

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323456945>

Positioning the Global Imaginary: Arata Isozaki, 1970

Article in *Critical Inquiry* · February 2018

DOI: 10.1086/696910

CITATIONS

2

READS

1,147

1 author:



Mark Jarzombek

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

84 PUBLICATIONS 225 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Global Imaginaries [View project](#)



Office of Uncertainty Research (OUR) [View project](#)

Positioning the Global Imaginary: Arata Isozaki, 1970

Mark Jarzombek

One day I noticed two books . . . sitting side by side on a bookshelf, and realised it is possible that two types of architecture from two different places (spatiality) and times (temporality) can be equidistant from my position, not to mention similar to my methodological preferences.

—Arata Isozaki¹

Is there something to be gained any more by thinking the term *global* as an adjectival noun? On the surface this is a strange question to pose because the word is practically meaningless in its ubiquity. The thingness, so to speak, of *global* has evaporated: global industries, global science, global news, global education, global florist exchange, global commerce, global village, global warming, and so on. *Global* has gone from rare to ubiquitous. It has become a parasitic—if not a predatory—adjective. So once again: Is there something to be gained by thinking *global* as an adjectival noun?

The historicity of the word is relevant to an attempt to answer the question, so let me start this venture by identifying a place and time when its difference can be clearly noted. I refer to the journal *Global Architecture* (GA) that was published in Japan beginning in 1970. The brainchild of Yukio Futagawa, Japan's leading architectural photographer, this journal likely represents the first time that *global* was used in the field of architecture as a consciously constructed claim.² The journal focused on

I would like to thank Norihiko Tsuneishi and Jordan Kaufman for their assistance with the images and for Sebastian Schmidt and Hiromu Nagahara for their helpful comments. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

1. Arata Isozaki, *The Island Nation Aesthetic* (London, 1996), p. 7; hereafter abbreviated *INA*.

2. A native of Osaka, Futagawa studied architecture at a technical school there and then entered Waseda University in Tokyo. He took up photography, developing an interest in

major architects of the twentieth century like Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn, James Stirling, and Alvar Aalto. Articles featured large glossy photos augmented by plans and accompanied by explanatory text. The aim, on the surface at least, was to make established foreign architects accessible to a Japanese audience and to tap into the English-speaking publishing market. The journal did not address the use of the word *global* in the title, and this might therefore throw us off the scent. But even at a superficial level there is no doubt that it broke ground semantically, given that the then-standard uses of the adjective were still restricted to phraseologies like global war, global peace, and global epidemics. Even Marshall McLuhan's famous "global village" did not break from these all-encompassing imaginaries, almost all of which were generated from within a North American, English-speaking orbit.³ *Global Architecture*, if only because it was printed in Japanese and English, pointed to something different, to the opening of a translation across languages, continents, time, and even history.

First of all, the rarity of the word needs to be understood. Pan Am referred to the world in its promotions well through the 1980s. It was only in the late 1980s that the word *global* became attached to the word *history*. The New Global History Initiative was launched in 1991.⁴ The use of the term *the global era* began in the mid-1990s—mainly in the wake of the de-

minka ("folk houses"). *Minka 1955: Traditional Japanese Houses* was published in 1957; see Yukio Futagawa, *Minka 1955: Traditional Japanese Houses* (Tokyo, 2012). Subsequent publications include: Futagawa and Teiji Itoh, *The Roots of Japanese Architecture* (1963); Futagawa, *Forms in Japan* (1963) and *Folk Arts in Okinawa* (1964). In 1970, he established the Edita Tokyo Company that launched the GA (Global Architecture) series, which later expanded into *GA Houses*, *GA Document*, and *GA Architect*.

3. See Marshall McLuhan and Bruce R. Powers, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the Twenty-First Century* (New York, 1989).

4. One could mention also Global Tools (1973–1975) that proclaimed itself a multidisciplinary experimental program of design education in Italy conceived as a diffuse system of laboratories (first in Florence, Milan, and Naples) to promote the "study and use of natural materials and their behavioural characteristics" with the support of media and aimed to establish an alternative relation with Italian industry. Needless to say, apart from the word *global* in the title, there is little here that tries to engage the global as a frictional/theoretical project.

