

# The Imaginary City: Horacio Coppola's Photographs of Buenos Aires from the 1920s and 30s

Ana Betancour

This text focuses on issues of representation particular to the city of Buenos Aires in the 1930s, through the modernist photographs of Horacio Coppola.

During this time, the edges of the city, its peripheries and everyday life became a strong feature of a rapidly changing city and laid the foundations for a mythology of the origins and the present status of a national identity.

The exploration of the relationship between the political and aesthetic discourse of these images is linked to the representations of the city itself. It sets the conditions for an interpretation of the work within the context of the cultural debate in Argentina and as part of the Modern project.

Discussing questions of nationality, constitution of culture in a peripheral country, and representation as an ideological construct.

Hard to believe Buenos Aires had any beginning. I feel it to be as eternal as air and water.

Jorge Luis Borges,  
*The mythical founding of Buenos Aires, 1929*

IN THE FIRST DECADES OF THE CENTURY, Buenos Aires was witness to extraordinary changes; the city was transformed, not only in appearance but also in urban life, in its very character as *city*. It was at the time the fastest growing city world wide along with Berlin and Tokyo, and grew seven-fold in fifty years. This resulted in a sprawling metropolis. The huge influx of immigrants at the turn of the century, and following decades had multiplied the population radically altering the demography of Buenos Aires, as well as its linguistic and cultural base. The former Spanish outpost was transformed into a heterogeneous city.

These changes were part of an immense state controlled enterprise aimed at forging economic development, with national and cultural identity as a construction legitimised, sanctioned and impelled by the state. These transformations encompassed massive changes across a multitude of scales that covered everything from large-scale immigra-

tion policy, transformation from colonial outpost to an economic powerhouse, the construction of cities and the institution of structures of power. In addition, the political system, ideological structures and cultural identity of the Modern project necessarily implicated mechanisms of representation as integral parts enmeshed in the systems of power. The relationship between ideology and representation, although never neutral, was in this case explicitly linked to formation or construction of identity.

This city is the focus for Horacio Coppola's images. From his photographic chronicle of Buenos Aires, he constructed a fragmentary view on the city: *"the first modern view of Buenos Aires translated systematically into images."*<sup>1</sup> These images rarely present to us a complete panorama, a tableau vivant where all parts seem to have their orderly place and role. Instead they present fragments, small snippets of the city, or large vistas taken from rooftops, carefully and artfully composed images and ones whose moment seems almost without composure. The sum of these fragments constitute a heterogeneity of images of the rapidly expanding city.

The spirit of 'the new' was at the centre of the debate of the artistic avant-garde in Argentina, and the Modern project during the 1920s and 30s was fully adopted as a model of progress. Nevertheless, it is significant that the process of modernity in Latin America and specifically in Argentina is understood as *"clear attempt to give the past a new function"*.<sup>2</sup> A progressive force, that does not establish a position of rupture against an existing or older order, as perhaps was the case in European cities. Instead, as Beatriz Sarlo writes *"In Argentine culture this general relationship with the past is given a specific form by the reading and imaginary recuperation of a culture much affected by immigration and urbanization"*.<sup>3</sup> In this one might locate Coppola together with Jorge Luis Borges as part of the intellectual avant-garde, attempting to define a national identity, an Argentine-ness. A project concerned with the construction of a past and an original myth as well as a future. One that belonged neither to the colonial past, nor to the European models on which the city was being modelled.

In Coppola's work from the 1930s, the survey of the city becomes an urban archaeology of modernity. An archaeology that attempts to construct and excavate an origin of modernity. The speculative re-construction of origins, in

which the past and present are put to use in constructing a progressive future. Borges' descriptions in words and Coppola's photographs, through an imagined past, rather than using descriptions of existing realities, function as fragments or beginnings of narratives which the reader / viewer somehow strives to complete. The emphasis of their artistic project is the definition of an urban modernity and the recuperation of a past or imagined Buenos Aires<sup>4</sup>, intrinsically connected to issues of representation.

The context of this text is divided in three main readings/interpretations of the city of Buenos Aires and focussing on a series of photographs by Horacio Coppola from the 1920s and 30s. His photographs depict the city as a fragmented city, as opposed to the official city; the urban grid as the ordering device and European cultural model. Considering the two as very different conditions, and suggesting that in the tension between the differing representations a third city emerges: the imaginary city. Articulated in Coppola's work as an ambiguous and elusive image allowing differing interpretations to occur. The city is neither of these interpretations alone but at the same time exists between these. This text in these terms offers these interpretations open to further conjecture that may be brought to the text by the reader, aiming to be in a way similar to the photographs of Coppola which are always open to interpretation.

## 1. The Fragmented City

### *Fragment 1: The sea in the city*

When I saw the prints, I became aware of my vision. Photography was the instrument. My vocation was revealed: a maker of pictures. A maker of pictures, but one who is aware of the primary value of words: the name spoken by the voice of one's being, one's spirit. Pictures to be looked at and to be known.<sup>5</sup>

Coppola

In the photograph captioned *"Vista de ciudad con transatlántico"*, or *"View of city with oceanliner"*, an ocean-liner seems to be part of the city. Ships that arrive and depart, the horizon interrupted by an unfinished high rise building, a square to be enclosed, masts of sea vessels, fragments from other centuries, and conflicting lines. A conglomerate of movements, structures, and the grey sky as present in the image as the city itself.



Grey from smoke fused together with the grey from clouds – as London, as Paris, as the world’s gigantic metropolises.<sup>6</sup>

Notwithstanding the unity of grey tones, there is an interesting intersection in the composition of the image. It is in-between the focal point of the picture, somewhere in the far distance of the implied ocean, and the strong sense of direction in the buildings in the front. In the contradictory direction of the chimneys of the ship, and the buildings framing it, and the diminishing scale of the buildings on one side of the photograph in comparison to the dominance of the tower rising on the opposite one. The sense of perspective it creates gives strong references to a city grid. The composition suggests directions made of converging and diverging lines, with discernible strong geometries. The framing of the image, in its straightforwardness reveals two oscillating subjects in the centre of the observer’s view, the building and the ship. There is a sense that everything is at the same time, in the same plane, and has the same presence in the picture. The viewer is left with a sense of ambivalence.

The ambiguity in the images can be associated to the quickly changing milieu of Buenos Aires, experienced as a loss of cultural referents as the earlier population becomes outnumbered and instability is brought on by the massive immigration. By the turn of the century, up to seventy percent of its working inhabitants were immigrants. They came to the country to provide labour for Argentina’s rapidly expanding export market to Europe:

More than fifty thousand workers come each year to the River Plata—Europeans washed up by desperation on these coasts. Eight of every ten workers or artisans are foreigners, and among them are Italian socialists and anarchists, Frenchmen of the Commune, Spaniards of the first republic, and revolutionaries from Germany and Central Europe.<sup>7</sup>

The enormous flood of immigrants into Buenos Aires, commencing in the 1870s, meant, for example, that the city expanded by over 300 percent from 187,000 inhabitants to 650,000 in the twenty-five years to 1895,<sup>8</sup> later swelling to 1.5 million by 1914 and to 2.5 million by the 1930s. The census of 1924 reveals that 184,427 immigrants arrived during that year, reported by a Buenos Aires newspaper as: “*An amount really full of promise because it represents an average of*

*more than 15,000 immigrants monthly, an important current of human energy flowing into our country.*”<sup>9</sup> These numbers, naturally enough, had drastic effects on the city’s fabric, on its public spaces and on the culture and ethnicity of the city. A culture of mixture was emerging and the city itself, rather than the nation, became the locus for the newcomers and the local inhabitants to found the references for this cultural identity.

