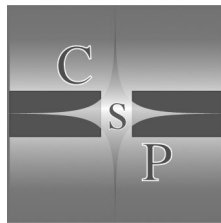


The World as a Global Agora

The World as a Global Agora: Critical Perspectives on Public Space

Edited by

Larbi Touaf and Soumia Boutkhil



Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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INTRODUCTION

LARBI TOUAF

The current world situation of globalized terror and policies of hyper-security brought to the fore discussions around the idea of Public Space. Today, even in historically democratic states in Europe and North America, video surveillance, identity checks and wiretappings raise issues about the narrowing spaces of freedom that the average citizen is allowed to enjoy. And not only that, but the seemingly consensual acceptance (out of fear) of the security measures and the lack of critical debate of the governments' decisions to enforce laws, such as the recent European anti-immigration law or the Patriot Act in the USA, that in other circumstances would have been unimaginable, poses serious problems. Ironically, this democratic regression in the west comes at a time when democracy is a global issue that seems to gain more terrain than it ever has before. What is so disturbing here is that on the one hand the opponents of democracy in the non-west are using the restrictions on freedom in the west as arguments to discredit the democratic aspirations in developing countries, and on the other western powers themselves seem to have turned a blind eye on such crucial questions as freedom of speech and basic human rights in the name of the fight against terror.

In the midst of all this it remains essential to stress the importance of public space as a site where such questions are raised. No matter how restricted public space has become or how shattered and diffuse and unfathomable public opinion is, public space is still at the heart of democratic functioning. As Jürgen Habermas defines it, it is the intermediary sphere which was historically constituted between civil society and the state at the time of the Enlightenment. Public space is the place that is accessible to all citizens where they can assemble, engage in debates on issues of general interest and put forth a public opinion. This "publicizing" is a means of pressure whereby citizens can counterbalance the power of the state. Thus, the idea of a public space is predicated on two essential elements, one a physical space (agora, coffee-house, salon, market place, street etc..) and a more abstract notion of a politically constituted

public (a people educated and interested enough to be able to form and voice an opinion in public).

From ancient Greece until now this concept has changed dramatically and the public has become extremely large and diffuse and the issues too numerous and contradictory that the ancients could imagine. Yet the concept of public space somehow retains that symbolic aura it inherited from the Greek city-states where the agora was enough to contain and shape all the public matters and public figures. Thus, the ancient Greek agora still stands for many as the first example of public space where citizens can assemble, debate and formulate diverse opinions that ultimately form what could be called a public opinion. Granted that in the Greek context citizenship was a privilege from which certain groups were excluded and that public space was not that public after all, just as in 17th and 18th century Europe, public space, Habermas informs us, was constituted by *lecteurs*, *spectateurs* and *auditeurs*, in other words people of a certain background who expressed their opinions in gazettes and gathered in coffee-houses and salons to debate and discuss public matters. While it can be argued that these educated elites who claimed to represent the public at large were somehow “insiders” to the system, what is common to these earlier forms of public space is a kind of centrality that the public (elites) and the space (usually the capital city or metropolis) occupy as fundamental democratic institutions.

Even today with mass culture and its concomitant postmodern crisis of (political) representation and the postcolonial condition of the production of discourse, these contradictory aspects of the public space never ceased to accompany the debates on this issue. Indeed, as a historically specific grounding for democracy, public space today is a concept that seems to have almost lost meaning. In the current postmodern reality, public space both as a physical and symbolic space, has no determined contours. Formed and deformed by the media and the virtual world of information technology, public space is *more a rumor than an actuality*. The general opinion of the masses that furnish the sprawling spaces of the cities is lost in the sound and the fury of consumption studies, market research and slanted polls. In this age of excessive dis/information, these masses can only be “probed” like distant planets, with very often pre-programmed results. The general disinterest in politics that has become the dominant trait of “liberal” societies witnesses to the devastating effects that information technology has had on the public. The atomization of society put an end to classical models of public space as a basis for social integration. Where society is no longer viewed as a totality but as a collection of individual interests, the public sphere is likely to take new forms. Yet as a crucial

principle of democracy, public space will continue to feed discussions as long as models of participatory democracy represent the guarantor of good governance and the preservation of the public good.

The collected essays presented here originate from a two-day international conference held in 2007 at The Faculty of Letters, Mohammed I University, Oujda, Morocco. The event in itself is significant as it took place in a developing country that has barely emerged from four decades of absolutist monarchical rule. And so the intention of the organizers was to accompany the democratic changes that have been taking place in Morocco since the end of the 1990's. The idea of a conference on public space in this context is significant in that it initiates a debate on a public institution that has no known precedent in the country's history. Public space if any has never been construed outside its physical sense of a market place dedicated solely to the exchange of commodities and never as a lieu for discussing public policy. Today, despite larger individual freedom and free press, the idea that public space should be the basis of good governance remains incomprehensible to the average citizen accustomed to see policies flowing down from the top of the pyramidal system of the Moroccan regime. Yet the state's commitment and continued effort to modernize itself, enlarge the range of freedoms and to promote civil society through "the National Initiative for Human Development" is a positive sign. Capitalizing on this, Moroccan civil society with the support of independent press has never pressed so strongly for the rule of law as it does nowadays.

