

Monument to Happiness in a New Land: the politics of national identity in the Italian Club of Western Australia

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Introduction

This paper questions how urban and architectural forms engage with the creation of national and individual identities. It seeks to elaborate theoretical tools for doing so. Culture, particularly ethnic culture, is described as an important term that mediates between one's association with a nation such as Italy or Australia and a sense of oneself. This assertion is particularly relevant when considering a work of everyday architecture, like an ethnic club in a multicultural society like Australia.

To begin, consider two, seemingly distinct and obviously distant projects. The first encompasses two design proposals by Giuseppe Terragni for the Palazzo Littorio project of 1934 in Rome. The second is the headquarters of the Italian Club in Perth, Western Australia, an amalgam of three buildings constructed before and after World War II. The first clubhouse was completed one year after Terragni's proposal for Mussolini's National Fascist Party Headquarters. In the Palazzo Littorio project, references to Rome served to denote a nation's imperial past. In the Italian Club, references to Italian history served to articulate a migrant people's experience of their adopted country.

In the first instance, Terragni's designs make equal use of monumental form to facilitate the insertion of a vast administrative and ceremonial complex in the heart of the ancient city.¹ Thomas Schumaker describes the overriding cultural initiative behind the competition for Mussolini's headquarters and the architect's attempt to both fulfil a symbolic agenda that sought through historic allusion to celebrate the establishment of the Fascist regime upon the ruins of empire and to express modernity through the deployment of Rationalist forms. Manfredo Tafuri describes the immense curved porphyry wall of the first of these schemes as "a limit, an embankment, a dam" while, in the second, monumentality is afforded by glass administrative blocks and a broad cantilevered horizontal band that unifies the scheme.² Whereas the first formed a clearing in what one author has called the 'marble wilderness' of Rome, an insertion like Mussolini's Via Imperiale in a continuously evolving urban fabric, the second attempts the dissolution of form so as to render Italian social, cultural and political identity continuous and apparent.³

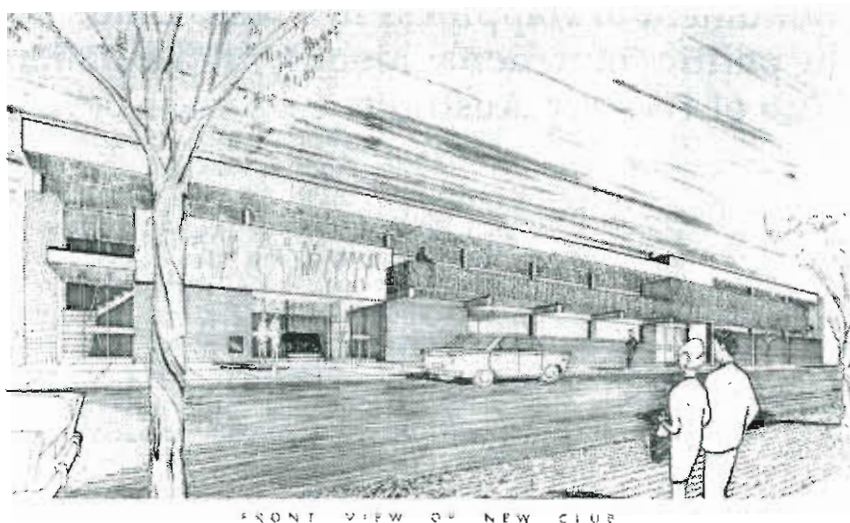


Figure 1: Perspective view of the third clubhouse, Noel Christou & Associates, 1968.

Source: Untitled commemorative brochure, c1968, held Archives of the Italian Club WA.

