What does the study of history offer the architect? What ways of thought and expression would be lost if history were eliminated from architectural curricula? Today, more than 80 years after Bauhaus’s radical attempt to exclude the teaching of architectural history, and about 30 years after the creation of the first doctoral programs in the History and Theory of Architecture—which separated architectural history from art history, underlining the interdependence of history and architectural practice—the teaching of history is an integral part of architectural education. However, what exactly is the practical purpose of historical knowledge? This of course is an old question. Woodrow Wilson answered it by pointing out that history endows us with the “invaluable mental power we call judgement.” Similarly, Sam Wineburg, who analyzed methods of teaching general history in his book, Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts, emphasizes that history offers a basic tool “for promoting literacy not of names and dates but of discernment, judgment and caution.” History, Wineburg reminds us, holds the potential of “humanizing us in ways offered by few other areas in the school curriculum and this process of humanization is based on a tension that underlies every encounter with the past; the tension between the familiar and the strange, between the feelings of proximity and feelings of distance in relation to the people (and buildings, and places one can see) we seek to understand.” This definitely holds true in the case of architecture as well, where history offers the potential to really change how we think. Its purpose is not to merely increase our factual knowledge, or simply turn the past into a commodity to be used or consumed; rather, architectural history can open up new avenues of nuanced reflection and action in architectural practice.

The essay below offers a tangible example of how research in architectural history (and by extension, how the teaching of architectural history) can offer the basis for these kinds of multifaceted, constructive, and critical ways of thinking in architecture. It concentrates on a somewhat known page of the history of modern architecture, specifically Hassan Fathy’s work, for which a great deal may have been written, which, however, has rarely been situated in its complex sociopolitical contexts. Through a systematic analysis of various aspects of Fathy’s work and its interpretations, this essay reexamines it from alternative points of view and beyond clichés, with the goal not to reaffirm, augment, or disprove any “facts” (or

1. The essay is based on a public lecture given at the University of Cyprus. In May 2007, Panayiotis Tougkas presented a research talk at the conference “Archi-tech: Modernist Architecture and Technology” in Athens, Greece, and throughout his career at the University of Cyprus. This lecture also served as a happy birthday for the University of Cyprus. This collection includes an excerpt from this talk.

preconceptions) about Fathy's work, but rather, to reflect on the role this work played (and still plays) in the formation of contemporary architectural conceptions about local tradition and cultural identity, about modernism, technology or ecology.

Hassan Fathy (1900-1989) became widely known in the early 1970s when he published a book that described the construction of New Gourna, a village which he designed almost 30 years before, between 1945 and 1947 in Egypt. Fathy’s book, Architecture for the Poor shook up the architectural community worldwide, and this was not only because it promoted an innovative design approach, but also because it articulated concerns that had already begun to influence architectural thought and practice. At a time when modernism and related ideas of internationalism and rationalism were tracing a global trajectory, Fathy’s book valorized local knowledge systems and construction methods. At a time when technology had permeated all aspects of life, Fathy emphasized the practical and emotional significance of an indigenous anonymous architecture. For these reasons, Architecture for the Poor is often placed among the ranks of the most powerful assaults on Modernism such as Jane Jacobs’s The Life and Death of Great American Cities, Robert Venturi’s Complexity and Contradiction, and Aldo Rossi’s Architecture and the City, which opened fresh directions in architectural theory. By advocating a resistance to eucentrumism, and by simultaneously valorizing the cultural and architectural particularities of his country, Fathy’s book also came to be associated with a proud rejection of colonialism and a refreshing sensitivity to national, religious, or other local particularities especially in the postcolonial world. Meanwhile, in the international scene, Fathy’s New Gourna was often embraced as an early version of postmodernist historicism.

Because Fathy’s work has been predominantly associated with the radical enunciations of Modernism that emerged in the 1970s, many other intricacies of his thought have been obscured. To grasp the complexities of his career, however, it is important to recognize that, from the time Fathy launched his housing experiments in the 1940s, to the time he gained international recognition in the 1970s, his thought traced a complex trajectory, defining a nuanced response to culture and modernity that cannot be explained away.