Ranging from architecture, sociology, to literary criticism and women's and gender studies, the essays that compose this collection have as a common denominator the idea of public space as a vital aspect of public life in modern as well as in developing and traditional societies. Placing themselves beyond the relentless theoretical debates around the concept of public space, the authors agree that no matter what forms this takes, it remains a fundamental aspect of even those societies that until recently were viewed as hermetically sealed. What emerges from the different perspectives included in this book is a general consensus that the symbolic value of the physical public space is grounded in the collective socio-political consciousness as the basis for a general sense of civic action.

I- Configurations of public space

The first part of the book presents inquiries about the existence, uses and configurations of the public space in different contexts. Studying the relationships between republican architecture, Ozlem Aritan and Ilknur Türkseven stress the idea that the design of public buildings such as

Parliament houses in many European countries, and urban planning were based on pre-configurations of public space. In the case of Turkish republican architecture Ozlem Aritan argues that since its inception, the newly established republic of Ataturk implemented public space models that sought to put into practice a Modernizing, rational, secular, collective life in Turkey. Likewise, new European Parliament buildings convey the idea of transparency and publicity as the basis of democracy. Ilknur Türkseven examines the interactions between the transparent ideals of society and the transformation of architecture of parliament buildings in our era. Architectural transparency being the response to the development of the concept of transparency in politics, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the Finnish Parliament Annex, the Scottish Parliament Building, the National Assembly of Wales and the Glass Cupola Of Reichstag Parliament have come to represent the developments in the idea of “publicity” over the last two decades in Europe. The author argues that the development of transparency in different areas of society, especially in politics, has begun to affect the architectural designs of parliament buildings since the 1990’s when the neo-classical model of parliament building architecture with its authoritarian aura began to be replaced by a more modern, friendlier, more accessible, more transparent and more open structures.

Expressing concern over the loss of public space to capitalist business activities from an activist’s perspective, Vanessa Parlette’s *Activating public space in the Toronto suburbs* considers that Post-fordist shifts in urban governance have been characterized by a trend towards competitive city entrepreneurialism signaled by an orientation away from the provision of collective social services and towards creating a hospitable business climate for foreign investment and consumer activities. The author contrasts the new image of Toronto’s downtown public spaces as commodified sites of spectacular consumption, as part of a wider project of downtown revitalization to solicit transnational capital, to the impoverishment of public space and public infrastructure in the dilapidated former suburbs. While capital expansion threatens to privatize and enclose public spaces, transforming use into exchange value, urban social movements in support of social justice and the “right to the city” have drawn scholarly attention for their efforts to reclaim public space often through collective physical demonstrations such as squats for affordable housing, ‘car free days’ and neighbourhood opposition to gentrification. Based on an activist project in a Toronto suburban community facing imminent destruction of the one source of public space in the region, the author explores the challenges and opportunities for collective organizing unique to suburban regions which

lack the public space, resources and hence particular tactics available to inner city urbanites. More broadly, the objective is to move beyond resistance in creating spaces which facilitate citizen engagement and influence in the decision-making processes of urban planning in response to local and global forces of governance.

However, an extreme example of the dilapidated public space is offered by J.J. Schlichtman's "Local Place Gives Way to Global Space: Encountering the World's Furniture Showroom" in which the author chronicles the loss of public space in High Point, North Carolina, USA. Indeed each April and October, downtown High Point is the site of the semi-annual International Home Furnishings Market (or the "Market"), which draws about 85,000 visitors from over 150 countries to this city of only 90,000 residents. Although the downtown is indeed a marketplace where goods are exchanged, this commerce is not accompanied by the exchange of local information that has also historically characterized a marketplace. For all of the frenzied activity of what some residents call their "mini-Manhattan," the Market inhabits the downtown with people during only two months each year, for the nine day expositions in April and October. Outside of these two periods, the thirty block city center closes down and stands seemingly motionless until the next exposition. Windows are boarded up and front doors are chained. To the residents who no longer have access to this once personally-meaningful downtown, it is a ghost town. Many young residents do not even know the name of downtown streets. As the author argues, High Point's leaders have guided the city's transition from a vertically-integrated furniture manufacturing complex with a national scope to a service center that specializes in one aspect of the distribution of finished product (exposition) for the entire world. In the process, they have rezoned downtown areas for furniture showroom development only, priced out alternative community-based land uses, and made public activities such as rollerblading, skateboarding, and biking illegal on downtown sidewalks so that the downtown will not incur any deterioration in between Markets. The essay considers how High Point leaders' efforts to garner a global niche have had a significant cost on the city's local dialogue, organization, and –ultimately– democracy.

