sense, graphic narratives are able to simultaneously tell multiple stories within the same frame of the page, allowing for a unique understanding of context. Past can simultaneously embed within the present, allowing a space for the in between to be inhabited and explored.

The project is no longer limited to blurred cutouts and blackened silhouettes as the default, meant to represent engagement with the city and its people.

There is an alternative.
Township of Domestic Parts: Made is Taiwan, Jimenez Lai
"Architecture is fundamentally an inquiry into what is, what might be, and how the latter can happen."

Architecture’s Desire: Reading the Late Avant-Garde, K. Michael Hays
works cited