3 For the impact of Fathy’s and the other books see Diana Ghiselli, Architecture After Modernism (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999).
4 As it will become evident below, the criticisms against ‘Modernism’ centered on specific dominant forms of Modernism that valorized rationalism, mass production, internationalism, etc.
either by the essentialist politics of separatist identity or by the formalism of historicism. The many interpretations of New Gourna, either by others, or by Fathy himself, have a historicity of their own—in other words, they did not emerge in a vacuum, but rather, they were tied to particular circumstances and they had, to one degree or another, particular goals and uses. It is these “alternative histories” that are being studied here. Not to advance any of them as better than others, or, inversely, not to advocate some kind of total relativism (as though each interpretation is just as valid as the next), but rather to contemplate, in a rigorous and precise manner, the multifaceted character of historical analysis. Let us take things from the beginning, from the building of New Gourna.

1st story: New Gourna as part of the sociopolitical circumstances of Egypt in 1945

In 1945 Fathy was asked by the Egyptian monarchy to design mass housing in Upper Egypt near Luxor, for the inhabitants of Gourna, who had, until then, lived on top of Pharaonic tombs in the area. The main objective was the creation of economical and sanitary housing. For the monarchy—which was advancing plans for a general modernization of the country—the project also promised to provide a prototype for other housing settlements that would help regenerate the Egyptian countryside, and provide the foundation for a modern, postcolonial national identity.

Hasan Fathy, who was selected as the architect of the project because of his connections with the Royal family, saw this project as an opportunity to advance his experiments with alternative construction methods that would not depend on imported materials. Fathy was already performing such experiments because during WWII, Egypt had faced great shortages in construction materials such as wood and steel. Fathy also aimed to seek collaborations between the architect and local craftsmen, not only to minimize cost but also to create a type of architecture sensitive to local rural lifestyles, that would, in turn, cultivate peasants’ pride about their own culture. Based on all these objectives, then, Fathy focused on reviving pre-modern building methods with hand-made sun-dried mud bricks. Fathy made a series of experiments with mud brick construction, and the biggest problem he faced was how to span the mud brick wall to create a roof without the use of wood or another material. In the end, he found the answer during his travels to Nubia, where he learned how to create vaults with mud bricks, and he brought craftsmen to Gourna to teach and disseminate their skills.

“Opportunities of the Montessori” where you would have to focus on the 1970s, the post-war period. There has been a great deal of research on the post-war period, but it is not clear how these ideas have been incorporated into the current political and social context of Egypt. The question of the relationship between architecture and politics is a complex one, and it is not clear how this project can be situated within the broader context of Egypt’s post-colonial history. However, it is clear that the project does reflect a desire to create a more sustainable and equitable society, and it is also clear that this desire is deeply rooted in the history of the region.”
Another important source of inspiration for Fathy was the typology of the Mamluk mansions of Cairo. Fathy was particularly fascinated by their internal courtyards, because they provided an organizing principle for the house, and also because they facilitated natural ventilation and lighting, improving the microclimate. (Fig. 2) For similar reasons, he wanted to transport to New Gourna the idea of the wooden window screen, which was used in the Cairene mansions to temper the harsh daylight and reduce air temperature by increasing its pressure.

How were all these precedents reinterpreted in New Gourna? Fathy envisioned a new village of mud brick houses in quaint streets and squares, cozy houses with internal courtyards and domes, and public spaces such as a theatre and market. The poetic simplicity of the buildings had a sensual presence on the desert landscape, while it also revealed some modernist sympathies, with the abstraction of spaces, the simplicity of volumes, and the monochromatic character of the buildings—as opposed to the colorful mud houses of Nubia. (Fig. 3) The project attracted the attention of European press which praised its formal character, and also for its aspiration to put physical design at the center of postwar social reform. Despite the positive reception abroad, the Gouni refused for years to transfer to their new homes and they even resorted to drastic measures, vandalizing or stealing from the houses of New Gourna.7 The Gouni’s stance sabotaged Fathy’s proclamations for a village sensitive

to rural lifestyles, and the project was interrupted before completion. Thus, at that moment in time—Egypt, 1947—New Gourna was a dramatic failure.