II- Socio-cultural transitions

In many countries transition towards more democratic forms of government was brought about by a very active and efficient civil society that employed concepts such as public space in its struggle for democracy. But when the period of transition takes a longer time than it was supposed

to before it unfolds into actual democracy, confusion settles in and the public could easily turn into a crowd, and the public space fall into the realm of media-backed ideologies. Addressing the specific links between the Maghreb and Arab satellite television channels from the Gulf and the Middle East, and the effect of these relationships on the public and political spheres, Ratiba Hadj-Moussa's essay "*Beyond the borders: Which Arab Public for Which Public Sphere?*" raises questions about the transformation of a public space into a community of thought and –possibly– of action regarding the conditions of possibility of a "shared critical thinking" in the "pan-Arab public sphere". The latter itself raises a number of issues, as its criteria has yet to be fixed and its contours yet to be defined in order to understand its effects on the functioning and practices of social actors, especially those that seek to affect the transformation of political structures.

Reviewing the recent changes that took place in Morocco's public space, Larbi Touaf's "*The New Moroccan public space: memory and identity between opposition and containment*" examines how the question of cultural identity is articulated through the public edification of memory and the concomitant cultural politics that such edification seem to bring about. Focusing on three instances of memorial celebration (the justice and truth commission investigating state terror, the "Museum of Moroccan Jewish Heritage" in Casablanca and the "Berber Heritage Museum" in Agadir), the essay addresses the current debate on identity in Morocco. The public opening of the record thus signals the fragility of the moment as the reclamation of the country's cultural diversity is threatened by dogmatic conceptualizations of the nation-state founded on ideologically constructed ideas of totality and sameness. Likewise, Valérie Orlando's "*The Francophone Spaces of the 'New Morocco': Transitions in Contemporary Culture, Society and Politics through Literature and Film*" explores the contemporary, post 1999 literary and cinematographic communicative spaces of Moroccan francophone authors, journalists, and filmmakers who have been instrumental in generating forums for contemporary cultural, social, and political criticism of and in their homeland. Since 1999, these men and women have transformed the socio-cultural and political fabrics of the country through novels and films that challenge static mores and conventions; the "semi-logiques" vestiges of the Moroccan past. Through examination of several novels and films, the author explores how francophone authors, journalists, filmmakers, human rights activists, and academics have dedicated their literary and cinematographic productions to reshaping the socio-cultural and political contours of Morocco. These novels and films demonstrate that today's Morocco promotes a francophone sphere that is literarily and cinematographically devoted to civic action and

engagement. Their creations open up dialogues that are unfettered, critically tackling subjects such as imprisonment, torture, homosexuality, and feminist activism. Authors such as Souad Bahechar (*Ni fleurs, ni couronnes*, 2000), Siham Benchekroun (*Oser vivre!*, 2002), Youssouf Amine Elalamy (*Miniatures*, 2004), Rachid O (*Ce qui reste*, 2003), Abdellah Taïa (*Le rouge du tarbouche*, 2004), Bahaa Trabelsi (*Slim : les femmes, la mort...*, 2004), and filmmakers Laïla Marrakchi (Morocco, 2005), *Farida Benlyazid (Women's Wives, 1999)*, and *Yto Barrada (Home, or Maids in My Family, 2001)*, contribute to the unique francophone literary and cinematographic spaces that influence the ever shifting contours of contemporary Morocco. Yet, within the larger context of the whole Maghreb which includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya, the transformations in the public space over the past decade are very complex in view of the actors intervening in it.

The last essay in this part traces the transition of the public space in one of Morocco's oldest cities, Oujda. Omar Bsaïthi's narrative essay (*From Al-Halka to Coca-Cola Posters*) recounts how changes in the economy (from a traditional and state run to a liberal economy) transformed the city of Oujda (North-east Morocco) over the last forty years into a bustling trade center. Taking *Bab Sidi Abdelouahab Square* as an example, the author shows how a public space formerly devoted to traditional cultural activities and popular entertainment (Alhalka, or circle) as well as some small economic activities, has yielded to capitalist and consumerist publicity. The transformation of the cultural identity of the city reflects the country's ambiguous transition from traditional socio-economic and cultural structures to a yet to be defined phase of modernity. In the meantime something essential is lost and that may be taken to account for the apparent state of chaos.