MARK JARZOMBEK is professor of the History and Theory of Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and works on a wide range of topics. His several books include most recently *Digital Stockholm Syndrome in the Post-Ontological Age* (2016) and *Urban Heterology: Dresden and the Dialectics of Post-Traumatic History* (2001). This article is part of a larger research project into global modernity.

regulation of transportation and financial industries in the 1980s. The *Journal of Global History* was started in 2006 and so on. In the art world, the term *global art*—which refers almost inevitably to the global art market—emerged only around the turn of the century. This means that the issue of *global* as an *active* semiotic identifier requires us to follow the architectural story, so to speak, and not to treat this as just an event remotely positioned in Japan and then even more remotely in the realm of the arts, with the subcategory architecture. More importantly, we should not assume that because we now allegedly know what the word *global* means we can work that assumption backwards into time. We should try to understand what was provoked by the early use of the term in order to also better counter the current tendency of “globalwashing.”

So, can we argue that it was in the context of *Japanese* architecture—and not in the context of some other more Englishcentric phenomenon—that the adjective *global* was pushed out of post-WWII realities and into the realm of sociohumanism? I would like to think so, though the question is by no means so easily solved.

How then do we read the word *global* in *Global Architecture*? The editors could have used the word *modern*, but in Japan that word was equated with *Western*. And the word *International* had been used for a time in the 1930s for a journal of architecture known as *Kokusai Kenchiku* (1925–1940). That journal, with a limited print run, was aimed at the Japanese professional and promoted a vision of national industrialization.⁵ *Global* actually has no equivalent in Japanese and is spelled out as グローバル using katakana, the Japanese phonetic syllabic alphabet created as a way to pronounce foreign words.⁶ Katakana more or less became the official way to solve the problem of foreign language imports following the 1964 Olympics. Using the word *global* was thus an index of an opening towards the world and its associated modernity of contact. *Global*—as an untranslatable word—was a way to see beyond the issues of modernization. However, unlike the journal *Progressive Architecture*, founded in the US in 1945, *Global Architecture* (*GA* as opposed to *PA*) did not claim a modernist progressive line as such.

5. Ken Oshima points out that several young architects in pre-WWII Japan strove to create an “international architecture” (*kokusai kenchiku*) as an expression of increasing international travel and communication. There were many interconnections among Japanese, European, and American architects in the interwar years. Yamada Mamoru (1894–1966), Horiguchi Sutemi (1895–1984), and Antonin Raymond (1888–1976) each espoused an architecture that encompassed modern forms and new materials, while attempting to synthesize the novel with the old in distinctive ways. See Ken Tadashi Oshima, *International Architecture in Interwar Japan: Constructing “Kokusai Kenchiku”* (Seattle, 2009).

6. I want to thank Norihiko Tsuneishi for the specifics about the founding of this magazine. I also want to thank Sebastian Schmidt for his assistance.

Instead it was a way to see past the East/West issue that had so defined, perplexed, and even haunted Japanese self-theorizations.⁷

Since the young architect Arata Isozaki (born in 1931), who wrote the first essay in volume 1 of *Global Architecture*, would reference Alexandre Kojève as a type of Archimedean point, it is worthwhile to recall that Kojève, having visited Japan in the late 1950s, wrote these words in 1968:

Consider Japan: there's a country that deliberately protected itself from history during three centuries; it put a barrier between history and itself, so well that it perhaps permits us to foresee our own future.⁸

Kojève argued that the Japanese valorization of their national history blocked them from participating in the dynamics of world history, a history with a capital *H*. In this, Kojève was relying on G. W. F. Hegel, whom he admired and who saw History as the animating principle of civilization, with the Eastern civilizations living in perpetual stasis. Kojève agreed; Japan had a culture immobilized by tradition, living blissfully in state of "snobism," which he identifies as "a state of living within the function of totally formalised values, that is to say, empty of any human content in a historical sense."⁹ Kojève, known for his dry wit, was implying half in jest and half as a provocation that pretty soon history would slow down and we would all, globally, retreat to a condition of mental localism. In the near future, we would all be like the Japanese.

Leaving aside this rather uncanny prediction, his view of Japan does carry some weight since it was widely known in the circles of the Japanese intelligentsia. It thus helps us see just how contrarian the use of the word *global* was, especially since 1970 was not yet the Japan of the 1980s, when Japan's prosperity and hypermodernity would transfix the West. There can be no doubt, however, that this transformation was in the air. The 1970s saw the end of the dominance of the architects associated with the metabolist movement, as led and influenced by Kenzo Tange, who had risen to become Japan's most famous architect.¹⁰ The metabolists, named after

7. For an excellent article that discusses early Japanese critiques of East-West dualism, see Miriam Silverberg, "Constructing the Japanese Ethnography of Modernity," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 51 (Feb. 1992): pp. 30–54.