The Gourni’s reaction seemed like an incomprehensible mystery to Fathy, who could not understand why the peasants did not appreciate his noble attempt to improve their lives. In fairness, many reasons for New Gourna’s failure went well beyond the architect’s control, and were the result of various antagonisms between locals and government bureaucracy. (For example, there were many land use disputes at the background, plus the Egyptian Department of Antiquities accused the Gourni of looting). Nonetheless, the architect also had a share of the responsibility. First, one can easily detect a dose of paternalism in Fathy’s claim that he was trying to restore aesthetic qualities that the locals themselves were incapable of appreciating. This attitude towards the peasants differed little from the classes of a typical bourgeois urbanite of Cairo. Second, Fathy’s assumption that the villagers would willingly relinquish their own homes for a planned village came dangerously close to arrogance, even hubris, the type of which, it should be noted, was not peculiar to Fathy, but it was characteristic of many planning visions of mid-20th Century.


8 Η αντίδραση των κατοίκων όμως έλεγε ένα αξιόλογα μισθονό θα λείψει για να αναπτυχθεί η ενεργεια του άρματος να τους ακούγεται για ζωή. Για να επιμεληθεί δικά και πρέπει να διαχειριστεί η μεταμόρφωση από τους ιδίους πολίτες και τους κατοίκους, δεν είχε με κάνει να κάνουν με τον αρχιτέκτονα και τις εισοδοθεί λόγω του άκτιγνου και τις ενδιαφέροντα της αλλά με την αυτονομία μεταξύ τόπων και κυβερνητικής γραφειοκρατίας. (εις παράδειγμα, οι κάτοικοι)}
HOW HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE INFORMS CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL CONCERNS

Something more specific: Fathy's rhetoric about reviving an "Egyptian tradition" ignored the ironies behind a homogenizing view that conflated many different formal precedents and building techniques from diverse cultural provinces of Egypt. For example, Fathy's key strategy to organize the house around a courtyard drew on spatial conceptions from the urban residential architecture of Cairo; but it had a very different reception among the rural population of Gourna, 400 miles south of the Egyptian capital, where land was highly valuable for cultivation. In the eyes of the Gourni, the courtyard was first and foremost a waste of space. Not only were courtyards rare in residences in Upper Egypt, they were associated with more utilitarian functions, as places for work, washing, raising animals—quite distinct from the secluded and serene outdoor places Fathy envisioned. Similarly, Fathy's choice to roof the houses with mud brick domes, which drew on Nubian habits of building, proved just as unsettling for the local population, which associated domes only with the most sacred of spaces, namely, mosques and mausoleums. It should be noted that several years later, when the village began to be inhabited, the houses were remodeled—for example, domes were knocked down, and courtyards became areas for raising animals—so as to become acceptable to the users.1

In other words: Fathy may have thought that his reinterpretations of internal courtyards or mud brick domes would revive "Egyptian architectural tradition," but his gestures imposed a homogenizing conception of culture/tradition that did not in fact exist. Further, his zeal to exalt "tradition" separated it from everyday realities and led Fathy to nostalgia for the past. This is why he even designed the houses without running water, arguing that this would preserve old rituals of social interaction, by forcing locals to visit the village well regularly. Such a gesture, however, denied users the basic convenience of modern life, and this increased the locals' suspicion.

2nd story: New Gourna after Fathy's travels in Greece, 1957-61

After New Gourna's failure Fathy was also confronted with the dramatic political turmoil of Egypt, with the brutal demise of the monarchy in 1952 and the rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser. All this led Fathy to a self-imposed exile. He found a new home in the office of Doshi-Adi-Adi Associates in Athens, where he was invited by Constantin

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10 Fathy describes the significance of courtyards and public fountains to women in Architecture for the Poor, 55-56, and 59-101.
11 Although Fathy never wrote about the political circumstances that pushed his decision, members of his circle describe his departure for Greece as a self-imposed exile. Interviews with Nawal Hassan and Shabaka Melhem.