III- Being "Other" in public space

The dialectic of "self" and "other" is nowhere more intense than in public space where one's understanding of social and cultural interaction is shaped by visual perception. Being other in public space poses the question of how identity is conceived. Where "other" means the not-me, then the "me" itself becomes "other" thus the centrality of the self is relative and problematic. Yet in societies that define themselves along the lines of sameness (race, ethnicity, language, cultural common practices etc...) the sense of alterity as a self-aware construction of identity is absent and what remains is a supposedly clear but in reality very dangerous idea of who is "one of us" and who is not. This is the case in most European societies

where immigration from the south is concerned. The immigrant perceives his/her “otherness” through the social structures and the cultural forms of the host country. This part of the book considers the situation of modern immigrants and tales of foreign travellers from the past in the public spaces of the societies they chose to visit or live in. Thus, in “*Reading the place of others: Brazilian bodies in Portuguese public spaces*” Marluci Menezes, Lucia Nucci, Judith Allen, Tony Lloyd-Jones, and Lia Vasconcelos investigate how a Portuguese-Brazilian ethnic identity is formed in relationship to the “others” encountered in a definite space, where the “others” include both long term and weekend/holiday Portuguese residents, two groups who usually define themselves as “other to each other”. It focuses, in particular, on how the liminal spaces are controlled to sustain the socio-spatiality of coming into being. Moving to a different continent and but in the same context, Regina Igel’s “*Neither here, nor there: the inter-space of immigrants in Brazil*” studies how the literature created by or about immigrants and their descendants in Brazil conveys the circumstances of displacement and mostly their struggles for a place Brazilian public life. “Neither here, nor there”, the authors suggests, was the area that the expatriates felt they were allotted in the new land. Therefore, the conquest of a public space became one of the immigrants’ desires in their quest for recognition from members of the hegemonic society. Writings on the subject of space and immigrants are focused on the fact that, although material progress was within the reach of many of the expatriates along an awareness of their contributions to the labor force, they missed a sense of belonging. Though accountable for a great percentage of the new country’s economic advancement, the immigrants experienced life as if living in an inter-space. They were not invited, nor welcome to participate in the national life in its political and social aspects. The last chapter in this part brings us back to the 19th century when emissaries from the Kings of Morocco were sent to Europe to report on the development of these nations. The interest in Ahmed Idrissi-Alami’s essay *Politics of Modern Cultural Geography: Moroccan Configurations of 19th century European Space* is that it studies is that presents the complexities of the imbalanced encounter between the Arab-moslem and European cultures. Travel narratives studied in this essay are thus revealing not so much of the particular way a Moroccan emissary represents western culture, but the cultural and religious prejudices that operate on both sides in such encounters.

IV- Re/inventing public space

The intersection of literature and place produces the vital space for ideas to confront and be confronted with the complexities of reality. In fact it was literature through *Salons*, coffee-houses, and forums for literary discussions that made the existence of public space possible. Re/inventing public space through text is thus no less crucial than initiating a physical space where culture and politics are negotiated. Considering the general conceptions of space and text relationships Mostafa Shoul's interrogative essay focuses on the individual experience of space through language. Space the author argues is less defined by proxemics as their deictic tools are more and more confusing if not totally abandoned, in this sense do expressions like "public" "or personal" space have any sense where mutual invasions and overlappings are legion? Leaving those theoretical questions to be answered by specialists, Elizabeth Godke-Koonce argues in her essay "*Lizzie's Sensational Public Invasion and Her Rewriting of British Legal History in Anthony Trollope's The Eustace Diamonds*" that the idea of the public sphere being inclusive was for Karl Marx and Jürgen Habermas a "fiction" of the Victorian British patriarchal Establishment. Despite this "fiction," within the mid-19th-century British political system, people were only recognized as such by the current legal system if they were property owners. Women and lower-class non-property owning men were disenfranchised, and thereby, had little chance of affecting public policy and the laws that attempted to govern their lives. By the mid-19th-century, as Habermas, says "the public could no longer claim to be identical with the nation," which was a major problem for a nation which was trying to promote itself as a model for democracy worldwide. Any alternative "readings" or "fictions" which challenged the dominant discourse were deemed inflammatory by the Establishment. Lizzie Eustace, the fictional protagonist of Anthony Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds*, poses just this type of challenge to the Establishment by creating a fictional "text" of her life, which she successfully controls and promotes, despite public discourses that attempt to deny her story. E. Godke-Koonce demonstrates that Lizzie's sensational story infiltrates all levels of British society via the dual public-private space of the Victorian drawing room and symbolically captures multiple anxieties which were present in 1870's Britain surrounding the Married Women's Property Act, including concerns about women gaining independence through increased property rights, worries about the disintegration of the unified British family, apprehensions about British morality, and anxieties about the role of capital in connection with societal power structures.

Iliana Alcantar and Marisol Castillo's essay "*The Public Space as Common Ground in Contemporary Colombian and Mexican Narrative*", studies contemporary authors from Colombia and Mexico such as Jorge Franco, Margarita Posada, Laura Restrepo, Cristina Rivera Garza, Guadalupe Nettel and Hugo Valdés as they all have in common topics pertinent to their cultural context. Migratory movements, the tension between the local and the global, drug trafficking, and the conflict of identity as a reaction to globalized societies, are some of the intersecting themes that their narratives share. Addressing two specific works by two writers from this group, Laura Restrepo and Guadalupe Nettel, whose novels *The Angel of Galilea* and *The Host*, respectively, feature the public space as the backdrop for the plot. In their works, both authors problematize the public space and present it as the ideal place where the former novel calls for social action, while the latter proposes it as the ideal site for renegotiating identity.