8. Quoted in James H. Nichols, Jr., *Alexander Kojève: Wisdom at the End of History* (New York, 2007), p. 85. Kojève travelled the world after World War II as one of the chief planners of the European Common Market, working for the French Ministry of Economic Affairs.

9. Alexander Kojève, *Introduction a la Lecture de Hegel* (Paris, 1947), p. 437.

10. The metabolist movement was launched in 1960, when a group of young architects and designers published a manifesto entitled *Metabolism: Proposals for New Urbanism* on the occasion of the World Design Conference in Tokyo. Though Kenzo Tange never became a formal member of the group, he was actively involved in the movement because he served as



FIGURE 1. Kenzo Tange, Tokyo Bay Project, Tokyo (1960). ©Akio Kawasaki.

their fascination with biology and growth, were not shy about thinking big, and indeed Tange's 1960 grand plan for a vast city elevated over Tokyo Bay epitomized their ambition (fig. 1). It featured a system of causeways and residential towers the sheer scale of which suggested the presence of massive technical, bureaucratic, and institutional infrastructures. Expo '70 in Osaka, with a masterplan designed by Tange, brought these ideas to a world stage.

The economic downturn of the early 1970s, however, dampened enthusiasm for schemes that by then seemed hollow and bombastic. Even in its own day, Expo '70 was seen as the great last hurrah of the metabolist generation. *Global Architecture*, obviously, implied a different type of openness to Western modernism, as paradoxical as that might sound. 1970, as it turns out, was the very year in which the 747 made Japan accessible to international flights from the US directly from San Francisco. It was a profoundly symbolic moment for a country to ally itself with an emerging culture of post-Olympic pride in connectivity, even if such alliance meant Japan's tying itself even closer to the US.

the leading mentor for the younger architects. See Kisho Kurokawa, *Metabolism in Architecture* (Boulder, Colo., 1977), and Zhongjie Lin, *Kenzo Tange and the Metabolist Movement: Urban Utopias of Modern Japan* (New York, 2010).

More importantly, the word *global* brought into play a set of vectors operating in the context of the breakdown and rebuilding of cultural certainties. In other words, *global* was not evoked as some zeitgeist phenomenon nor was it intended as a token of internationalist relevancy. It was used as a frictional device *within* a Japanese context, even if the friction was more implied than real. It was a pronouncement without a practice that nonetheless indexed a new type of geopolitical speculation, with Japan identifying itself as the front line of that problem. But if the clichés of East/West were now exposed as tired, what did this new *global* have to offer? It was the elliptically placed starting point of what might be called a new global imago.

The use of the word in 1970 in Japan—as unexpected as it might seem from a US perspective—did have a backstory, one that begins with the first use of the adjective *global* in a book title in 1942 just after the declaration of war on Japan in 1941. *Global War: An Atlas of World Strategy* was a hastily published book by the noted journalist Edgar Ansel Mowrer.¹¹ For Mowrer, *global* represented the precise moment when the US turned to Asia, and to Japan in particular, not as a culture frozen in time as the Hegelians had thought, but as just the opposite: a crafty and superior enemy. And it was not just Mowrer who envisioned this global turn. *Life* magazine ran the article “Global War Teaches Global Cartography” in August 1942, featuring maps by Richard Edes Harrison, the house cartographer for *Fortune* and a consultant for *Life* (fig. 2). Explaining the difference between the Mercator map used by the Germans, which it identified as old-fashioned, the authors of the article argued for a new mapping strategy. They made the following astonishing assertion: “Until the fifth decade of the 20th Century, knowledge that the world is round was of little immediate importance to most of the inhabitants of this planet. . . . For most people, once they learned the lesson in school, the earth for all practical purposes was flat. . . . Today, however, the round world is the prize of global war.”¹² The phrase “round world” emphasizes that the roundness of the world was not naturally associated with the world.

The article goes on to discuss the issues of projecting the globe on a flat surface, arriving at a map that shows the great circle route, from San Francisco to Tokyo—a flight route that was still far off in the future, but one that the Japanese could potentially use to bomb the US. The article ends with a

11. See Edgar Ansel Mowrer and Marthe Rajchman, *Global War: an Atlas of World Strategy* (New York, 1942).

12. “Maps: Global War Teaches Global Cartography,” *Life*, 3 Aug. 1942, p. 57. See also *Global Politics*, ed. Russell H. Fitzgibbon (Berkeley, 1944).