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και πιο συγκεκριμένα: Η ιστορία του Φαθί πέρα από αννάλικες κάποιες "αιγυπτιακές παραδόσεις" ομοιογονοποίησε πολλά αντιανθρώπικα πράγματα. Για παράδειγμα, η ιδέα της εσωτερικής αιωνότητας ενός νέου ενάντια στην εποχή της από τα αρχαιοποιημένα Καίρο, μεταφέρθηκε δηλαδή, 400 μίλια μακριά, σε ένα αγροτικό περιβάλλον, όπου η ηγεμονία ήταν περιπολίζονη για καλλήρεια. Αυτό συνιστούσε σε μια τρέχουσα σταθερή χώρα, ανά για τις επιπλέον εισαγωγικές ιστορίες ή βιοκλιματικές αιώνες που αντιπροσώπευαν το Φαθί. Κάτι που συνέβη με την τρέχουσα κατάσταση στη γη της Νεακόρειας. Οι κατασκευές των άτομων σαν Ουσάν ή άλλοι έφεραν μεγάλες πολιτικές διαφορές από τους (μικρούς) κατασκευαστές της Νεακόρειας, και σύμφωνα με τις αισθητικές επιρροές και προτιμήσεις των πληθυσμών, οι Βόλοι ήταν ένα στοιχείο που αντιμετώπιζαν κάθε μία στη Μεσοελλάδα και Τζαμί, και η χρήση τους πράγματα από τα αλλότρια ή προσδιορίζοντα στον ιστορικό θάνατο της Νέας Μεσοπολεμικής, ένανθε δραματικά διαφορές στην κατάσταση του θαθύ, κρατώντας Βόλους ή μετατρέποντας τα αιώνες ή αποδίδοντας ή χάνοντας για το ζήτημα, ξεκινώντας να μεταφερούν την τρέχουσα στατική και κόλλατος, όπως ο ιστορικός ενός νέου ενός νέου ενός νέου ενός νέου ενός νέου ενός

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Doxiadis himself, as a consultant for his firm's Middle East projects, Doxiadis Associates, which had a prolific practice designing mass housing and new cities around the world, offered Fathy an opportunity to tackle large-scale design issues. Doxiadis believed that the only realistic approach for postwar architects was to align themselves with international trends in urban industrialization; at the same time however, he shared many of Fathy's sensitivities. Thus, through his collaboration with Doxiadis, Fathy had the chance to more systematically contemplate the interrelationships of local knowledge systems with dominant demands for standardization and mass production. For this reason, the five-year period Fathy spent in Athens has been very important to shaping his conceptions of "tradition"—even if current scholarship often ignores this chapter of his life, or overlooks it as an aberration.12

While at Doxiadis Associates, Fathy worked on projects for Iraq (housing for Baghdad and Mussayib) and Pakistan, while he also performed various experiments; for example, he proposed a plan of mass-produced mud houses, and he attempted to transport the idea of the internal courtyard to high-rise housing. (Fig. 4) Through these research activities which were supported by Doxiadis Associates, Fathy began a much more systematic study of the principles that guided the design of New Gourna. For example, he did a series of investigations into the ways in which courtyard houses supported passive cooling, and he even went as far as proposing modifications and improvements to maximize a courtyard’s climactic benefits.13 Also, he experimented with minimizing construction costs. Simultaneously, he traveled around Greece studying mud structures in Santorini, Corfu and elsewhere (The Fathy archive in Athens is full of photos and sketches Fathy made in these travels.) Thus, one can argue that during his experience in Greece, Fathy's search to establish continuities with past design and construction methods was not confined by national (or any ethnic/religious) boundaries; instead, he searched across the larger bioclimatic region of Eastern Mediterranean looking to understand the validity in mud brick domes and courtyards. As we will see later, this broader and more flexible conception of the notion of "tradition" was to be replaced with another, in the course of his career.

13 Many sketches attest to this, and also, many of the firm’s reports, such as, Fathy, Design, Kyriak & Marinos, “Thermal Comfort,” Doxiadis Associates BGA 108 (April 19, 1953); Fathy and Marinos, "Applications of Ideas on Thermal Comfort” (May 2, 1950): 1-6; Fathy, "Heat Protection,” Doxiadis Associates BGA 355 (April 19, 1952), Fathy, "Climate and Architecture, Course Outline,” 1959-60.

χώρο προσόχαμε να ζερά, με το σκέπτικα σε αυτή την άνοιξη να αναγνώρισε και να ακολουθεί το πλαίσιο της κατασκευής του, καθώς και την εργασία συνεργασίας και συνασπισμού ελληνικών και αραβικών κατασκευανέων.