In the second instance, the headquarters of Perth's Italian Club dominates an area of the city once known as Little Italy. Its scale, greater than one would expect in such an inner-city suburb, reveals a hulk of concrete, brown brick and travertine set darkly against the Western Australian sky (fig 1). Guarding cavernous, and now largely empty interior spaces, a lone wolf stands at the door: a bronze statue of the she-wolf, symbol of Rome, a gift by the Italian Government to the local migrant community. In contrast to the metaphor of the dam or the glass boxes describing Terragni's Palazzo Littorio schemes, the clubhouse appears more like an ark, its strong horizontal lines not only unifying what is in actuality the forms of three buildings erected on the site in the years 1935, 1954 and 1968, but also invoking the ocean liners owned by a major Club sponsor, the Italian shipping company *Flotta Lauro*. The metaphor of the ark is apt for in Christian iconography it has two meanings worth considering. The ark is a container in which life in all its diversity and fecundity is carried safely upon waters of chaos and dissolution. It is also a sign of God's promise, of ultimate fulfilment, emancipation and a new world to come. In presenting a coherent form to the viewer, the ark combines both representative value (of containment or protection) and prophetic meaning.

Given obvious differences in their architecture as well as their provenance, Terragni's grandiose designs and the headquarters of Perth's Italian Club could not be more dissimilar. The point of this brief comparison is not to assert a stylistic continuity or historic lineage between these works. In fact, circumstances unique to either Italy or Australia during the middle decades of the twentieth century preclude any such claim. Likewise, the contextual issues that distinguish a group of self-taught migrants and their homely, improvised and community-oriented clubhouses from a group of academically trained designers seeking the patronage of the Italian government with canonic and officially-

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sanctioned works make one mindful of differences between popular culture and high art. These same issues lead one to question just how the ideas of nation, nationhood and nationalism can be linked to the concept of identity. Whereas the former invoke a precise geographic entity, shared language, political system and history, the latter requires the theorisation of subjectivity, integrity and character, terms which are more or less fluid. True, one normally identifies oneself with a particular nation state and fellow citizenry. Beyond that association, the idea of the nation seems somewhat limited to accommodate the range of identities one finds giving form to the experience of settler or migrant societies like Australia. The point of comparing Terragni's work and the Italian clubhouse here is to preface thoughts in this paper on the usefulness of the term culture in exploring ways in which architecture that is less than high-brow like that of the Italian Club might accommodate forms and practices of subjectivity.

In abstract terms, the importance of culture is that it allows urban and architectural form to assume a key role in the play of national identities: whether Italian or Australian, or some amalgam of the two. By 'play' we mean to suggest that culture is effective less as a precise thing—say, architectural forms representative of a given nation or ideology—but rather for denoting a domain of being, one incorporating forms and practices of subjectivity, behaviours, belief systems, expectations for oneself and for others. Like the metaphor of the ark, the concept of culture has both particularising and eschatological significance. The appeal to culture is one means by which universal and timeless values are distinguished from ethnically or nationally distinct practices. This is entailed in the proposition, for instance, that while all cultures may build with monumental forms, some Italians in Italy might create dams against the weight of their history, while in Australia, certain groups of Italian migrants might need an ark or two to keep their past alive. Furthermore, the appeal to culture is also a means by which our inner life and social being come together in attempts to reconcile them. It is a means through which human fulfilment is sought.

Cultural baggage

It is not uncommon to celebrate such seemingly unselfconscious works as ethnic clubs like the 'Italianised' homes found in many Australian suburbs of the 1950s and 1960s as evidence of popular custom as opposed to works of a certain canonic or high-brow character. Just *how* these are opposed is worth considering for they may not be as distinct as one might first assume. One commonly finds in criticism of a Marxist or materialist sort a dialectic through which the critic seeks to reconcile consciousness with social being, culture as high art with culture as a way of life. Seen from such a viewpoint, Terragni's work is significant for its role in the development of twentieth century architecture in which case it is normally discussed in terms of supposedly universal, or rather, European aesthetic values of reason, scale, configuration. The view of culture as a way of life suggests that the buildings for the Italian Club are valued as a measure of a people's self-awareness: their ability to take stock of a new situation and to respond accordingly. Whether high art or a way of life, a category of human *being* is invoked by the use of culture that entails the existence of a unique ethical substance or core, one which Ian Hacking considers less a single point of profound spirituality, ego or soul and more the "strange mix of aspects of a person that may be, at some time, imagined as inner."⁴