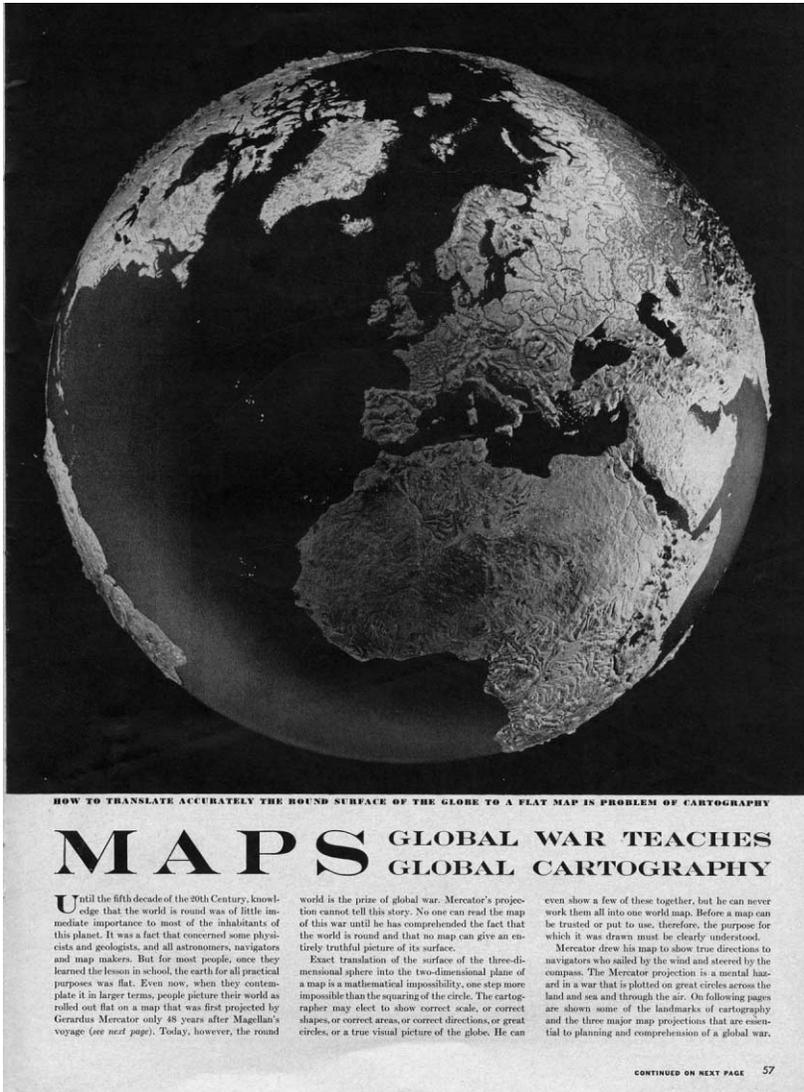


FIGURE 2. Herbert Gehr, *A Globe* (1942). The LIFE Images Collection.

claim that the best way to view the world was from the North Pole. This global axis—aligned, so the article claimed, to the principles of the United Nations—is set against the false axis of the enemy: two axes, a political one (of Germany and Japan bracketing the US) and a planetary one that speaks to the future. A true global versus a false global. This was a global that

posited itself dialectically, an important fact that is missing from most discussions today.

So the birth of the modern global is astonishingly precise.

Harrison—who called himself an artist, not a mapmaker—blossomed into a minor celebrity. He made popular, startlingly oblique satellite-style views of the globe such as one that looked at Japan from high above Alaska.¹³ Harrison was called in to help design the maps for the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York for which the *Life* article was the teaser. The exhibition, “Airways to Peace: Sequence of Exhibitions for Section II, How Man Has Drawn His World” (1943), featured a five-foot layered relief model of Europe by Norman Bel Geddes, as well as a large, suspended partial globe into which viewers could walk from below to see the earth and its continent from an inside-out perspective.

