

TIME AND SPACE AS PROCESS AND PRODUCT: AN INTERPRETATION OF VERNACULAR AND TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

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What is vernacular and what is traditional? Although a lot of discussion revolves around defining and re-defining the vernacular; there is hardly any debate on the differences between vernacular and traditional in the field of architecture. As a result, these two terms are often interchangeably used, resulting in the lack of critical thinking in this area of study. This is perhaps one of the reasons why vernacular architecture is very often viewed in stylistic terms- like one of the "isms's" of architecture.

This paper posits that vernacular architecture is a time specific response to the local context, whereas traditional building is a continually modified process that is place specific.

This hypothesis is elaborated through a study of the craft skills of construction and a study of space use patterns of selected houses. This study is then cast in the dualities of space and time- where space is related to the architecture as a product frozen in time, and time is related to architecture as a process of constructing and using space that is place (culturally) specific.

This paper does not intend to overthrow existing ideas of the vernacular or the traditional. However, by looking at the terms in a different way, it hopes to inform the debate on the role of vernacular architecture

in the contemporary context. Thus, vernacular architecture can be seen not only as heritage that needs to be preserved but as a contemporary process that needs to be understood.