Further, in Marxist and materialist critical traditions the significance of works of art or architecture is that they are taken to be adaptive. They are the means by which problematic relationships between members of society, their history or geography are negotiated. This is not to assert that these relationships *are* reconciled, but that one believes they *might* be. This is an important source of motivation for reflecting on art or architectural forms. In such a scenario it would be common for us to study creative works from the past or from diverse cultures for what they *tell* us about ourselves so that in future, we may better direct our creative energies. One need not be an academic, Marxist or professed critic to frame an understanding of architecture in such terms. Newspaper accounts and literature commemorating the opening of the third and final Italian clubhouse in Perth extol the virtues of the building in furthering the assimilation of migrants into the broader community. In furthering the aim of assimilation, it would be a common enough belief that the Club was likewise a defence against cultural oblivion and a reserve of ethnic identity. Strong horizontal lines of the third clubhouse serve to establish formal continuity between earlier structures and a coherent identity as a building type with an identifiable purpose: to help a people remember their past and adapt to the present.

The recent popularity of cultural studies suggests that the distinction between high and low culture may in fact be less relevant than one would assume. Indeed, Pierre Bourdieu takes up this point, considering such distinctions to be productive in delimiting fields of cultural production.⁵ In the context of this paper these two meanings for the term culture—as high art and a way of life—encourage one to appreciate the uniqueness of the Italian Club as a work of everyday architecture. Its owners, commissioners and corporate sponsors, its architects and contributing artists appropriated representations of ‘Italianness’—emblems, statues and travertine alike—and adapted them in response to the contingencies of an evolving building program and community expectations.

Ian Hunter’s work suggests that in the study of culturally significant artefacts one finds evidence not of a form of essentialised human being, but of the implementation of a normalising regime, the object of which is the inculcation of specific cultural attributes. He writes:

It was in and through this machinery, then, and not through the ‘idea of culture’, that a uniform development of human attributes became thinkable. The target of this development was not ‘man’ as the bearer of a divided ethical substance awaiting aesthetic reconciliation, or ‘the subject’ as the bearer of an unconscious being awaiting theoretical clarification. It was the individual as the member of the population whose health, literacy, criminal tendencies, private sentiments and public conduct had been constituted as objects of a new kind of government attention.⁶

By considering culture as an evolving regime or an ensemble of practices rather than as an expression of an “ethical substance”, divided or otherwise, one begins to understand such complex machinery and to grasp the significance of a politics of national identity.⁷ In fact, it might be said that the production of culture, particularly in Perth’s Italian Club, occurs within the space of a number of discourses. Through these, culture in its ethnically particular state is seen to form an integral part of personal identity, while in its more universal form culture holds out the promise of human fulfilment and integration. It is a

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promise of the dissolution of difference through opportunities associated with self-improvement and a new land.

Perth's Italian Clubs

The first Italian clubhouse, built during the early 1930s, was notable for being the first of its kind in the world to be entirely owned by Italian emigrants. This made big news in the most prestigious Italian newspaper of the time, *Corriere della Sera*, while a medal commemorating the event was struck by the Mussolini government.⁸ The site for the Club was located on the edge of Northbridge in what was a residential precinct not far from St Bridget, the Catholic Church with which all Italians were associated, and next door to an orchard established by Chinese migrants. The money to buy the land was raised through donations, lotteries and at famous picnics where alcohol was sold illegally.⁹ A committee was formed to represent all ethnic Italian groups consisting of two Sicilians, one Venetian, one Tuscan and two Lombards, an arrangement intended to avoid internal disputes. A figure of £3000 was raised to build the clubhouse which included an entrance lobby, an office and toilets at the front, lawn area delineated by a tall hedge on one side as a playground for children, a bar, and large hall at the back. The building was totally enclosed and when in use on Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons and on special occasions, a guard always stood at the front door intending to keep anybody non-Italian out and to keep the children from venturing about. In reality, some members of other ethnic groups were allowed in, but only as exceptions.

