On the Threshold of the Home: Borders of Spatial Segregation

Edna Langenthal

This article proposes a perspective on the built environment that attempts to enrich our thinking about planning from a qualitative angle, in particular the ethical angle, which has the potential to shape urban policy. The starting point is the concept of Hospitality, in the writings of French philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas, where hospitality has an ethical meaning, an event that takes place within an essential tension on the boundary between I and the other. On the one hand, it welcomes another into one's home, respecting his strangeness, and on the other, welcoming guests implies a threat and the risk of losing property via that same other. I will attempt to pinpoint how opening up one's home to another is an ethical act that poses a change in spatial approach relative to the built environment. Today, most of us live in an urban environment composed of built areas shaped by building facades. This article challenges the concept of the façade as flat, exterior visibility that frames or represents the contents of a building. Although Levinas does not make this connection explicit, I am proposing to understand the building façade as preserving the tension between the house's drawing inwards, and the events introduced from outside when welcoming a guest. This double movement suggests that the entire façade is a boundary, a place at the heart of which there is tension, essential conflict, a space of Hospitality.

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Inter-Colonial Networks of Scientific Expertise: Yellow Fever and Urban Planning in West Africa

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The organization, guiding rationale and conclusions of the conference on yellow fever that was held in Dakar in April 1928 give us insight on how inter-colonial networks for administering disease and urban