In the African literary tradition also, public space plays a major role. This space often consists of a market-place or a vast rural area with a large crowd of people who meet to listen to some elder(s) and to participate in making decisions on matters that concern the whole community. An author like Chinua Achebe makes a distinctive use of this space, and he usually succeeds in manipulating it expertly to enrich his themes and to enhance the artistic and aesthetic qualities of his narratives. In his essay "*The Socio-Political Functions of Public Space in the novels of Chinua Achebe*" Mohamed Elkouche offers an exploration of the nature and the roles of public space in three of Achebe's novels—*Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God* and *Anthills of the Savannah*. addressing the basic questions of whether the people could be considered free—or represented—in making communal and political decisions, and whether consensus is democratically obtained and respected, ElKouche examines how Achebe's public space functions structurally as a stage where some very important events are dramatized, and symbolically as a mirror that reflects a host of African social practices and tribal conventions. He also shows how this space functions as a backdrop (and catalyst) that throws in sharp relief the psychological drama or the private tragedy of given protagonists. focussing on key issues such as tribal law, democracy, public opinion, dictatorship, and freedom of speech, the essay analyses a number of representative passages with the aim of displaying the make-up of Achebe's public space and evaluating its socio-political significance.

Contrary to well established literatures, some literary experiences from developing countries in Africa are still striving for self-affirmation. Sabrina Brancato's informative essay "*Struggling for a Public Space: The*

Literature from Equatorial Guinea” explores the hiccuped and difficult development of the literature from Equatorial Guinea and sketches the major concerns of a writing which, due to historical and social circumstances, has been denied the place it deserves in the literary arena. The only hispanophone country in Africa and with a history marked by brutal oppression both in colonial and postcolonial times, Equatorial Guinea occupies one of the most marginal spaces – if one at all – in past and current scholarship in the plural research fields where it should belong by right: Hispanic, African and Postcolonial Studies. Partly because of its linguistic isolation, the country did not take part in the cultural and nationalist movements which would play such a fundamental role in the shaping of postcolonial African literatures. Nevertheless, the emergence of hispanophone Guinean literature can be traced back to the end of the forties, when the first texts produced by natives were published. After independence, though, Macías Nguema’s sanguinary regime reduced the country to silence. From their Spanish exile, a group of intellectuals started an underground struggle which would only be able to go public once both Franco’s and Macía’s dictatorships were over. Today, most hispanophone Guinean literature is still produced in the diaspora and, though it is gradually becoming accessible thanks to the work of ‘bibliographic archeology’ undertaken by Donato Ndong and Mbare Ngom, it seems to have still a long way to go in its claim for visibility and recognition.

V- Moroccan Women in/and the Public space

Public space is where gender equality can best be measured in a given society. It can serve as an indication of how far into modernity Arab and Islamic societies (or any society for that matter) have gone. As the world is more and more interested in the dynamics that shape the political and social conditions of this region, civil society and the elites of Morocco struggle for the empowerment of women. And as we are ushered into the new millennium through a gauntlet of terror and violence, Islamic societies are closely watched for signs that would prove the easily made link between Islam and the oppression of women or to justify whole sets of ideas and views that perceive Islam as providing rich soil for all kinds of archaisms and extremisms. For the past few years, a process of democratization, free press and freedom of speech has been initiated, and some courageous steps towards that end have been taken. However, as Soumia Boutkhil contends in her essay *Moroccan public space: a male-dominated arena*, as long as gender-awareness does not shape public policies, equality between the sexes will remain an empty slogan for decades to come. The author argues

that despite the major changes in the status of women in Morocco, women still suffer from illiteracy, unemployment and poor access to health care. The essay examines the mechanisms by which the male-oriented Moroccan culture excludes women from the public arena, what Aboubakr Harakat called “the unconscious rejection of women’s invasion of the public space.” The essay calls for public awareness and the establishment of a gender friendly environment that will lead to the implication of women at the different levels of decision making, and that’s the only way to ensure an effective empowerment.

Not totally disagreeing with these arguments, Lucy Melbourne’s “*H’chouma* and Pub(l)ic Space: Women’s Erotic Voice in Recent Moroccan Fiction” insists that women writers in Morocco are out there expressing their views and initiating debate. The author argues that these writers have explored the previously taboo topics of women’s bodies, gender, and sexuality, consciously attempting to “unveil” the Moroccan woman and empower her as an autonomous subject. Novelists and short story writers such as the Anglophone Leila Lalami, the Francophone writers Siham Benchekroun, Bahaa Trabelsi, and Rita El Khayat, among others, all expand the range and depth of women’s expression despite the internalized structures of a patriarchal culture. Melbourne maintains that by publishing about the body and sexuality, these women liberate themselves and female creativity by entering a pub(l)ic discourse heretofore the exclusive province of men. While their discourse is revolutionary in Morocco, in that it attempts to free women from the patriarchal and group oppression of *h’chouma*, or shame, their writing is nevertheless marked by strategies of narrative evasion reflecting the difficulties of women’s self-expression in Morocco. Nowhere is this struggle more apparent than in the search for a feminine erotic voice that seeks to validate the female body and women’s sexuality: The closer Moroccan women writers come to writing about subjects that remain cultural taboos, the more they diffuse female sexuality by adopting a “male” narrative voice and phallogentric, objectifying perspective. In short, in coping both psychologically and creatively with *h’chouma*-laden topics in pub(l)ic discourse, the more Moroccan women writers are forced into becoming “male.”