The completion of the first clubhouse coincided with the height of Fascist government in Italy and affords an opportunity to consider the politics of identity both on the peninsula and in Italy's cultural outposts in places like Australia. In the 1930s the Italian Government required that migrants who wished to be supported by its consular services had to be a member of the Fascist Party. The clubhouse in Perth was not intended to be a *Casa Del Fascio* as such, though given the circumstances of World War II and subsequently, as per word of mouth, it was perceived to have had a political role. Amedeo Re, a member of the founding committee, confirmed that the Fascist connection was purely bureaucratic. Some political activists were in fact using the clubhouse, but largely for recreational purposes. The Fascist connection was one that afforded identity given its international status. Literature commemorating the completion of the third and final clubhouse includes a photograph of this first building bearing the words '*Casa D'Italia*' along with a flagpole above the front, arched doorway. These do not appear on a photograph of the second clubhouse. A light standard and the more prosaic words 'WA Italian Club, Inc' identify a fairly nondescript entranceway (fig 2).

World War II brought disastrous consequences to those early migrants. All Club members were sent to internment camps on nearby Rottnest Island and then to South Australia. These people were in effect doubly betrayed. The Italian Government had closed the consulate and abandoned the Club and basically, the Australian government had discounted the value of their citizenship and birth. The 'fifth column' was a term used by the media to characterise the political threat Italians supposedly might have posed to Australia (as secret agents against England via German contacts).¹⁰



CASA D'ITALIA, 1937
THE ORIGINAL ITALIAN CLUB



W.A. ITALIAN CLUB, 1954
LICENSED PREMISES

Figure 2: Photographs of the first and second clubhouses, 1937 and 1954, taken from a brochure commemorating the opening of the existing Perth Italian Club. Photographers unknown. Source: Untitled commemorative brochure, c1968, held Archives of the Italian Club WA.

The second building for the Italian Club in 1954 was largely a renovation of the first (fig 2). The original motives behind its design are uncertain. Perhaps for reasons of economy or a desire to appear more modern or less neo-classical in detail, rectangular fenestration and brick came to replace arched windows and entranceway, entablature and plaster render. Perhaps, given the seemingly

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unobtrusive or defensive character of the second clubhouse, members preserved the memory of their experience during the War in the façade of their building. Paradoxically, promotional literature for the subsequent clubhouse in the 1960s stressed the idea that cultural integration demanded the doors be opened to Australians of Anglo-Celtic origin.¹¹ Likewise, politicians sought to attract migrants' votes by endorsing the idea that cultural diversity would be beneficial to Australia.

The third and existing clubhouse was inaugurated in 1968. It was built as an extension and refurbishment of the second during a period of relative prosperity, both in Italy and among the Italian migrant community in Perth, the ranks of which grew following the revocation of Australia's policy of allowing only migrants of Anglo-Saxon descent. Club Committee Reports for the 1964-65 financial year record membership of 2932 persons and reveal pressure for expansion given increased membership, desires for a larger ballroom, a new bar and other amenities. In this golden era of the Club, the race for obtaining memberships was considerable. As part of the integration game all members could and indeed were encouraged to bring an Australian guest, though a quota for non-Italians was set at 10% of total memberships. Similar quotas were later put forward for special occasions or sporting events and for politicians. Some politicians were highly respected and became honorary members of the Club in exchange for what was considered to be indispensable help.

The facade of the third clubhouse reveals a significant attempt to impose formal continuity on an otherwise fragmented development while its details and commemorative artworks reveal the growing influence of Italian shipping lines and Italian design. A writer for the *West Australian* writes in December of that year:

This magnificent building, erected on the foundations laid in 1935 by a small group of Italian migrants, is of outstanding significance and symbolic of the characteristic attitude of Italian migrants generally who, having set themselves a goal work unremittingly to achieve it ... [the Club] would enable people of Italian origin and others in the community to develop understanding and integration in order that together we may live and work in complete harmony in the best interest of Australia.¹²

Another writes in January 1969:

All this has led to today's rambling \$400,000 monument to happiness in a new land —the WA Italian Club. The big two-storey building, facing busy Fitzgerald Street is like an oasis in the desert. Entering the glass doors beneath a vast mural wrought in concrete, one is confronted by the club's emblem, the Lupa (the she-wolf).¹³

Initially, a design competition was called for. Club minutes of 2 May 1966, however, record that the architectural firm of Noel Christou was hired to submit plans. Subsequent notes show that firm member Gordon Allen was designated project architect. The brief called for accommodation for 3000 members, a restaurant with 75 tables, dance floor for 1000 along with a stage, a lounge and bar and storage for 40 kegs and 300 cases of beer. Construction tenders were received in April 1967 and a bid of \$252,960 from W Fairweather & Son accepted (figs 3 & 4).