#### *Fragment 2: Outskirts and peripheries*

Skin and gestures occupying space. Reflected light; trying to discover the source of energy and decode time.<sup>10</sup>

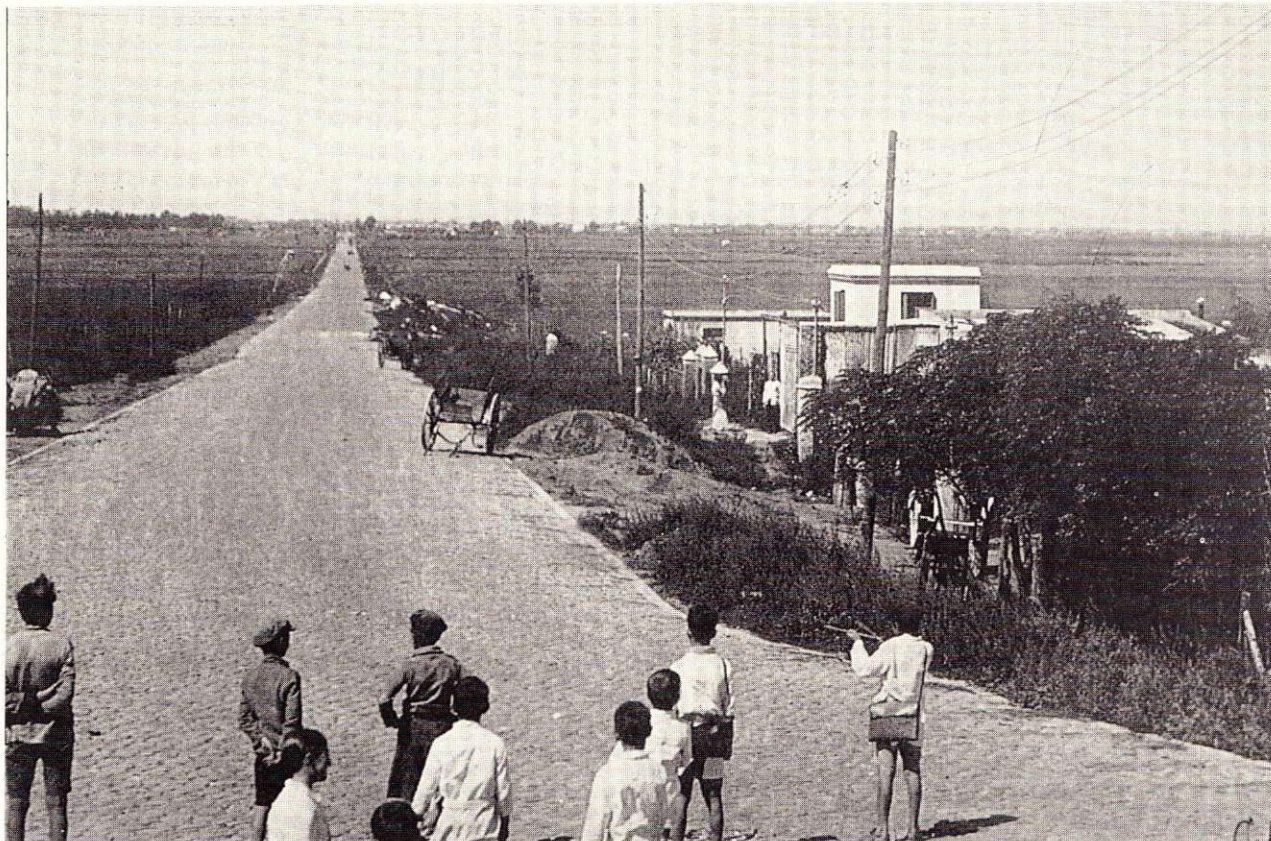
Coppola

Coppola’s photographs of the periphery of Buenos Aires in the 1930s show the ubiquitous grid receding into the pampas. A frontier pushed back as the city grid encroaches, appropriates, and establishes itself on the hinterland. The road extends to the horizon without deviation. Not a farmer’s lane, but a road laid down as relentless progress. A group of children stand, looking down the empty road in expectation, hope perhaps. They are emblems themselves of the future, enmeshed in the grand projects of the city and surveyors of the horizon. A single house marks the edge of the city and the beginning of the Pampas.

However, in isolation, without an understanding of the context that surrounds the photograph, read only as a cut-out of reality, this photograph suggests another meaning. Its bleakness, and emptiness as well as the sense of infinitude leaves one with a feeling of place-less-ness. As a fragment, the image out of context suggests ambivalence.

The flat plane on which the city is built, horizontal and without relief, is a specific characteristic that allowed for speculative development and expansion of the city without physical constraints. The porteños<sup>11</sup> ancestors, the Spanish Colonisers believed the city would become the major port of the southern Atlantic. However, the flatness of the city and its surroundings, which extend into the sea, meant that “*the bay’s bottom is essentially a continuation of the pampas.*”<sup>12</sup> Because of this the sea able to flow into the city in innumerable floods. Analogously, the city extends across the pampas like water. This duplicity marks the city’s equivocation of import and export, sea and pampas, Europe and the interior, and, in essence, registers the spatial duality of the city





The periphery of Buenos Aires in the Thirties

in the form of a horizon. “*And, above all, respect for the pampas. This mixture of native, tradition, pampas and patterns of squares blended traditional culture with the spirit of modernity.*”<sup>13</sup>

The periphery, depicted as a partial reality, the city as it is but projecting as it will be in the future is perhaps an archetypal fragment, one that has come to have an almost iconic status in relation to the modern city’s notion of progress. Like the Soviet photographs of the time showing progress and the future promise of a rapidly industrialised country. The periphery was an emblem of hope. However despite the periphery’s dynamic status as frontier during these time, the periphery was a collection of fragments. A heterogeneous patchwork of isolated houses and areas that collected the newly arrived immigrants but had not yet coalesced into the unified body of the city.

### *Fragment 3: Arriving and returning*

Chance awaits me. In my native country, on the plains, in the mountains, in Patagonia, the Delta, the shore, the north. Landscapes through which I have travelled. They lived on my eyes and in my ear: picture archives that are constantly vibrating[...]<sup>14</sup>

Coppola

Coppola was part of the generation of mixture/cultural heterogeneity.<sup>15</sup> He was a son of a numerous Italian immigrant family, born in Buenos Aires, and actively part of the cultural life in the city. In the late twenties, together with a group of young artists he created the first cinema-club in the country and published the cultural magazine *Clave de sol*. He made his first journey to Eu-

rope in 1930, and two years later, he returned to join the Bauhaus in Berlin.<sup>16</sup>

Returning to Buenos Aires in 1935, after two productive years in London, he held his first exhibition at *Amigos del Arte* and was thereafter commissioned by the mayor of the city, to do a systematic survey of the city. As he walked along the city from the centre to the outskirts he became known as the “Buenos Aires pedestrian.”<sup>17</sup> His friendship with Borges, led to different contributions in the legendary magazine *Sur*, and Borges book *Evaristo Carriego*. The series of images *Siete temas de Buenos Aires* appeared in the numbers 4 and 5 of the magazine, together with articles by Waldo Frank, Alfonso Reyes and Martin Heidegger. The images had no explanations more than simple captions with the names of the streets and the neighbourhoods. Coppola’s photographs, apparently drawing on influences from his time at the Bauhaus, presents a multitude of images many of which seem to almost by chance;

The ground, too, in a photo that looks like a mistake, a picture taken accidentally by his Leica, revealing the gleaming patent leather of a shoe and a glimpse of trouser and turn-up, walking on a honeycomb of geometrical white paving stones<sup>18</sup>

We can interpret the accidental shoe as a signature given Coppola’s *nom-de-plume*. Barnatán writes of the infinite combinations and the various apparently unrelated images of Coppola; “*Shop windows reflecting glassware and hats, suits and special offers. A telegraph pole like an altar to the branches of a centenarian tree.*”<sup>19</sup>

Coppola’s first book *Buenos Aires 1936*, with texts by Alberto Perbisch and Ignacio B. Anzoátegui, is an album of photographs, with his ideas about the city, and “*existential propositions.*”<sup>20</sup> There are images of the rationalist architecture of the barrio Norte, eighteenth-century neighbourhoods with their more provincial pace, Corrientes and Avenida de Mayo, cafes, neon lights, advertisements, endless streets, the outskirts of the city and the “dreadful sky of the *pampa.*”<sup>21</sup>

Fully aware of the importance of the project, Coppola took pictures from below, above and full in order to capture the spirit of the city, with results in which he produces something more than figurative photography, Revealing the essentials of his attitude to the problems then being posed by the avant-garde core.<sup>22</sup>



Avenida Juan B. Justo al Oeste/ Avenue Juan B. Justo to the west, 1936.