Adopting a postcolonial approach to Moroccan women’s literary production, Hassan Zrizi’s “*The feminization of the postcolonial Moroccan literary space*,” examines the presentation of historical, cultural and psychological spaces that traverse these writings operating an important shift into the postcolonial, “post-patriarchal” and “post-harem” era. The establishment of the feminine narrative space questions and dismantles the overwhelming dominance of the various institutions that empower sexual

politics. Writing means possessing the essential tools of analysis and expression, and it is an indication of the contribution of women into the reshaping of Moroccan society. But the effort to break the law of silence on women's place in society does not lie only in literature but also in the cinema. Thus, Chourouq Nasri's "*The repressed made public through film in Les Yeux Secs by Narjiss Nejjar*" examines how in her film *Les Yeux Secs* (2003) (*Dry Eyes*), Narjiss Nejjar unlocks a taboo and shapes it into an artistic form through a public medium. The shameful reality of an isolated Berber village, uniquely inhabited by prostitutes is brought before an immobilized public within a darkened movie theatre. The film director exposes a "scandalous" reality using cinema as an artistic means and appealing to the audience's creative interpretative faculties. She not only gives this ignored zone of Moroccan reality which is condemned to silence and exclusion a place through fiction, but uses it as a trope that says so much about woman in society. The essay shows how the director transforms the film into an unconventional space where fallen women are constructed in an original way. It also demonstrates how the very use of the cinematic medium tries to free those women from the objectifying attitude of society and gives them a sense of subjectivity.

While prostitution can be seen as a desperate way of entering the public space on the part of destitute women, Touria Khannous's essay "*Moroccan Women as Contrabandists: New Interferences in the Public Sphere*" informs us on an equally clandestine though less immoral activity of making a difference. Khannous's contention is that in Morocco, poor women have increasingly contributed to the public sphere because of their involvement in contraband activities. Citing Deborah Kapchan, who did research in the region of Beni Mellal, a region in the Middle Atlas mountains, she notes that there have been changes in women's economic activities in the region. These shifts not only mark an expanded economic sphere, but also women's inclusion in the public sphere, a community that has been defined largely in male terms. Women have always been in the market and at the forefront of the workforce; this is not a modern phenomenon the author maintains. What has changed with the processes of globalization and modernization is the shift of the locale of their economic enterprises to the city, and also the kinds of products they are selling. These women bring their contraband products which range from food products to electronic devices, cigarettes, alcohol and even drugs to sell in major cities. The essay shows how these women through their involvement in contraband are changing the socio-economic and the cultural spaces of Fez, without contradicting the overall traits of the old medina. Indeed, the traditional concept of the city where space and time form a harmonious

entity is no longer suitable to express the globalized, metropolitan reality of the old city of Fez, whose many shops and markets attest to its fragmented reality. Fez represents less and less a local territorial culture, as more foreign goods and images flood its gates and affect the everyday lives of its inhabitants. Touria Khannous raises an important question on how these women's new business practices affect the local, traditional flavor of the old medina. Her view is that poor women's involvement in contraband enables the critique of the tensions and contradictions in Morocco's modernization process and the tensions and contradictions between the better off urban areas and the impoverished rural parts, the widening economic and social gaps between social classes, and rising gender inequalities and conflicts.

PART I

CONFIGURATIONS OF PUBLIC SPACE

CHAPTER ONE

PUBLIC SPACE MODELS OF TURKISH REPUBLICAN ARCHITECTURE

OZLEM ARITAN

The foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 after liberation from the Western military powers that occupied Anatolian land, led to the emergence of a brand new nation-state. With the emergence of a new government, a modernisation project was directly implemented, in which the state and public space was thoroughly transformed. In the Early Republican Period (1923-1950), during which the founder Ataturk led a single party administration (the Republican People's Party), many pioneering public space models were developed. These models put into practice a modern, rational, secular, collective, and state-centred new understanding through architecture. Serious efforts developed in the 19th century that had been oriented towards modernisation were taken over from the Ottoman Empire and gained a systematic appearance as state preferences were realised from the Republican regime and its public space models. These models will be considered in this paper. Through observations of the models, it will be possible to obtain meaningful inferences related to both the Republican Period and contemporary Turkish Architecture. In other words, it will be useful to examine the emphasized public models to perceive contemporary Turkish Architecture in a way that establishes a connection with the approaches developed by the Republic, whether by assimilating or relaxing its responsibilities and principles. Moreover, such observations will also provide clues for the collective development of architecture in non-western countries that have adopted modernisation projects.