The new view of the global—implying a spherical “inside-out-ness”—was popularized even further by Alexander de Seversky, a famous airman who coined the phrase “airman’s global view.” He was no esoteric pundit.¹⁴ Walt Disney made a movie, *Victory through Air Power* (1943), that was based on Seversky’s book and that even featured an interview with him interspersed with cartoon animations of historical events and news clippings. Halfway through the movie, the word *global* is spoken for the first time; fittingly, it is just after the dramatic cartoon portrayal of the Pearl Harbor disaster. At a certain moment in the film the earthly globe is shown from outer space, a blue planet hovering in a strangely foggy ether, a vision of the planet still far in the future, if we assume that the famous photo of Earth—*The Blue Marble*—made by Apollo 17 in 1972 stands as a certain type of historical datum.¹⁵

Yet another early theorist of the global was Nickolaus Louis Engelhardt, Acting Director of Research for the Board of Education in Newark, New Jersey, who created a pedagogical program for high school students in New Jersey known as “Education for the Air Age.” It is worth quoting this remarkable passage from the opening of the book.

13. See Alan K. Henrikson, “Maps, Globes, and the ‘Cold War,’” *Special Libraries* 65 (Oct./Nov. 1974), pp. 445–54; “America’s Changing Place in the World: From ‘Periphery’ to ‘Centre?’” in *Centre and Periphery: Spatial Variation in Politics*, ed. Jean Gottmann (Beverly Hills, Calif., 1980), pp. 73–100; and “The Map as an ‘Idea’: The Role of Cartographic Imagery During the Second World War,” *American Cartographer* 2 (1975), pp. 19–53.

14. See Stephen B. Jones, “The Power Inventory and National Strategy,” *World Politics* 6 (Jul. 1954): 421–52, and Alexander P. de Seversky, *Air Power: Key to Survival* (New York, 1950), p. 11.

15. The image of the earth begins around minute 37 of *Victory through Air Power*, dir. H. C. Potter (1947); see www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiiPBvwalkI

Wide seas, dangerous reefs, precipitous mountains, frozen wastes, and jungle depths, all barriers to earthbound generations, have become features of the landscape below the global sweep of the airplane travelers in the ocean of air which is now the third dimension for an air-free people. No aspect of human ecology will remain unaltered by this new instrumentality which not only abolishes distances but also reshapes basic human geography and remolds the internal and external relationships of national and continental population groups. City, state, national, and even continental boundaries vanish or become curious anachronisms to the stratospheric travelers on great-circle routes which wheel around a planet bereft of topographical restrictions.¹⁶

It is an impressive insight for 1942. Engelhardt even notes—once again quite precisely and paradoxically if one remembers the air campaigns in Europe—that “the American people became air-minded on December 7, 1941.” Engelhardt was no naïf. “Airpower,” he states, “has wrecked homes: maimed and killed men, women and children.” But it is here to stay; soon “space will be measured in time rather than miles.”¹⁷ Further hints of how this new globality of the globe envisioned itself are to be found in Engelhardt’s *Toward New Frontiers of Our Global World* (1943) a title that itself astonishes because by 1943 one would have thought that the world’s frontiers had long since been discovered (fig. 3). Engelhardt was clearly trying to define a new American ethos. The globe was the new frontier. The first illustration is telling. Showing a small globe resting in a man’s palm, its caption reads:

You are used to looking at the side of the globe—and probably have turned it on its axis from East to West to study the continents that lie across the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans from us. From now on, you will study the globe in the modern manner. Take it up in your hands and turn it from North to South. This will change your ideas of our Global World when you realize the nearness to us of Europe and Asia across the Arctic Ocean.

His point rests on “and Asia,” for it was “and Asia” on which the very concept of global turns. He goes on to state, “we all know about land and water. We have maps that show us the shore lines of the oceans and the boundary lines of the different countries. There are uncounted millions of

16. Nickolaus Louis Engelhardt, Jr., *Education for the Air Age (A Guide for Teachers and Administrators)* (New York, 1942), p. v.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