2η Ιστορία: Η Νέα Πόλη μετά το τελείωμα της Ελλάδας, 1957-61

Μετά την αποστολή της Νέας Πόλης, συνεχίστηκαν οι δραματικές δημιουργίες στην Αίγυπτο, με την επανάσταση του Τσερμίλ Αυτερβίντ Νάσερ και τη βίαιη εκδρομή του Μουκάμπη το 1952, και ικανά αυτά οδήγησαν στην πραγματοποίηση της Νέας Πόλης. Η Fathy ειδοποίησε το γεγονός της Νέας Πόλης στην Αθήνα, όπου τον κάλλας ο Δισέλλος Κωνσταντίνου-Ελένη την Αθήνα για να ενεργεί στην πραγματόποιση της Νέας Πόλης στην Αθήνα. Στο γεγονός της Νέας Πόλης, το οποίο έκτισε ως το πλεγμόνιο της πόλης και της μεγάλης ακμής της, ο Σαφής ήδη αποκαλούσε τη συγκεκριμένη περίοδο περίοδο από την Ελλάδα (1957-61) ως σημαντική στην Κατάρα του Φαθού γιατί ανέδειξε κανονικά προβληματισμούς.

Με την Αποκατάσταση του Ιράκ για τους εκατομμύρια στην Βαγδάτη και το Μπαχμπουμάν και στο Πακιστάν, όπως εκεί επέλεγαν τη χρήση των παραδοσιακών σχεδιασμών, όπως π.χ., για την ακίνητη μορφή της Αραβίας και για την μεταφόρα της ιδέας της εικονικής ακμής σε πολυκατοικίες και μεγάλα οικοδομικά συμπλήρωμα (εκ. 4.1). Παρασημοφορία Φαθού με εικονικές ακμής σε πολυκατοικίες του Γκρέκου Κοσίδη στη Βαγδάτη. Αυτά από τις ενιαίες δραστηριότητες που στηρίζονταν στο Γκρέκου Κοσίδη, ο Φάθο σχεδίασε μια πολύ συστηματική μελέτη για τα πλανετικά της επιστημονικά που προωθεί έναν Νέα

As mentioned before, New Gournia acquired new life in the early 1970s, when Fathy published a book that described his experiment. The book was first published in Egypt in 1969 with the title, A Tale of Two Villages, but in 1973 it was published in English by the University of Chicago Press, and it was with this later edition that Fathy became a celebrity. There were many conditions that helped the phenomenal reception of the book. As part of the radical challenges to the Modern Movement as they were formulated in the 70s, there was a great suspicion towards the type of faceless mass-produced housing projects that had radically altered cities both in the postcolonial world and in the West, in the name of a homogenizing internationalism. In this climate, Fathy's position was particularly appealing, not only because of its aesthetic sensibilities, but also because it valorized cultural difference. Emphasizing the timeless wisdom of particular building traditions, Fathy appeared as an apologist of any local knowledge system worldwide. In addition, the tone of the book, which made indirect but persistent references to the phenomenological qualities of architecture and the emotional needs of users represented a powerful challenge to rationalism and functionalism. And, Fathy's argument for the "trinity" of architect-builder-user called for a modest architect willing to collaborate with others and this was immensely appealing at a time when the megalomaniacal signature-designer became anathema. It may of course be true that the Gournia did not consider Fathy's approach all that modest, however the book itself had already acquired a "life" of its own, that transcended the realities of the particular village.

Fathy's ideas were well received because others had already begun to pave the way. For example, Bernard Rudofsky's seminal book, Architecture Without Architects (1964), which valorized premodern building methods, had already presented a strong argument for an indigenous anonymous architecture (challenging in many ways to the more expensive and less aesthetically satisfying designs of postmodernism). However, Fathy's book was unique in that it provided a detailed account of a sustainable urban development that actually worked. This is why the book became a bestseller and why Fathy's ideas continue to influence architects and urban planners today.
ways, architectural profession itself). Similarly, Paul Oliver’s, Shelter and Society (1959) presented a strong case for the timeless and transcultural validity of anonymous architecture. Fathy was also touching topics that were explored by Victor Olgyay in Design With Climate: Bioclimatic Approach to Architectural Regionalism (1963) and Ian McHarg, in Design With Nature (1969), both of whom advocated the adoption of architecture to local climate and natural energy sources (and paved the way for current practices in green architecture). Fathy’s work echoed, in addition, many of the ideas of John F.C. Turner and Robert Fichter, whose book Freedom to Build (1972) advocated self-help housing as the key to the emancipation of the world’s poor and formed the foundation for current debates in participatory design. All these books may have challenged some of the dominant trends in Modernism, as they were advanced by the Modern Movement in the interwar period, and as they were re-conceptualized in the aftermath of WWII. However, these positions were still tackling quintessentially modern problems, such as the social responsibilities of architecture and its democratization.