In Coppola’s survey of the city, he searched for the essence and character of Buenos Aires. The city he wanted to describe has been interpreted as not to “*anthropomorphise or sentimentalise Buenos Aires, but simply to show his urban surroundings exactly as they were.*”<sup>23</sup> This definition presupposes Coppola’s survey of the city as a truthful testimony of the time, and the images mirroring an existing reality. Using his own epithet ‘a maker of pictures’, I argue that rather than evidence, the images are instead a ‘making’, a construction of certain realities, and that Coppola is fully aware of the possibilities that photography, as means of production, offers in the articulation of the gaze upon the city.





Rivadavia entre Salgado y Medrano/ Rivadavia between Salgado and Medrano (street names), 1931.

In these and other images the city of Buenos Aires is little by little revealed, mosaic-like, as partly composed and partially accidental. The fragments of this mosaic-like appearance do not necessarily coalesce into a singular clear image of the city. Each of Coppola's images remains semi-autonomous and at times blank, with only the caption providing any connection to a physical place. Each fragment sometimes suggesting a possible tenuous link to some other place, some other image. The nature of these fragments make up the disconnected, the fragmented city:

The extreme mobility of urban society, the bustling crowds of strangers, the new customs and social mores, the successive waves of demolition and construction that followed one

another in accelerating rhythm – all suggested instability, loss of the past, and a future to be conquered.<sup>24</sup>

A city of full of immigrants who have just arrived by ship from Europe; strangers who are without origin or place in the city but who end up next to another stranger in the city; the constant change and urban transformation that was always altering the stable referents of the city; chance meetings and opportunities; the polyglot of various languages in the absence of a common one, the terrible conditions of overcrowding that overfilled the city at the time; the perpetually unfinished city in constant change. It is this fragmented city that Coppola seeks to capture.

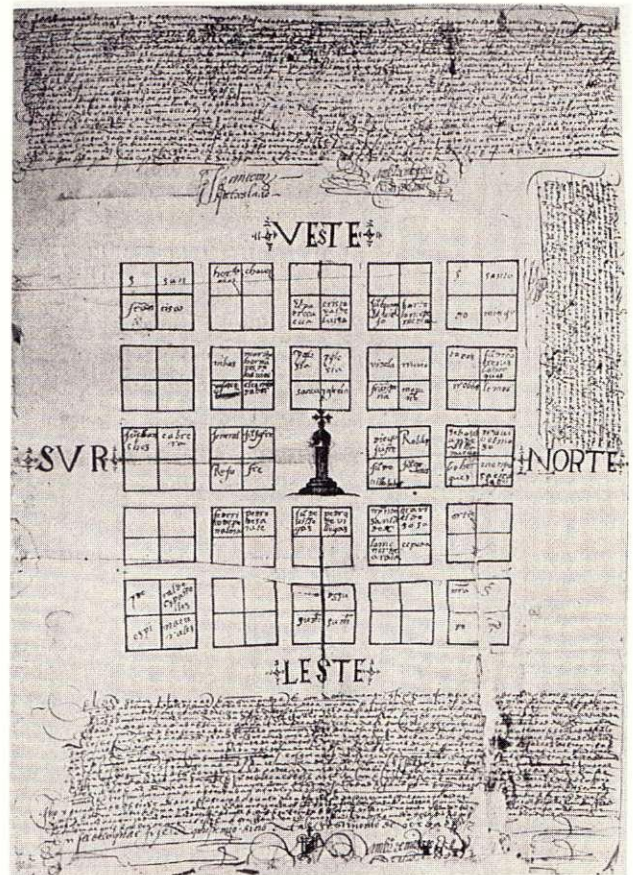
## 2. The Official City

In Buenos Aires...Sarmiento...imported sparrows so the city would...seem more like Paris.<sup>25</sup>

The immigration policy initiated in the 1880s by Sarmiento, the forefather of the Modern project as a state run form of social Darwinism intended to alter the demography of a population that by 1870, was 30 percent of African or indigenous Indian origin. It was in effect a form of miscegenation aimed specifically at whitening the population. But by the 1920s the effects of this *criollismo*<sup>26</sup> that threatened the notionally Spanish population could be said to have induced a crisis of identity, as Beatriz Sarlo writes, concerning Borges' search for identity: "...what does it really mean to be Argentine? Who has acquired the rights to define the still un-delimited field of Argentine culture?"<sup>27</sup> During this period, many attempts to construct a national identity were made by the state and later by various dictatorships as well as by the cultural elite. In these terms the Modern project that aimed to construct an Argentinean national identity is problematic against the background of massive change, urban growth and mass immigration that altered the demographic constitution. However from these attempts, it is no wonder that authenticity as origin and foundation often became a fictionalised construct, and at times an imaginary entity, which perhaps was used to make up for the lack of stable referents:

When accelerated changes in society arouse feelings of uncertainty... An old remembered or imagined order is reconstructed by the memory as past. Against this horizon the present is placed and evaluated<sup>28</sup>

The influx of people flooded into the grid of Buenos Aires. The tool of the modern project, and a device with which the state could efface differences and fill up the city whilst using the grid as a means of expansion and control. The grid of the modern project in the course of history took over from the preceding Spanish colonial grid, aided by the flatness of the pampas. Comparisons were made and the models offered by the most civilised yet dynamic of cities, New York and Paris were considered at the highest levels of planning and state policy as possible ways of implementing Buenos Aires self-conscious and wilful expansion via the grid. Controlled, sanctioned, planned and implemented

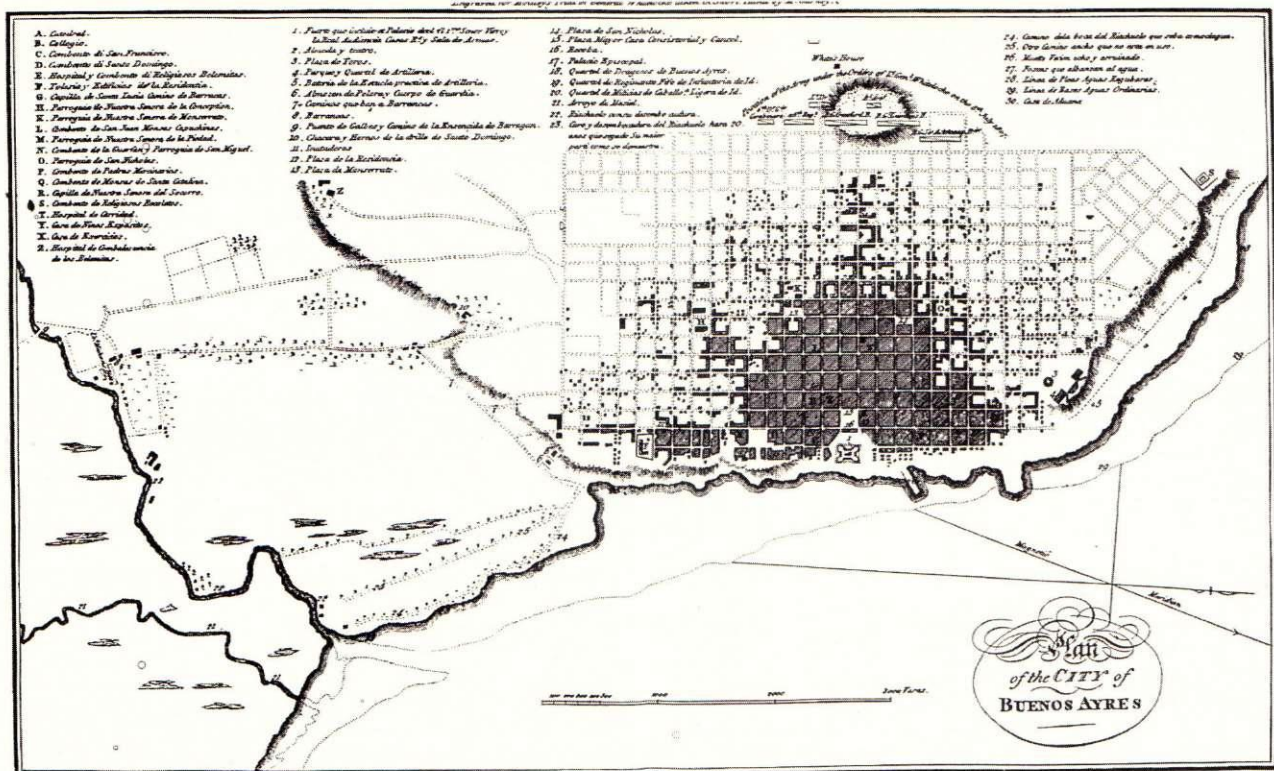


Mendoza (Ministerio de Educacion y Cultura. Archivo general de Indias)