Though an addition, it was important that the scheme present a dignified facade on Fitzgerald Street, hence an urban presence is more strongly asserted by the existing clubhouse. The second floor hall is an important feature of the building's plan. Originally, a long balcony connected this space to the street below. Given that furnishings were originally donated by the Lauro Fleet which brought most Italians to Australia in the 1960s and that other references to ships and navigation appear within the building, it is worth speculating on the influence of such references in the design of the clubhouse. The Lauro Fleet, for instance, donated a mural made by Gino Volapo of Sydney, who endeavoured to represent the meeting of the migrant with the host country (in Sydney). The mural was so large that the new roof had to be dismantled for it to be brought inside.¹⁴



Figure 3: Plan of ground floor of the third clubhouse, Noel Christou & Associates, 1968. Source: Untitled commemorative brochure, c1968, held Archives of the Italian Club WA.

The Lauro Fleet continued to promote its own important role in relation to migration. This role can be seen as early as 1901 given the Immigration Act of that year when, for example, the *Morning Herald* under the heading 'Italians and Austrians, Undesirable Migrants, A Menace to the State' reported that:

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The Premier would cause an intimation to be forwarded to all shipping companies to the effect that in the future the provisions of the Immigration Act ... would be strictly enforced and they, the shipping lines, should be very careful as to the class of immigrants they brought to Western Australia.¹⁵

The migrants who frequented the second and third Italian clubhouses were considered to have been of a different breed from the old pre-World War II settlers as a writer in the *Westerly* notes in March 1964:

Though the immigrants to Western Australia tend to come from the poorest part of Italy, they are probably not the poorest people living there. The impression one gets is that the people who migrate are what sociologists call the upper lower class, poor but respectable, not well-off but not poverty stricken ... They are not the kind to be satisfied with the life that their fathers had ... They came here to get ahead and to find economic security.¹⁶

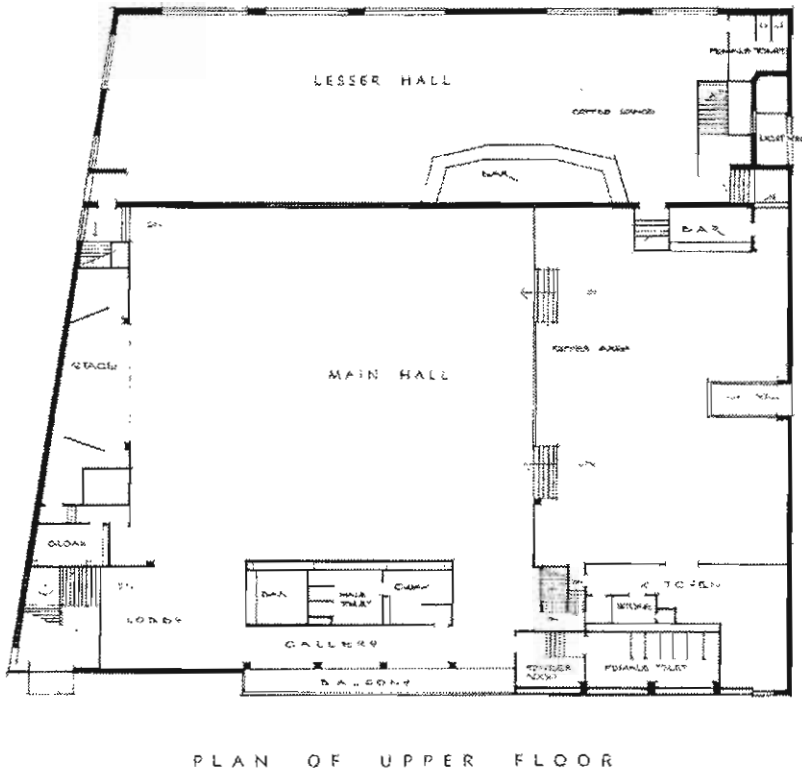


Figure 4: Plan of first floor of the third clubhouse, Noel Christou & Associates, 1968.
Source: Untitled commemorative brochure, c1968, held Archives of the Italian Club WA.