Fathy’s book also entered another dimension. Through its valorization of the cultural/architectural particularities of Egypt, Fathy advanced a severe criticism of the mono-ethnicism that characterized many dominant trends in Modernism that remained oblivious to local aesthetic preferences or the realities of developing economies. (In this sense, one can see several parallels between Fathy and Pikionis in Greece, for example). In the case of Fathy, his praise for a “traditional Egyptian architecture” (regardless of how problematic this homogenizing concept may have been—as mentioned before) became a symbol of resistance to colonialism and its remnants in many parts of the so-called third world. The book’s anti-colonial spirit was embraced by many architects not only in Egypt but also in the Arab world and beyond. Fathy’s choice to place a greater emotional weight on the concept of “tradition” contributed to this effect. For example: In his analysis of the introverted courtyard, Fathy still spoke of the economic and climatic benefits he had studied all his life, but at this point he continued that “to the Arabs” the courtyard had an altogether different value “To the Arabs,” Fathy maintained, “the courtyard is more than a space that controls temperature,” and “more than an architectural device for privacy and protection. It is, like the dome, part of a microcosm that parallels the order of the Universe itself.” These types of arguments that emphasized the particularity of Arab identity were very palatable to Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt because they supported his Pan-Arabist ideology. Especially after the defeat from Israel after the six-day war (1967), Nasser increased his efforts to cultivate

Οι ιδέες του Φαθυ έμειναν πρόσφορο έδαφος για τους αρχοντικούς, για τους ιστορικούς, για τους αρχιτεκτονικούς. Οι ιδέες του Φαθυ είχαν προφανώς ένα μεγαλύτερο επίπεδο επίδρασης στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά, όπως και στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά, όπως και στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά. Οι ιδέες του Φαθυ έμειναν πρόσφορο έδαφος για τους αρχοντικούς, για τους αρχιτεκτονικούς, για τους αρχιτεκτονικούς. Οι ιδέες του Φαθυ είχαν προφανώς ένα μεγαλύτερο επίπεδο επίδρασης στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά, όπως και στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά, όπως και στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά. Οι ιδέες του Φαθυ είχαν προφανώς ένα μεγαλύτερο επίπεδο επίδρασης στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά, όπως και στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά, όπως και στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά. Οι ιδέες του Φαθυ είχαν προφανώς ένα μεγαλύτερο επίπεδο επίδρασης στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά, όπως και στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά, όπως και στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά. Οι ιδέες του Φαθυ είχαν προφανώς ένα μεγαλύτερο επίπεδο επίδρασης στην αρχιτεκτονική καθολικά, όπως και στην αρchi
Egyptian and Arab pride. It is in this climate that Fathy (and arguments of his such as, that mud construction could be traced to the Pharaonic era), were promoted by Nasser. The 1969 publication of the book was funded by the Egyptian State.

4η story: Who was left out of Fathy’s reformist vision?