by the state as a part of the modern project, the grid forms a part of the official city. Onto this pattern other more specific cultural actors and their actions were placed, ones that could transform the city into having a gravitas and dignitas that would merit such a civilised city as Buenos Aires desired to be.

Buenos Aires was described as the Paris of the South. The cutting of Hausmann-esque grand boulevards through the colonial Spanish grid during the mid nineteenth century by Torcuato de Alvear, shifted the perception of the city from a former outpost of the Spanish colony to a centre of culture belonging, therefore, to the same sphere as historic and 'civilised' Europe. Coupled with the construction of grand civic institutions such as the Congress Hall and the





Plan of the city of Buenos Aires (map from the beginning of the nineteenth century).

central *plazas* (squares), the city was envisioned as exemplary and necessary in the on-going construction of the identity of the nation. Corbusier's invitation to Buenos Aires in 1929 can be understood as part of the same, using (European) culture as the model, and architecture as the emblematic representation of the new, modern metropolis.

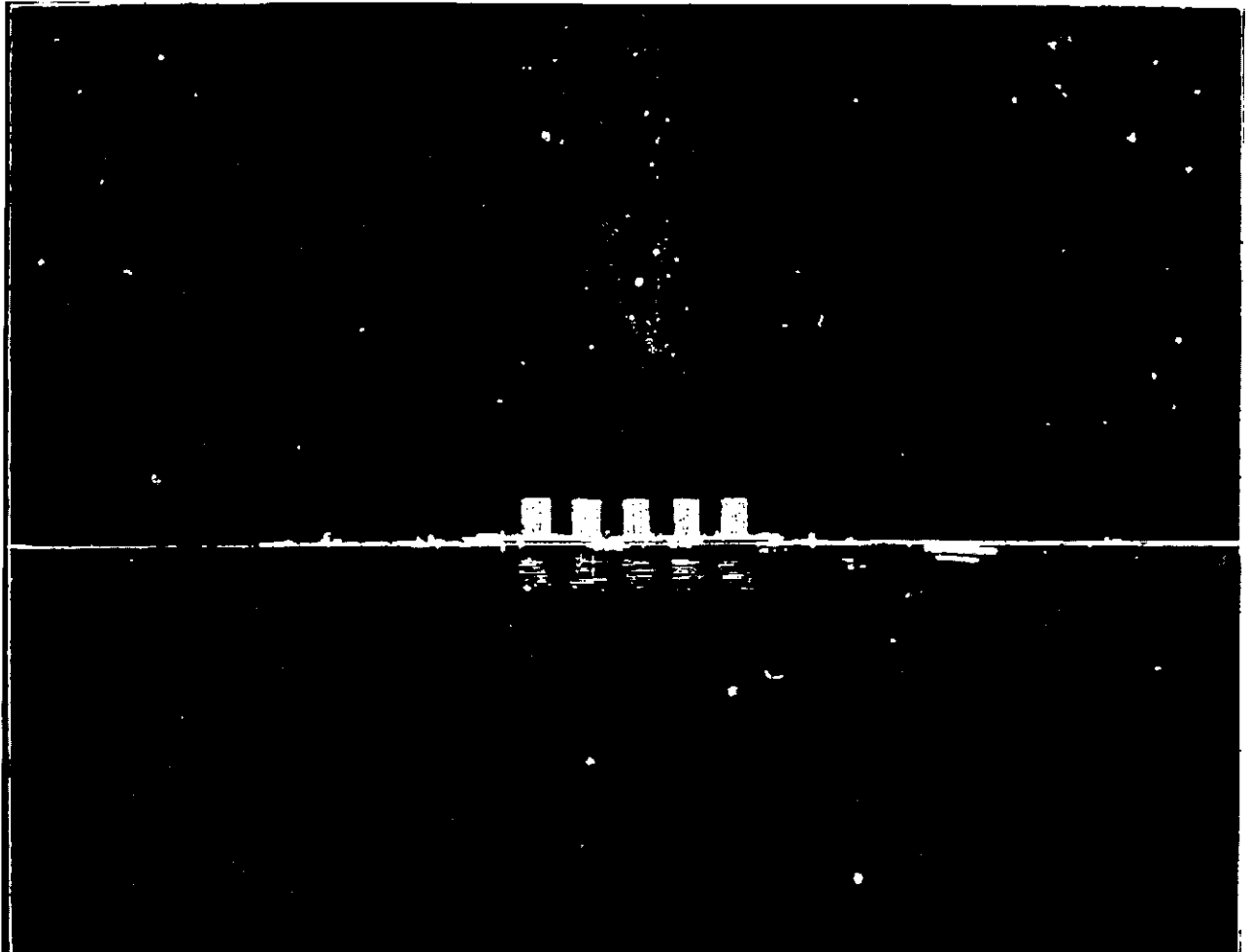
Corbusier approached the city from the sea at night. He saw a southern sky full of stars glittering mirage like on the surface of the River Plata. Effectively the characteristics Corbusier experienced were those around which the myths of the city was being constructed at the time. The city as he described it was hovering between these:

All at once, above the first illuminated beacons, I saw Buenos Aires. The uniform river, flat, without limits to the left and to the right; above your Argentine sky so filled with stars; a Buenos Aires, this phenomenal line of light beginning on

the right at infinite and fleeting to the left towards infinity. Nothing else, except, at the centre of the line of light, the electric glitter which announces the heart of the city. The simple meeting of the pampas and the river in one line, illuminated the night from one end to the other. Mirage, miracle of the night, the simple punctuation regular and infinite of the lights of the city describes what Buenos Aires is in the eyes of the voyageur. This vision remained for one instance and imperious I thought: nothing exists in Buenos Aires; but what a strong and majestic line<sup>29</sup>

His lyrical description suggests a complete seduction by the image, the appearance of things. This 'first impression', it can be speculated, enamoured Corbusier so much that it re-appears as his proposal for the city. Corbusier focused on the centre in his proposal for Buenos Aires and the development of a mirage-like apparition that floated above the Ri-