I. Urban Models

Within the context of deciphering the modernizing of public spaces in the Republican period, it is meaningful to examine the models that were developed at the urban scale.

Modernist Urban Planning

The most basic structuring on the urban scale was the modernist urban planning activity. The Republic, which took over limited transformation and planning experience from the Ottoman Empire, particularly developed the port cities (Tekeli, 1998, p.3). The Republic rapidly realised modernist urban planning in the 1930s, formed large city centres, adopted the logic of functional zoning, and utilized an orthogonal urban geometry based on a rational and homogeneous parcelling system. The most striking implementation of modernist planning, which eliminated the organic traditional pattern that was multi-centred and functioned at the neighbourhood scale rather than the city scale, is the capital city of Ankara. In the urban planning and architecture spheres, as in many spheres of the Early Republican Period, foreign specialists (Western or Soviet) were consulted. New urban planning studies of Ankara were performed by German Herman Jansen, who won the invited competition. Wide and long avenues in a grid pattern, residential areas with loose common characteristics located among these avenues, and public buildings located consecutively through the axes, all of which were determined by the state, were features of the Jansen plan (Altaban, 1998, p.45). In this context, Atatürk Boulevard, Kizilay and Ulus Squares, and the Ministry, Assembly, and General Directorate buildings, were the initial implementation cases that realised the “boulevard-square-state buildings” system frequently used by the Republic in modernist planning. Although the Jansen plan was not precisely implemented, planning studies of Ankara formed a model for other cities in the country.

A New System at the Urban Scale

The “main axis/boulevard-square-state buildings” system, which was embodied in the capital city of Ankara for the first time, is an important urban model that was characterised and made widespread by the Republic. The system, which was formed by a boulevard identifying the city centre and a rational square connected by this boulevard and the state buildings surrounding the square, had been used in western architecture from the

Antiquity Periods to the Renaissance and the post-industrial modernisation process, during which rationalist approaches of various types have stood out. However, this system found its place in Turkish Architecture with the modernist urban planning studies developed in the early Republican Period. Its implementation in Turkey reflects the state dominant character and state authority in a more effective manner than in the Western cases (Aritan, 2004). The boulevard-square-state buildings system, which formed the new, rational, public bodies of cities, was rapidly repeated in many cities across the country.

Public Spaces Organised by Transportation and Railway Stations and Avenues

Railways and the patterns of the station areas and avenues, which had a primary significance in the industrial-centred policies of the Turkish Republic during the 1930s, are also among the new urban models that should be emphasized. Expanding the railways that transported raw material to industrial districts facilitated and accelerated the mass transportation that had already been one of the major objectives of the Republic aimed at “weaving the country with railways”. The construction of railways, which were built to quickly provide access to many settlements, also triggered the construction of new stations. Although the stations held traces of traditional architectural and frequently used local materials (usually stone), they caused a new secular publicness that became widespread throughout the country that was based on mass transportation and created new daily practices, such as commuting by train, gathering, waiting, and developing new relationships while waiting for the train. Stations were usually located in the centre of the city, and the station avenues, which were the streets near the stations, followed the main boulevard and were connected to the square within the system of boulevard-square-state buildings. These streets allowed the cities to become open to modernisation (Tanyeli, 1998).

The New Sphere of Secular Public Spaces – Parks

City parks in many cities, both large and small, emerged as another spatial model related to egalitarian public life in the early period of the Republic (Tanyeli, 1998, pp.101-102). Pioneering cases in central countries of Modernization were examined during the design of the parks, which brought new interpretations of the concept of urban green space, proposed a common and secular open space use, and involved enclosed

spaces for social, cultural, and commercial activities. The implementations, particularly realised in the Soviet Union, had a deep impact on the Izmir Culture Park within the context of its form and content. Dr. Behçet Uz, the mayor of İzmir, and his team studied the Moscow Culture Park, then opened the Izmir Culture Park and International Fair in 1936 through the design of architects commissioned by Mayor Bulgandin of Moscow. In addition, Youth Park in Ankara was constructed according to the plan by Theo Leveau, an engineer in the Ministry of Public Works, by remaining faithful to the main features of the Jansen plan (Uludağ, 1998, p.71). These cases in the capital city and in Izmir were repeated in almost each city of the country on different levels. City parks, which sometimes covered the fair area, were adopted as an efficient reflection of the new public life model of the Republic at the recreational level.

II. Architectural Models

Following the urban cases, architectural models will be examined within the context of deciphering the public models which were used countrywide by the state during the early Republican Period. It should be mentioned that in this section, efforts on the scales of the building, group of buildings, and the settlement will be predominantly discussed. Village planning will be examined within the framework of architectural models based on its role in organising the rural area and developing detailed architectural proposals at the building scale.