Having gained extensive reputation in Egypt, Fathy began to build many houses in his own country, especially for Cairo’s urban elite, e.g., Fouad Rial House (1967), Mehrez Apartment (1967), MitRehan (1982). This is a phenomenon rather familiar in the history of architecture: The initial opposition turned into sympathy, and even a new fashionable trend in favor of Fathy’s approach. Some critics pointed to the irony behind the fact that the proponent of “architecture for the poor” ended up designing luxurious villas. Fathy himself resisted the criticism saying that New Gourna taught him that the lower classes aspired to copy the wealthy, and thus, the only way to reach the poor with his architecture was to first collaborate with the rich. Aside from how valid this tactic would really be, one cannot ignore the disappointing implication of an argument that is based on the binary categorization of an architecture for the “rich” and an architecture for the “poor.” This was a categorization that Fathy himself had rejected in the past. Specifically, when the University of Chicago Press changed his book’s title from “A Tale of Two Villages” to “Architecture for the Poor,” Fathy had resisted, arguing...
Similarly problematic is Fathy’s insistence to present the introverted courtyard as sensitive to the local desire for women’s privacy. These interpretations of the courtyard house (promoted in many of Fathy’s writings of that time) received, and even reinforced what often passed unchallenged as a “tradition” of confining women in secluded spaces, and came nowhere near addressing the politics of domestic space. For all his reformist ambitions Fathy steered entirely clear of any gender issues.

5th story: Fathy’s role in the Arab world, 1980-90
During the 1980s, a new generation of architects turned to Fathy as their main source of inspiration (for example, Rami El Dehan, Abdul Wahab El Wakil, and Rasem Badran, among others); and their work reflects two larger phenomena. First: The kind of amalgam of interpretations that Fathy created from various vernacular architectures lost its relative value (as some interpretations of one architect), and it was elevated, instead, to the status of the “tradition.” As a result, New Gourna’s mud houses came to be viewed as a timeless repository of an authentic “Egyptian tradition” an Arab identity, or even Islamic symbolism. The neotraditionalist design strategies that emerged promoted an essentialist assumption that ethnic, cultural, or religious identities are unified, coherent, and unambiguous. Fathy’s own rhetoric during the last decades of his career reinforced these interpretations by framing his preferred forms and typologies in terms of notions of Arabism and Islamism.

The second phenomenon that characterized the aftermath of Fathy’s international success is that, what had emerged as a refreshing critique of the establishment—an architecture that represented the rejection of colonialism, a challenge of eurocentrism, and a denunciation of sterile forms of modernism—ended up being the establishment itself. The most vivid exemplification of this phenomenon is perhaps Michael Graves’s Sheraton Miramar on the Red Sea, which claims Fathy’s work as its precedent, but it is empty of any dynamism, social vision, or critical attitude, becoming, instead, a theme park more or less, where any form of public space or shared experience is limited to a passive and predetermined consumer itinerary. It may be true that the hotel by its

nature becomes to a certain degree a space of consumption, but in this case, an entire notion of "tradition" turned into a commodity to be consumed. Of course the village of New Gourna itself is today an object of consumption, having been renamed on tourist maps as "Hassan Fathy's Villager." And it is at this point that we come to another dimension of Fathy's work—another "life" of Hassan Fathy—the last one, at least for this essay's purposes.

6th story: Fathy within the context of globalization

Today, at the beginning of 21st Century, Fathy's work is often mentioned as an exemplar of environmental strategies. Those who search for the pioneers of sustainability, green architecture, or appropriate technology, often point to Fathy as a good example. Parallels between New Gourna and the more recent environmental consciousness are of course on target, not only because New Gourna presents a crucial argument about the use of local materials, the conservation of energy, and the minimization of embodied energy, but also because Fathy's approach touches on the larger meanings of sustainability, that go beyond its technical aspects, to its economic and social dimensions. In this sense, it is logical to draw parallelia, to look at it for the parousa analysis.