Cité d'Affaires, Le Corbusier, 1929

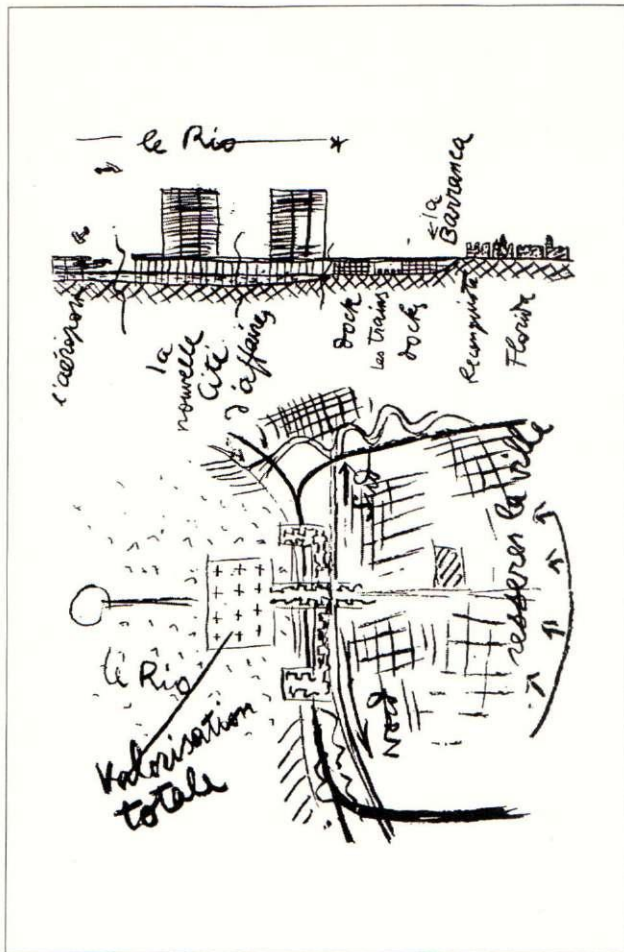
ver Plata. His plan for the city re-appropriated the thin line between the city and the river. Proposing a new, modern centre raised on piloti and located on an artificial island that would bring modern and cultural life to the city, and in essence an icon for a city that lacked differentiation and stability in its rawness. A large plateau built out over the river with restaurants and cafes and all the places people need to relax in, where the citizens of Buenos Aires will at last have regained the right to see the sea and the sky.<sup>30</sup>

Corbusier named his proposal *Cité d'Affaires* and on the plan of the platform wrote '*valorisation totale*'. It was as

though this faux-island manifested the mirage that Corbusier wrote of elsewhere. Buenos Aires was ambivalent for Corbusier: a city that elicited both mirage-like apparitions and abject horror:

Buenos Aires is one of the most inhumane cities I have known; really, one's heart is martyred. For weeks I walked its streets without hope like a madman, oppressed, depressed, furious, desperate.<sup>31</sup>

Given the two terms of reference it is possible to understand Corbusier's plan for the city as an escape, a retreat into a



Cité d'Affaires, Le Courbusier, 1929

form of aesthetic reaction against the horror of the raw urbanism of a Modern project. The Plan Voisin, radical though it may have been in Europe's history-bound cities creating ruptures in the fabric of medieval or imperial cities, here, the radical gesture was nothing other than a minor element in the project of the state in Buenos Aires at the time. The city was, and had been for over thirty years, involved in a grand project of modernism.

We can retrospectively view Corbusier's proposal as being an intrinsically European one. Looking back metaphorically towards the origin of culture and of urbanism—in this case Paris—as Collins writes:

in his ninth lecture (18 October, 1929) he advanced the possibility of adapting the Plan Voisin of Paris to Buenos Aires—or one might say, Buenos Aires to the Plan Voisin—affirming that Buenos Aires can transform itself into one of the great (dignas) cities of the world.<sup>32</sup>

Corbusier's presence and invitation to Buenos Aires by Silvia O'Campo and the Amigos del Artes society is indicative of the yearning, and in some ways, superficial allure of historically constituted origin to a displaced culture. Witness to the insistent claims of the mainly bourgeois Porteños that Buenos Aires is the Paris of the South. Therefore, Corbusier's plan was a desire to shift Buenos Aires towards that which was emblematic of a European modernism, which implicitly homogenised differences—in other words, the compass of the Plan Voisin pointed towards an implicit European centre, away from the intrinsic differences and cultural 'otherness' that were manifest in the social matrix of the city.

Around the same time, Werner Hegemann, a German-American architect and planner visited Buenos Aires and made a number of urban proposals for Buenos Aires. Hegemann's more in-depth proposal for Buenos Aires focused instead on the connection of the city to the pampas. In a sense, this further articulated the Modern project where the periphery effectively became the centre. Hegemann, unlike Corbusier, based the premise of his plan on an in-depth study and protracted fieldwork, rather than on immediate impressions. He immersed himself in the culture of the city and attempted to comprehend its complex dynamic. Collins writes

anchoring his recommendations in the local context, Hegemann reinforced the uniqueness of the South American city as it was striving for its own identity.<sup>33</sup>

In this focus on the periphery, Hegemann specifically considered the role of the barrio and presented his findings in a film entitled *La Ciudad del Mañana*, (City of Tomorrow). In part, Hegemann recognised the heterogeneity and ad-hoc nature of the outer edges of the city as

democratic in spirit...[he] saw in these unpretentious buildings, as well as in the self-built dwellings on the periphery of the capital, an incipient indigenous style.<sup>34</sup>



Collins, drawing on della Paolera, points out the crucial differences between these two imported authorities, Corbusier and Hegemann, as 'emblematic' of the difference between a *plano regulador* and a *plan regulador*. The former is a

graphic prescription for an urban intervention, which, at the moment of its creation, may be the correct prescription: but already while it is being implemented, the complex city organism has transformed itself.<sup>35</sup>

The latter is comprised of

many planos in a continuous, energetic planning politic that commands the momentum and flexibility required to organise a major city.<sup>36</sup>

A certain analogy is found between Corbusier, who looks to Europe and Hegemann, who sees the interior and the periphery with the hero of Cortázar's *Rayuela* (1963)<sup>37</sup>, who 'wavers irresolutely between Buenos Aires and Paris in a permanent alternation of "now here" and "now there"'.<sup>38</sup>

The official city as an issue of the modern state, can be read in terms of the desires for control effected by the Grid City. As well the impulse for homogeneity in the effacement of differences coupled with the imposition of an urban order manifest in boulevards and ordered streets. From Sarmiento's desire for a European-ness and for the reinvention or construction of Buenos Aires not as a barbaric colonial city:

...America, instead of remaining abandoned to the savages, incapable of progress, is today occupied by the Caucasian race—the most perfect, the most intelligent, the most beautiful and the most progressive of those that people the earth<sup>39</sup> but as a civilised city whose origins are pure is a desire for a utopia. Various exemplifications of this can be found, the invitation of Corbusier, the constant looking outwards towards Europe and the modelling of the city on places elsewhere which appear as ordered cities. These factors construct the official city.

### 3. The Imaginary City

I maintain – without having any spurious fears of the paradox or a romantic love thereof – that only new countries have a past [...]. If time is to be defined as succession, one

must acknowledge that more events occur at places which are more highly concentrated, that more time flows there and that our unstable side of the world is the most fruitful in this respect. [...] in Granada, in the shadows of towers more than a hundred times older than the fig trees, I have not felt this fleeting time, yet have felt it at the intersection of the streets Pampa and Triumvirato: a blanch, colourless place, nowadays marked by clay tile roofs, where, three years ago, its characteristic feature comprised smoking brick kilns and, five years ago, chaotic building sites.<sup>40</sup>

Borges *Evaristo Carriego*, 1930

It is in Coppola's infinite perspective of streets-always-the-same, that he finds a location for constructing the essence of the city: in the outskirts or periphery. In these years the "suburbs emerged as a literary and political urban theme."<sup>41</sup> The periphery here is not the left over nether-spaces of the city but a frontier whose endurance in the beginning of the century is temporal, progressive and as necessary as the influx of immigrants who flood into the city from the sea. The edge of the city becomes in this a frontier to be colonised by the rapidly advancing city. What becomes evident from this chance mythology present in Coppola's photograph is the not yet city. Coppola's photograph is an emblem of modernity. A temporal periphery, the mode of Coppola here is not so concerned with contextualising and spatialising the future city but in the capture of a chance moment, a fragment of system of representation of modernity, is a dynamic, which many have written about:

The man of the interior has stripped Buenos Aires of any materiality and transformed her into a formidable emporium of the best that exists in our reality and in our imagination. Thus Buenos Aires is the centre of a circumference formed by the most populated points and cultivated by the interior. They are all at the same distance. They are periphery as she is centre.<sup>42</sup>