This change of attitude suggests that while they did not actually choose the migrants, the shipping lines nonetheless assumed a pedagogic role which began from the day a migrant set foot on the ship, concerning themselves with the migrants' image in the host country. Consequently, it became important for

companies to sponsor clubhouses as if they were ocean liners with their own prestigious connotations and to lure Italians to continue their self-improvement under the patronage of the Lauro Fleet or the Lloyd Triestino, hence the donation of works of art.

Club officials were obviously equally concerned about the image their building would project to the broader community. The bas relief sculpture—in simulated bronze—of the front facade was created by Italian artist Dino Mazzotti. Its message was summarised in the *Sunday Times* in September 1968:

The idea of the mural is to get across to the public the message of the club ... goodwill and friendship. It depicts groups of men relaxing in informal discussion.¹⁷

Club minutes record that not all members were pleased with the design, the material used or its \$2000 price tag. Regardless, other decorative pieces, like the fibreglass interpretation of the four Marine Republics were examples of the appropriation of historical images connected with Italy's maritime past and perhaps, one might claim, with sailing toward the unknown. This appropriation served to legitimate the migratory experience as one in which individual fortitude and higher values associated with pluralistic democracy combined to conquer the seas peacefully rather than the one that saw migrants being themselves conquered by their adopted country. It was preferable to see and use the Club as the continuation of personal journeys. It is worth noting that the Club began to lose its prestige by 1970 partly due to the decline of immigration from Europe and given competition for members from new establishments representing Italian regional interests like Perth's Veneto Club.

The migrant soul

The variety of experiences among migrants to Australia were subsumed by their insertion into a system of global economy and a particularly Anglo-Saxon symbolic order entailing overseas opportunity, self-improvement and the taming of nature. Accordingly, Italian migrant identity is affected by three key positions. Firstly, a belief in the existence of an Italic consciousness serves as the source of creativity and tenacity giving purpose to artefacts of culture such as Italian clubs and clubhouses. Secondly, a European system of ethnic and multicultural differentiation—the grid of what Homi Bhabha calls a *museé imaginaire*—operates through exclusion to detail the distinctiveness of such artefacts.¹⁸ Thirdly, an 'antipodean presence' or concept of 'terra nullius' makes Australia a new world where assimilation and syncretism are negotiated.

Noting the rise of Afro-Caribbean film and the popularity of similar third world cinemas, Hall argues that the effect of their narratives is the construction of essentialised identities that subsume the varied experiences of individuals. "Such texts," he writes, "restore an imaginary fullness or plenitude, to set against the broken rubric of our past,"¹⁹ those varied historic circumstances and practices that have "disturbed the relatively 'settled' character of populations and cultures."²⁰

One can extend Hall's argument in terms of an experience of migrancy and consider not only cinematic representations, but other narrative forms that draw attention to the identity of the migrant, their private sentiments and public

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conduct. In the Italian Club, the commissioning of artworks representing uniquely Italian experiences, landscapes and history and their considered placement is but one obvious example. The episodic character of spaces designed for various 'Italian' activities from *bocce* to ballroom dancing is another. Pressure for improved amenities and enlarged spaces for balls in the third scheme were partly motivated by concerns that members were drinking and dancing elsewhere, on foreign terrain, namely Canterbury Court and the Embassy and Pagoda ballrooms. Signs placed alongside the *bocciodromo* and soccer field inform one not only of key sponsors of Club activities, but also narrate the story of migrant achievement. Placards for the successful Fini Group of local construction-oriented companies stand out. These artworks, spaces and billboards operate alongside efforts on behalf of the Italian government in the guise of cultural institutes and the Dante Alighieri Society, efforts on behalf of the Australian government to support multiculturalism, and those on behalf of local business associations such as the Italian Chamber of Commerce to further contacts between members of the migrant community. Subsequent additions to the clubhouse and developments adjacent to it have incorporated both the Society and Chamber of Commerce into an Italian cultural and business district.