A New Public Space Model within the Cultural Context – Community Centres

“Community centres”, which aimed at serving the cultural sphere, stand out among the new architectural models directed by the state. Turkish National Clubs, which criticized the modernisation movement, had defended the integration of Turkism with Islam since the last period of the Ottoman Empire, and served in the creation of Turkist/nationalist movements in the post-Republican period, were eliminated as they were regarded as being too “Islamic” in terms of the secular nationalism adopted by the state in 1930s (Keyder, 1990, pp.83-87). Community centres, based on secular nationalism and other principles adopted by the Republic, were established instead. Similar centres and community schools were examined in countries such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Germany, England, Sweden, and the Soviet Union, and the Turkish community centres were formed using this information

(Yeşilkaya, 1999, p.72). In particular, the communal centres and worker clubs in the Soviet Union, where ideological, cultural, and social activities were realised, were interesting cases for the community centres. Community centres of the Republican period adopted the major principles of Soviet communal centres, such as 'reaching the community and presenting an equal/ widespread education for it', and they associated these principles with the central state authority.

These centres, which quickly became widespread nationwide following their establishment, were located in a position to dominate the town square within the aforementioned system of boulevard-square-state buildings. In contrast with the Islamic emphases on the architecture of the Turkish National Clubs, which frequently used domes and arches, the community centres, which consisted of major units such as libraries, movie theatres and performance/conference halls, cafes, gymnasiums, party buildings and guest houses, adopted a secular, unadorned architectural approach which seldom used those elements (Yeşilkaya, 1999, p.189). Community centres, which were densely used throughout the day and served the education needs of uneducated people but which, however, could not go beyond the limits determined by the state, became a pioneering public model for modern Turkish society (Bilgin, 1998, p.261; Köker, 1989, p.108).

Collective Education Model in Rural Area and Village Institutions

Another case that emerged in architecture among the public space models developed during the Republican period was the village institution. Village institutions were aimed at educating the rural/village people who made up the majority of the population in the 1930s, to create the educated human resources necessary for the various needs of the villages, and in this way assist in the development of the village (Keskin, 1998, p.8). Village institutions, which were institutionalised with the opening of a teacher's school in Eskisehir-Çifteler in 1936, acquired a formal identity in the early 1940s, increasing to 20 in number in various regions of the country before being closed down in 1946 (Keyder, 1990, pp.103-104). They were directed towards educating ideal educators, and had been envisaged to train people to succeed in a collective manner, develop ideas and applications, and start national development from the village, and who are loyal to the development line determined by the state. In this context, the village institutions also carried the influences of the period's socialist ideas and those of the Soviet Union.

The institutions, which were established in vacant lands near villages that were close to the main roads, were made up of units such as dormitories, toilets, teachers' houses, dining-halls, kitchens, management offices, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, workshops, theatres/meeting halls, laundries, bathhouses, an infirmary, large open spaces, cooperatives, stables/sheep-pens/ poultry-houses, fisheries, water tanks, swimming pools, warehouses, a power-station, gardens/arable fields/groves/agricultural areas, sports facilities, outdoor theatres, and playgrounds (Keskin, 1998, p.13). Students at the institutions took three main courses: culture, agriculture, and art/technical. Cultural courses were similar to those in other schools; agricultural courses were classified into sub-categories such as farming, industrial plants, animal-breeding, poultry, apiculture, and fishing. The art/technical courses included hardware, carpentry, and construction for male students and sewing, knitting-weaving, and agricultural arts for female students (Binbaşıoğlu, 1993, pp.43-48). Beyond theoretical explanations, all these courses were focussed on direct applications, and the buildings and grounds of these schools were included in this effort. These schools were generally designed by the famous architects of the period and were constructed collectively by their own students (Keskin, 1998, p.13). Consequently, village institutions contributed to the growth of the Republic by both incorporating neglected villages into the national agenda and supporting the state-centred understanding by overemphasizing the collective public life.

Village Development and Village Planning

Village development, an important part of which was done by the village institutions, was among the public models on which the Republican regime focused. The public sphere was considered to be similar to the institutions and collective life practices that were incorporated into the village development plans, which realised the policies of industrialising the agriculture sector in 1940s. The "Ideal Republic Village" Plan was prepared with the direction of the governor of the Thrace Region and was put into the agenda in 1973 by Professor Afet Inan, a scientist close to Atatürk, within the framework of the 50th Year Celebrations of the Republic for the implementation in some villages. The plan was composed of 43 main units, including the school, teacher's house, community rooms, village government house, reading rooms, conference hall, hotel, village park, village café, agronomist, veterinary surgeon, handicrafts museum, mosque, infirmary, cooperative, village shops, sports areas, chicken/rabbit/bee breeding stations, breeding stable, dairy, industrial plant,