The flat *pampas*, often described as a sea of grass, is the hinterland on which the economic future of Argentina was assured. The pampas was largely unwritten-about until the nineteenth century in terms of the history of Argentina and Buenos Aires in particular. Upon this blank sheet, the speculations of the Modern project occurred. Erasing the tensions between the country and the colonial city that



clung to the edge that had befallen the city in previous times—and erasing the distinction between barbarism and civilisation that Domingo Sarmiento, the forefather and future president of modern Argentina, saw<sup>43</sup>. Sarmiento's vision of an urban and cultivated utopia proclaimed that “*the pampas is an immense sheet of paper upon which a poem of prosperity and culture will be imposed.*”<sup>44</sup> Sarmiento played upon the dramaturgy of this tableau in describing the pre-modern pampas as ‘shadow’ and the river as ‘light.’<sup>45</sup>

Sarmiento, founder of the Animal protection Society, preaches pure unabashed racism and practices it with untrembling hand. He admires the North Americans, free from any mixture of inferior races, but from Mexico southwards he sees only barbarism, dirt, superstition, chaos and madness. Those dark shadows terrify and fascinate him. He goes for them with sword in one hand, lamp in the other. He publishes prose works of great talent in favour of the extermination of gauchos, Indians, and blacks and their replacement by white labourers from northern Europe.<sup>46</sup>

The expansion of the periphery of Buenos Aires from the 1900s to the 1950s was the epitome of the Modern project. The unfolding of the periphery was not conceived of as a “*homogeneous counterpole to the space of the centre.*”<sup>47</sup> Gorelik explains that in the case of Buenos Aires, the periphery was the site of the most dynamic and progressive urban experiments on a *tabula rasa* that had few modern precedents, unlike the periphery in older, more established cities where the periphery might be regarded with a kind of derision.

It was precisely the peripheral city districts which often served as a place providing the opportunity for, and experience of, the most ambitious plans.<sup>48</sup>

This Modern project built on the ‘utopian’ vision of Sarmiento and others half a century before, remains unfinished. The resulting urbanity, as Gorelik writes,

appears as a collection of model buildings, like postcards containing unkept promises, in which objets trouvés and insignificant gaps alternate on the unvarying expanse of the pampas.<sup>49</sup>

In what Octavio Paz calls “*tradición de ruptura*”<sup>50</sup>, the tradition of ruptures that modernity embodies, the city would seem to be destined to incompleteness, emblematic of this phenomena.

Gorelik, borrowing from Borges, speaks of the periphery as a temporal condition in Buenos Aires. The rapid modernisation programme of Buenos Aires as a modern state sanctioned development that generated the periphery as a progressive frontier, a grid of urbanity spreading over the pampas. In this programme, the grid is a tool of a Modern project that, with civic and state impetus and drive, is enmeshed in a dense “*public, metropolitan space.*”<sup>51</sup> The grid, “*the promise of equality and integration*”<sup>52</sup> was immediately filled with a diverse population and served effectively to integrate the differences within the construct of the *arrabals* (outskirts).

In a similar vein to the desire of the city to be Parisian, Miguel Barnet writes about the authenticity of writers whose works come to Latin America from outside. A pattern that presumes Latin American writing as being associated with the corporeal body or immanence, whereas European writing is connected with the mind or transcendence. Defined in terms of identity this could be expressed as *la magia*<sup>53</sup>, one of the main characters in Cortazar's novel *Hopscotch*, or elsewhere as Latin American magical realism<sup>54</sup> as opposed to European ‘culture’. This touches upon the thesis of the Uruguayan writer Angel Rama who postulates and traces what he terms the “*Lettered City*”. A city of words that often preceded the physical city in South America defined usually from the outside, from colonial Spain in laws, decrees, and culture for example or from France or Europe as words, which articulate the ‘body’. The map therefore in this context is a carrier of an imaginary city.

In terms of most communication theories and common sense, a map is a scientific abstraction of reality. A map merely represents something which already exists objectively ‘there’. In the history ...this relationship was reversed. A map anticipated spatial reality, not vice versa. In other words, a map was a model for, rather than a model of, what it purported to represent... It had become a real instrument to concretize projection on the earth's surface.<sup>55</sup>

Maps as presenting false images of existent realities is one of the subjects of discussion in Benedict Anderson book, *Imagined Communities*. In this he describes how maps, as with other representations, becomes the instrument with which political ambitions have been enacted. Borders had an important role in



defining the spatial form of the contained political regions... and boundaries occur where the vertical interfaces between state sovereignties intersect the surface of the earth...<sup>56</sup>

Looking at a map depicting Buenos Aires and surroundings in the beginning of the 19th century shows the grid laid upon the land and the existing buildings. The legal boundaries for the city settlement evolved in accordance with the planning ordinances of the Law of the Indies, and the Iberian conquerors created, in Angel Ramas clear words: “*a supposedly 'blank slate', though the outright denial of impressive indigenous cultures.*”<sup>57</sup>

The implementation in the colonies of the Spanish *cuadrícula*, and the rational urban grid from the late 19th century are very much alike. The lines are drawn upon a supposed ‘blank sheet of paper’, a landscape not yet built. The grid as a repetitive structure, and thus ordering pattern urban life is not specific to the city of Buenos Aires. What is more specific as Silvestri and Gorelik points out, is the tradition of understanding the grid as a cultural interpretation. Despite divided reflections, upon the relationship between grid and pampas, Coppola encompassed the preoccupations of the avant-garde in the twenties: ‘the recovery of the pampas as the essential form of the *criollo* culture’. In these boundaries of the city, he created a link between the most modern and the most traditional through the means of the grid. In the place where the city fuses together with the landscape. Inspired by Borges proposition of the square-block as the location for the mythological foundation of Buenos Aires, a structure that survives the passage of time. Coppola’s images of this proposal are translated in the re-vindication of the periphery, in an emphasis on perspective images of endless streets, horizontality, and simple orthogonalities in the city. The underlying structure, the grid, is the essential ordering principle of the city and is used by Coppola to this extent.

The concentration of population in the peripheral neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires paralleled the concentration of political power in the city centre, creating a tense and unruly agglomeration of social forces that seemed constantly to threaten the kind of eruption that would surely subvert the hierarchical structures of urban life.<sup>58</sup>

Yet as the names of the nation and its key city never managed to match the reality that promised silver and good air, Argentina and Buenos Aires, so too there is an apparent gap, an absence between the image and the reality of the city. From this lack of substantial reality, of authority, one can understand why Buenos Aires for example desired to be the Paris of the South. Paris, being deemed to be an authentic origin and repository of culture, as if to make up for the absence of reality that the fictional identity could never attain. In terms of its cultural identity, the city appealed to elsewhere, to England for its model of society, to Europe for its authenticity; to Paris for an image of its desire and later to the myth of the pampas as a source of its mythology.

In the slippage between image and reality, the city of Buenos Aires appeals on the one hand to an already established image, that of Paris for example, but on the other hand the manifest reality of the city is not as defined. The masses of immigrants who fill the city do not constitute this city or any definition of urbanity during the 1930s. They might be described more closely as a collection of fragments, a heterogeneous mixture of differing origins, languages and cultures who apparently occupy the same space, having no little in the way of endurance, history or place.

Into the gap between the city’s image and its reality Coppola’s work, his photographs therefore might be said to faithfully reproduce this manifest gap or rupture. His documentation of the city being the manifestation of a heterogeneous collection of fragments. However to assume the neutrality and passivity of such a reading would be to ignore the role of Coppola and his contemporaries in the mythologising of this condition. A discursive position which considers the nature of technology and representation in a context that is itself a modernisation implying industrial, and technological change.

### *Imagem*

The photographic image and the image in the retina of the eye coincide, but the perception of this image is not necessarily faithful [...] Perception is, one might say, a composite of rationalisations running parallel to the reality of the object that the eyes see [...] Imagem is one of the possible



definitions of what is visible, one of the infinite definitions that light offers to our eyes [...] photography as a method, a philosophy of truth.<sup>59</sup>

Coppola

In conventionally bound notions of photography, the image is defined as a truth's image,<sup>60</sup> and the act of making photographing as recording, documenting, mirroring reality. In this assumption, the photographic image is "a transparent presentation of a real scene,"<sup>61</sup> and the 'visible' becomes associated to the real, and henceforth to truth, in what John Berger calls a positivistic use of photography<sup>62</sup>.