There has always been an issue of control of representative powers between the Club and the Italian Consulate. At times the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs proved to be particularly uncooperative so that Club committee members often had to grovel for any contribution even in the form of a simple flag or photograph of a newly elected president of the Republic.²¹ The official ceremonies, however, such as Republic Day, survived in this country as a somewhat dramatic representation and were performed on the Club's stage. To obtain the Roman Wolf from the Italian government was a truly intense diplomatic exercise, but it served to make the new clubhouse official and respectable. Bureaucratic practices in the control and differentiation of roles between the Club and the Consulate as representatives of Italians in Australia, suggest that despite its architect's attempt to present a coherent architectural entity, the building as cultural artefact fails to represent in a transparent manner—like Ciucci's reading of Terragni's Palazzo Littorio scheme—a social reality that is unproblematic.

Before concluding it is worth offering a further word about arks and how they might assume more than metaphoric value in this study. Historians such as Alain Corbin tell us that ships, along with schools and prisons, offered pre-industrial instances in which the effects of crowded spaces could be experienced. These were instrumental in the formulation of both hygienic science and psychology and aided the conceptualisation of the senses of smell and personal space. Captain Cook's *Endeavour* is particularly interesting for it was depicted as "the first hygienic city in miniature: it was the antithesis of the ghost ship ravaged by pestilence" and, we would add, the ship of fools condemned to wander the seas without purpose or meaning.²² One can help but wonder if the impact of the vessels of migration upon their passengers was not in some ways similar. For the large number of rural migrants to the cities of Australia, did these passenger ships offer unique instances of a series of coherently organised spaces, functionally differentiated according to program and social class, that might be described as urban? For migrants from Italy's numerous cities, in being the first stage of a journey of individuation, might not these ships illustrate

by example something of the inadequacy of their birthplaces, in that the varied spaces of the piazza turned ballroom, the cafe or saloon, Corso or top-deck promenade were enlivened with the first sightings of meaningful opportunity?²³ Whereas Italian cities had been encumbered by the history, these ships ploughed the waves towards a bright economic future. In the case of the twin schemes of the Palazzo Littorio the pursuit of coherency, both cultural and formal occurred within Rome's marble wilderness or Rowe's collage city of fragments. In Perth, the Italian Club rests uneasily within what was presumed to be the cultural wilderness of Australia, while today calls for its rejuvenation are lost within the dissolution of fixed identities associated with debates over multiculturalism.

Conclusion: the politics of national identity

In structures such as ethnic clubs, it would not be uncommon to celebrate the absence of an overarching brief and subsequent building alteration as manifestations of popular culture. Given the multiple reworking of the headquarters of the Italian Club, the superimposition of a large singular space such as the first floor ballroom, the renewal of entrances and stairwells and the redevelopment of the street facade using Mazzotti's mural and strong horizontal lines re-establish a certain formal coherence. Indeed, can it not be said that the only thing that holds the structure together as a building type is the pursuit of coherency and a belief in its representational effects, the belief that in some way the clubhouse embodies ethnic character? Whether or not the Italian Club is successful in commissioning work of architecture is perhaps impossible to say and most likely beside the point. The point is that the pursuit of formal integration in architectural terms parallels that aesthetico-ethical exercise associated with culture: the integration of the soul.

What then might be said to constitute a politics of national identity in Perth's Italian Club? Firstly, one finds associated with the inhabitants of these urban forms and architectural spaces an emphasis on memory as an essential vehicle for personal identity. Given the central and interdependent roles played by characterisation, narrative and setting in forming that identity, memory likewise becomes the basis for communal association as the experience of history or migration are universalised. Secondly, there is an emphasis on individual autonomy. Given the view that we are responsible for constructing our ethical selves, cultural artefacts are assigned a purpose, and through the imposition of a brief, a *coherence* they might not otherwise possess. Thirdly, these forms and spaces operate as correlates to their inhabitant's ethical interiority, replacing the confessional and supplementing the psychiatrist's couch in which the trauma of separation and loss are recounted in pursuit of a healthy integration of the self, that is, in response to "deeply rooted convictions and sensibilities about what it is to be a fully developed human being."²⁴ This "old sense of teleology," as Hacking describes it, is evinced by Hall as he writes:

Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation. Identities relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself.²⁵

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Finally, there is a fourth aspect to this tradition which links individual identity to cultural artefacts. It is a view that a person—or soul—is formed from memories and character and that a threat to memory risks a loss of the self. It is the minimisation of such risk or, in other words, the maximisation of human potential that a politics of memory attempts to address. It is the terror associated with a loss of identity that draws meaning from the disparate events of history or chaos of the city and keeps the wolf at the door of the Italian Club.

Notes

- ¹ The first of Terragni's proposals was advanced to a second stage of the competition held in 1937.
- ² Cited in Thomas Schumacher, *Surface & symbol: Giuseppe Terragni and the architecture of Italian rationalism*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991, p 180.
- ³ Carolyn Springer, *The marble wilderness: ruins and representation in Italian romanticism, 1775-1850*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- ⁴ Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: multiple personality and the sciences of memory*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- ⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: essays on art and literature*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993.
- ⁶ Ian Hunter, *Culture and Government: the emergence of literary education*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, p ix.
- ⁷ Paul Gilroy suspects that much of the recent enthusiasm for culture and cultural studies rests in their association with England and an attempt to define English identity. One could argue that in broader terms the fascination with artefacts of culture are indicative of a project of grander scale: the articulation of human nature in terms of European values. See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, London: Verso, 1994, p 5.
- ⁸ A copy of the article from the 12 December 1930 edition of *Corriere degli Italiani* has been framed and is currently displayed on a wall of the lounge bar at the Club while the medal has apparently disappeared.
- ⁹ The population of Italian migrants in West Australia, recorded just before a wave of violent riots against Italians in the gold mining town of Kalgoorlie, East of Perth, amounted to 4300, an increase of 3000 over 1901. This is recorded in the *Italian Club Journal*, special Centenary issue (April 1979).
- ¹⁰ Interview with founding member Amedeo Re, 20 February 1997.
- ¹¹ Interview with Amedeo Re, 20 February 1997.
- ¹² *The West Australian*, 19 November 1968.
- ¹³ *The West Australian*, 29 November 1968.
- ¹⁴ Detail from an interview on 17 February 1997 with Frank Merizzi. Appropriately, for this image, Merizzi was president of the Club for many of its golden years. He was then and still is today a well-known and respected travel agent.
- ¹⁵ *Morning Herald*, 31 May 1901.
- ¹⁶ *Westerly*, March 1964.
- ¹⁷ *Sunday Times*, September 1968.
- ¹⁸ Homi Bhabha, 'The Third Space,' in Jonathan Rutherford (ed), *Identity: community, culture, difference*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, p 208.
- ¹⁹ Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity & Diaspora' in Jonathan Rutherford (ed), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 225.

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- ²⁰ Stuart Hall & Paul Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: Sage, 1996, p. 4.
- ²¹ Interview with Frank Merizzi, migrant and president of the third and existing clubs, 17 February 1997.
- ²² Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*, London: Macmillan, 1996, p 106.
- ²³ In the immediate, post-World War II period, many of the ships used for immigration to Australia had been converted from military craft, offering only one (generally poor) level of passenger accommodation. These had been chartered by the British and Australian governments as part of the assisted passage scheme. On 28 March 1955 the scheme had been renewed, though its scope was broadened to encourage migration from countries other than Great Britain while the chartering of ships ended. Both actions encouraged the wider participation of and competition between European shipping companies. The Italian and Greek lines profited by purchasing older vessels and converting and modernising them to be put into the migration trade. Thomas Fitchett writes: "The big Italian shipbuilding yards had developed a technique for modernising passenger liners past their first youth with a skill and imagination that had to be seen to be believed". See Thomas Fitchett, *The long haul: ships on the England-Australia run*, Adelaide: Rigby, 1980, p 65.
- ²⁴ Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, p 264.
- ²⁵ Hall & Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, p 4.