6th historia: Η ιστορία του Φαθύ μέσα στο πλείστον της παγγύλητης

Στις αρχές του 21ου αιώνα γίνεται συχνά αναφορά στην αρχιτεκτονική του Φαθύ σαν ένα παράδειγμα συμπίεσης περιβαλλοντικής στρατηγικής. Όσοι αναλύουν την προστασία των εννοιών της αειφόρειας, πράσινης αρχιτεκτονικής, κατάλληλης τεχνολογίας κλπ, συναντούν συχνά το Φαθύ ως ένα από τους πρωτοπόρους. \[12\] Γράφουμε για επαναστάσεις μεταξύ των προβληματισμών που αντικατοπτρίζει η Νέα Εγγύρ από την πλευρά της περιβαλλοντικής συνείδησης, που διαμορφώνει όλο και περαιτέρω την αρχιτεκτονική κουλτούρα σημερά, είναι αποδεκτής ευνοϊκός. Κι αυτό όχι μόνο γιατί ο Φαθύ ως πρώτος έγκριτης έκφρασης στη χρήση των τοκικών πρώτων, την εξοικονόμηση ενέργειας, την εμπεριεξόμενη ενέργεια, τη μείωση της εμπεριεξόμενης ενέργειας, όλα πέτυχε για τον έργο του Φαθύ αποτελεί τον ευρύερος έννοια του θέματος αειφορίας—πέρα από τεχνικές (βιολογικού θέματος—που έχουν να κάνουν με ακινητικές και κανονικές διαδικασίες της αειφορίας. Δε συμπεριλαμβάνεται το πολύ λογικό να υπάρχει κάποιο συνομοσπονδία μεταξύ κατώτατων ιδεών που αντιπροσωπεύεται ο Φαθύ (ευαισθητικά προς τον θεμελιώδη, συμπεριλαμβάνοντας στον θεμελιώδη, συμπεριλαμβάνοντας στον θεμελιώδη). Στην πίνακα του, οι συνεργάτες που είναι ευαισθητοί, ή κατά πόσον η έννοια αειφορίας θα χρησιμοποιήσει για την προώθηση κάποιου άλλου είδους κατανάλωσης αυτό παραμένει ένα ανακλητικό ερώτημα για προβληματισμό. Ας λάμψεις μίας υπόθεσης ότι η έννοια της αειφορίας έχει κάποια γνήσια βάση για ένα καλύτερα κατοικημένο και πολλώννοι συναστικές της αειφορίας και σε έναν σχεδιασμό του Νέα Τούρκος από τον τομέα της αρχιτεκτονικής (Εδ. 6. Οικοσυστηματική χώρα στη Αίγυπτο, από την εποχή του Νέα Τούρκος).}

Αναστολές

Όπως είδαμε προηγουμένως ο Παναγιώτης Τσίοντοπουλός, "Η ιστορία της μοντέρνας αρχιτεκτονικής γράφεται σε πληθυντικούς ραγιζμένους" και με αυτό την έννοια, τέσσερα έργα του Φαθύ ως και και τις εργασίες που του επιτύχθηκαν απαλογούν μια σημαντική εξέλιξη στην ιστορία της μοντέρνας αρχιτεκτονικής. Συμπεριφέροντας με κατάλληλο και χαρά, καθώς και σε κορυφαίες τέχνες του Μοντέρνα, συνάλλαξαν καταστάσεις με κατά εξώριση μοντέρνας προβληματισμός. Για τη σχέση της αρχιτεκτονικής με την κοινωνία, την κουλτούρα, το περιβάλλον και την ιστορία. Οι πιο παράγοντες «επικίνδυνες» ίσως δεν είναι ότι απλάς οι λέξεις «πολιτικοί» και «επικίνδυνοι» δεν είναι ότι απλάς οι λέξεις «πολιτικοί» και «επικίνδυνοι», αλλά αυτό προκύπτει και από την απάντηση της πρόβλεψης και του μοντέρνας του «πολιτικού» και του «επικίνδυνου» είναι προβληματικό. Με...
allels between Fathy's work and current strategies in sustainability. Now, whether these parallels are substantive, or whether "sustainability" will be used as another marketing tool, this is an open question that requires our vigilance. Let us keep in mind that the notion of sustainability has already been used for the promotion of ecotourist villages in many parts of Egypt. (Fig. 6).

Reflections
As the architectural historian/theorist Panagiotis Tournalidtis has astutely observed, "the history of modern architecture should be understood in plural terms" and in this sense, Fathy's work, as well as its multiple interpretations constitute an important page in the history of modern architecture, because they contemplated quintessentially modern concerns—about the relationships of architecture with society, culture, the environment, and history. The "alternative histories" explored above show that concepts such as "tradition" or "locale" are neither simple, nor neutral, and that any binary opposition between "traditional" and "modern" or between "local" and "global" is highly problematic. To situate these "histories" into the larger sociopolitical realities that shaped them is not simply a matter of historical research or historiographic critique; rather, these histories and the rigorous reflections they cultivate can introduce useful complexities into contemporary architectural concerns about the social, political, and ideological uses of concepts of "tradition," "place" and "environment" in a globalized world.