The relationship between image and ideology, raises the question of how identity is constructed in this, the concept of photography as 'a transparent' reflecting the reality it represents, presents some complications.<sup>63</sup> This is borne out by Laclau who considers representation not as a mere transmission, direct projection or transparent to the reality it shows, cannot simply be. Laclau points to the impossibility of both 'absolute representation' and 'total transparency' between the:

...representative and the represented, means the extinction of the relationship of representation. If the representative and represented constitute the same and single will, the 're' of representation disappears since the same will is present in two different places. Representation can therefore only exist to the extent that the transparency entailed by the concept is never achieved; and that a permanent dislocation exists between the representative and the represented.<sup>64</sup>

It is into Laclau's 'dislocation' that we could posit Coppola's 'philosophy of truth'. The pure reality or *Imagem*, the elemental nature of the image,<sup>65</sup> has an existence on its own as well as an own form of expression. The photographic image is defined to have similarities with reality, but it is in the perception of the image that the image is 'not necessarily faithful' to reality. His endeavours are not to establish images as documents, but how the "making of pictures" can become a narrative construction, a *gaze* upon the city.

Coppola is trying to construct an order for reality; to create a context perhaps less about place and spaces than as a temporal condition, to capture a moment in time as a fragment. He attempts to reconstruct the past and the present, laying the foundations of a mythology of the city, in

the absence of places. Yet, at the same time he claims a necessity of the image to be able to project the desire, an imagined identity of the place and its culture. In the light of these definitions, and reading Coppola's images as an architectural, urban and cultural programme, as much constructed around what you can't see as what you can. The relationship between how identity is constructed and articulated within the representation of the city and what fails to be represented, the absent, the not yet present, the erased or the disappeared are inextricable in the modern city that is rapidly changing. It is as images that are not claiming to be authentic<sup>66</sup>, mimetic of a reality they represent but that attempt to capture the 'essence of the city.' Henceforth the photographs played an important role in the construction of an urban imaginary of the city of Buenos Aires, contributing to the cultural debate in Argentina of the thirties.

## Postscript

The meaning of a photograph, like that of any other entity, is inevitably subject to cultural definition.

Allan Sekula

In 1980, during the military dictatorship years in Argentina, photographs of Horacio Coppola from the 1930s, were re-issued in book form. In this book, the photographs, which had chronicled the Modern project and a time of expansion, were presented with a yellow-toned patina and entitled *Viejo Buenos Aires, Adios*, (Good Bye, Old Buenos Aires). With the images a text followed, re-interpreting Coppola's photographs, and the images are presented as to be nostalgic images for a city in transformation.

A photograph can be the same fragment of the city thus meaning two different things. An ocean liner, on one sight becomes an emblem of the future and on the other a fading memory. The city itself is a collection of fragments and the *gaze* upon the city – a collection of images. In one context looking to the future, and in the other to old memories. In the 1930s Buenos Aires was emerging as a 'culture of mixture', a place of cultural heterogeneity, and the debate evolved critically around issues of nationality and cultural heritage.<sup>67</sup> The same city and the same historical period that in the 1980s, were described as authentic, unified cultural expression of the nation state Argentina.



Ana Betancour

is an architect, doctorate student at KTH, dept. for Design methodology, and senior lecturer at the University of East London. She has studied at the School of Architecture, KTH, Stockholm, School of Architecture, ETSAB, Barcelona, and the Bartlett School of Architecture, in London. She is involved in an own practice with Peter Hasdell.

## Notes

1. Adrian Gorelik, "Imágenes para una una fundación mitológica", in *Punto de Vista*, NR 53, 1995, Buenos Aires, p 20.
2. Beatriz Sarlo, *Jorge Luis Borges - A writer on the edge*, London: Verso, 1993, p 17.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p 121.
5. Horacio Coppola quoted in Josep Vincent Monzo, "This is Buenos Aires" in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p 153. (The English translation in the exhibition catalogue is incorrect).
6. Caras y Caretas, October, 1930, in Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Visión, 1988, p 13.
7. Eduardo Galeano, *ibid.* "1890 River Plata: Comrades", *Memory of Fire*, transl. Cedric Belfrage, London: Quartet books 1986, p.555.
8. For further elaboration refer to James Scobie's classic two-part study: *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb 1870-1910*, New York: OUP, 1974.
9. From Spanish in own translation; "La Argentina recibía a 15 mil inmigrantes por mes", El Popular newspaper, Buenos Aires, 9 Jan 1925.
10. Horacio Coppola in "This is Buenos Aires", in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, op. Cit. p 153. (The English translation in the exhibition catalogue is incorrect).
11. The Porteño the name given to the Buenos Aires inhabitant, refers to the harbour, the port. The Porteño's role is effectively a transitional one. During the 1880s, when ships were forced to anchor five or six miles off the coast horse and cart were used to traverse the land and the water, due to the shallowness of the bay and lack of an adequate harbour; "...a base of planks two or three inches apart, through which water splashes at every wave, mounted on a big heavy wooden axle between a pair of gigantic wheels. To this ungovernable machine is tied a horse The wild brutish appearance of the sun-tanned cart drivers who, half naked swear and scream and shove one another and whip their poor exhausted horses into the water." Suarez, Odilia E., 'Buenos Aires, La Story Urbanística', *Abitare*, No. 342, July/August 1995, p.87.
12. George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires 1800-1900*, Madison/Wisconsin; The University of Wisconsin press, 1980, p.11.
13. Horacio Coppola quoted in Josep Vincent Monzo, "This is Buenos Aires" in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p 152.
14. Ibid., p 153.
15. Coppola's generation that saw a huge influx of European immigrants into the city.
16. After the Nazis closed the Bauhaus School in Dessau, Mies van der Rohe opened a private version of the Bauhaus School in Berlin that lasted only a couple of months. Coppola participated there in the photographic studio of Moholy Nagy. During his time in Berlin he met Grete Stern, with whom he moved to London and later married. He stayed two productive years in Europe, making films, images for *Cahiers d'Art* in Paris, and several exhibitions at the Louvre and the British museum.
17. Juan Manuel Bonet, in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p 151.
18. Marcos Ricardo Barnatan, "Misterious Buenos Aires" in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p 157.
19. Ibid., p 157.
20. Adrian Gorelik, in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, 1996, p 154.
21. Adrian Gorelik, Horacio Coppola, testimonios, *Punto de Vista*, Año XVIII Numero 53, Buenos Aires, Noviembre 1995, p 22.
22. Ibid., p 22.
23. Ernesto Schoo "Horacio Coppola" in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p 159.
24. Angel Rama, *The lettered city*, transl. Charles Chasteen, Durham: Duke University Press, 1996, p 70.
25. Dot Tuer, in "Cartographics of Memory," *Parachute*, No.83, Jul/Aug/Sept 1996, p.25.
26. *Criollismo* is the adjective deriving from criollo, from creole.
27. Beatriz Sarlo, "Xul Solar", in *Argentina 1924- 1994*, Exhibition catalogue: MOMA, Oxford 1994, p. 34.
28. Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 30*, in Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Vision, 1988 p 31. In an own translation from Spanish; "Cuandos cambios acelerados en la sociedad suscitan sentimientos de incertidumbre. Un viejo orden recordado fantaseado es reconstruido por la memoria como pasado. Contra este horizonte se coloca y se evalua el presente."
29. Le Corbusier, *Precision; On the present state of architecture and city planning*, ed. Edith Schreiber Aujame, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991, p.201
30. "Argentina is green and flat, and its destiny is violent—an



- American city with all its innocence, fear, and horror of making mistakes. It encourages Louis XVI and Renaissance emulation, but it is also an explosive city with a brand-new engine, standing on ground strewn with tools, the result of over-hasty and now useless colonisation. Buenos Aires epitomised urbanism in the modern era. One day, drawing on my earliest impressions of the riverside city, I built the city that Buenos Aires could have been if only far-sighted civic fervour, combined with imperious reason, had succeeded in arousing the necessary enthusiasm. I had the distinct feeling that this enthusiasm would manifest itself very soon here, so great is the danger, so great is the pride, so ripe is the city of Buenos Aires for architectural development“, *Ibid.*, p.202.
31. *Ibid.*, p.202.
  32. Christine Collins Crasemann, , “Urban Interchange in the Southern Cone: Le Corbusier (1929) and Werner Hegemann (1931) in Argentina“, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, No. 542, June 1995, p.211.
  33. *Ibid.*, p.213.
  34. *Ibid.*, p.221.
  35. *Ibid.*, p.224.
  36. *Ibid.*, p.224.
  37. Julio Cortazar, *Hopscotch*, translation by Gregory Rabassa. 1966. Reprint, New York: Random House, 1972.
  38. Rosalba Campra, *Abitare*, “Buenos Aires in Literatures Mirror“, p.144.
  39. Marta E. Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, San Francisco: Westview Press, 1995, p.24.
  40. Jorge Luis Borges, *Evaristo Carriego*, 1930, in *Obras completas*, Buenos Aires: Emece, 1974, p 107. English translation in Andreas Gorelik, “A place of time. The periphery of Buenos Aires“, *Daidalos*, No 50, December 1993, p 107.
  41. Adrian Gorelik, in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p 154.
  42. Martinez Estrada, *Civitas, Abitare*, July-August 1995, No 342, p 21.
  43. Refer to Ana María Barrenechea, “Sarmiento and the “Buenos Aires/Córdoba” duality“ in Donghi, T H., Jaksic, I. & Kirkpatrick, G., (eds), Masiello, F., *Sarmiento, Author of a Nation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, p.62.
  44. *Ibid.*, p.63.
  45. *Ibid.*, pp 62-63. Donghi, Jaksic, Kirkpatrick & Masiello elaborate this issues in their biography of Sarmiento. Tulio Halperín Donghi, et.al., *Sarmiento. Author of a Nation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
  46. Eduardo Galeano, op.cit., “1870: Buenos Aires: Sarmiento“, p.530.
  47. Andreas Gorelik, “A place of time. The periphery of Buenos Aires“, *Daidalos*, No 50, December 1993, p 107.
  48. *Ibid.*, p 109.
  49. *Ibid.*, p 109.
  50. *Ibid.*, p 109.
  51. *Ibid.*, p 110.
  52. Paul Carter’s writings on the colonial city in Australia, *Road to Botany Bay*, London: Faber and Faber, 1987, p 204: “Land there could be regarded very much like land here. Empty spaces on the map, accountable and equally subdivided, should yield returns that could more or less be computed in advance. Located against the imaginary grid, the blankness of unexplored country was translated into a blueprint for colonisation: it could be divided up into blocks, the blocks numbered and the land auctioned without ever having to leave their London offices.“
  53. In English translation; the (female) magician. “... ‘I believe in the principle that thought must precede action, silly.’ ‘you believe in the principle,’ said La Maga. ‘How complicated. You’re like a witness. You’re the one who goes to the museum and look at the paintings. I mean the paintings are there and you’re in the museum too, near and far away at the same time. I’m painting, this room is a painting. [...] You think that you’re in this room, but you’re not. You are looking at the room, you’re not in the room.“ Julio Cortazar, *Hopscotch*, translation by Gregory Rabassa. 1966. Reprint, New York: Random House, 1972, p 20.
  54. “Fuelled with the desire to see Latin America narrative awarded its rightful place in a canon of international literature, this industry has purchased its entry ticket at the expense of downplaying the transitory, or historically and regionally specific, aspects of these works.“ Colas, p. 31.
  55. Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam mapped: A history of the Geobody of Siam*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1988, p 310, in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities*, London: Verso, 1991, pp. 173-174.
  56. Richard Muir, in *Modern Political Geography*, p 119, New York, Macmillan, 1975, p 172, in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities*, London: Verso, 1991, p 152.
  57. Angel Rama, *The Lettered city*, translation John Charles Chasteen, Durham: Duke University Press, 1996, p 2.
  58. *Ibid.*, p 68.
  59. Horacio Coppola, in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p60.
  61. In his book, *The Vision machine*, Paul Virilio writes on the impact of photography on investigative techniques. Followed by the birth of the documentary, the use of the new means of (re)production had determinant influences on the introduction of fingerprints techniques and “metric photography of the spot“ as basis in criminal investigation. Documentary as an adjective deriving and having the character of a document becomes here the very evidence of the committed crime. Eyewitnesses became in comparison with the “truth’s image“ worthless perceptions, and a significant shift from the importance of the mind in favour of the ‘image-document’, instituted the techniques of representation and their reproductive power



- as the main material for establishing evidences. The documentary condition, Virilio argues has become such that "... *The human eye no longer gives signs of recognition, it no longer organises the search for truth, it no longer presides over the construction of truth's image...*", Paul virilio, *The Vision machine*, London: British Film Institute, 1994, p 43.
62. Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity, Modern architecture as Mass Media*, Cambridge/Mass.: The MIT Press, 1994, p 77, and John Berger, "Ways of remembering" from *Another way of telling*, London: 1982 in Jessica Evans, *The camerawork essays*, London: Rivers Oram Press, 1997, p 43.
63. John Berger and Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling*, Cambridge: Granata Books. 1982.
64. The nature of human relations are not any longer explicit, in Brecht's terms the "*actual reality has slipped into the functional.[...] So something must in fact be build up, something artificial, posed.*" A photograph can depict social differences, but no conflicts are at sight. Meaning in Brecht's terms has been constructed as artifice in the 'slippage'.
65. Ernesto Laclau, *New reflections on the revolution of our time*, London: Verso, 1990, p 38.
66. Horacio Coppola, in Gonzales, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p .67.
68. Benjamin in his seminal essay "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" speaks of the concept of origin of a work of art problematized by the means of mechanical reproduction. In this, he elaborates the loss or lack of singular uniqueness of the photograph effecting the matrix of relations that art before photography had with its duration and value as well as the intrinsic relationship to a specific author. When authenticity stops being a 'criteria' for the production of an artist, the "*... total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics.*" The notions Benjamin touches upon could equally be used to speak about the modern city of Buenos Aires. The city in its reproducibility, the rubber stamping of its grid and mass import of people entered precisely into a realm of reproduction, in which singular uniqueness is lost.
69. Significant political, social and cultural changes have produced a crisis in the identity of the city of Buenos Aires.

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### Captions and image references

- Image 1: Vista de ciudad con transatlántico/ View of city with oceanliner, 1936  
GONZÁLES, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p 46.
- Image 2: The periphery of Buenos Aires in the Thirties  
GORELIK, Adrian, "A place of time, The periphery of Buenos Aires", *Daidalos*, No 50, 1993, p 108.
- Image 3: Avenida Juan B. Justo al Oeste/ Avenue Juan B. Justo to the west, 1936.  
GONZÁLES, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p 138.
- Image 4: Rivadavia entre Salgado y Medrano/ Rivadavia between Salgado and Medrano (street names), 1931.

- GONZÁLES, Julio Ivam Centres, *El Buenos Aires de Horacio Coppola*, Valencia: IVAM Instituto Valenciano de arte Moderno, 1996, p 104.
- Image 5: Mendoza (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura. Archivo general de Indias)  
RAMA, Angel, *The Lettered City*, transl. John Charles Chasteen, Durham: Duke University Press, 1996, p 1.
- Image 6: Plan of the city of Buenos Aires (map from the beginning of the nineteenth century)  
KIRKPATRICK, F.A., *Compendio de Historia Argentina* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931, pp 54, 55.
- Image 7 AND 8: *Cité d'Affaires*, Le Corbusier  
LE CORBUSIER, *Precisions on the present state of architecture and city planning*, ed. Edith Schreiber Aujame, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991.