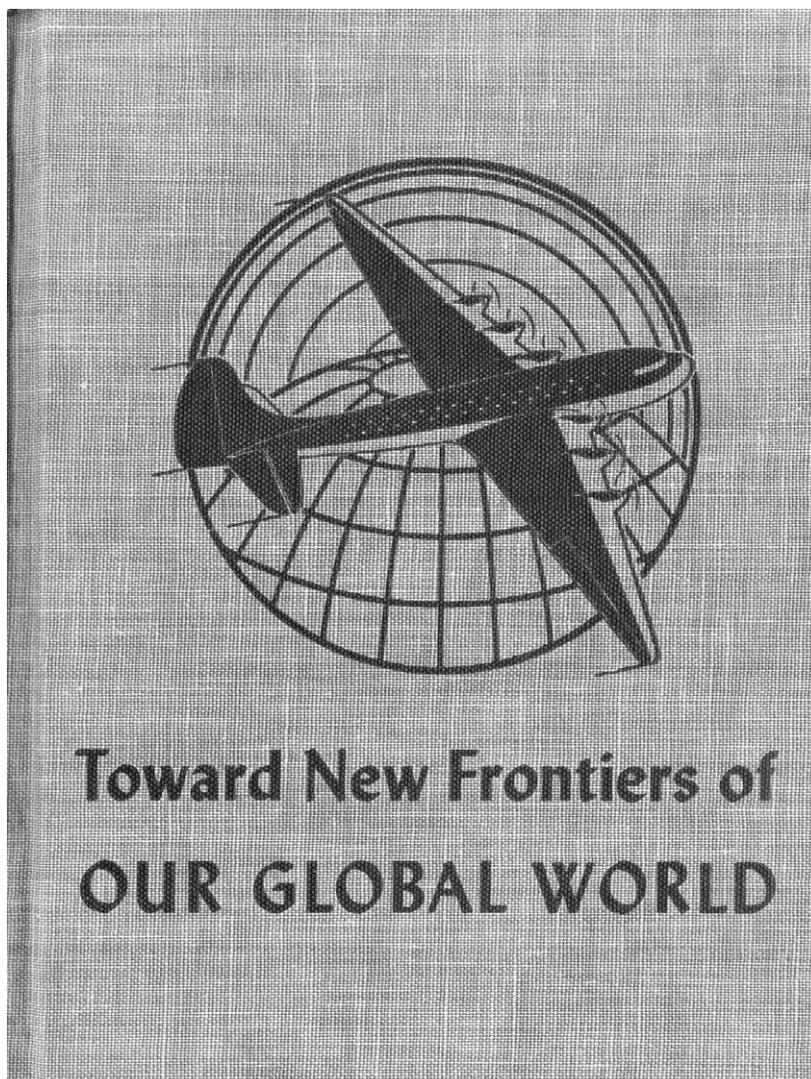


FIGURE 3. Book cover for Nickolaus Louis Engelhardt, Jr., *Toward New Frontiers of Our Global World* (New York, 1943).

boundary lines on the surface of the globe—but there is not one boundary line in the air.”¹⁸ The new frontiers are identified as “World Markets at our Door” and “Industrial Centers on the Move.”¹⁹ It was this sudden turn from

18. Engelhardt, *Toward New Frontiers of Our Global World* (New York, 1943), pp. 9, 9–10.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 55.

Europe, and from what would then have been understood as the world—a world suddenly revealed as flat—and toward an air- and ocean-based image of planetary dynamics that produced the adjectival *global*, a word that still today is marked to some degree by this fundamental condition. If the world was dominated by empires, capitals and ports, *global*—as launched after 1941—evoked visions of Asia, stratospheric aircraft, great circles, and disappearing boundaries. This global was no jocular, Euro-colonialist *Around the World in Eighty Days*. This global was a geopolitical global—a US global—its next frontier. It evoked visions of war and peace. Forced into reality on 7 December 1941, it cemented itself into history with the bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945.

It might be assumed that a discussion about *global* would want to build on the premise of this newly emerging perspective. After all, the standard argument about globalization points to the condition of speed, connectivity, and commerce; to the rise of postwar US imperialism, and to the parallel denouement of the superiority of the West. I will leave that argument to the political scientists. My discourse is not to add yet more historical weight to the obvious (or what is *assumed* to be the obvious). Instead, the global, as I am framing it—the global before the era of globalization—is less open in its signification. My point is that *global* did not just piggyback accidentally on the presumed globalization of capital in the 1980s, nor did it appear as the natural consequence of technology, finance, and power. Airplanes existed well before WWII. For centuries emperors, colonialists, churchmen had all imagined something that was global in nature. The new US global, as I define it, had little to do with the old conventions of imperial might or colonial reach. It was the semantic signifier of a shock, appearing as a word that, once deployed, preceded *by far* its actualization in history—an actualization that is still most certainly incomplete. In the mid-1940s, it was clearly an open signifier, and yet its US/Pacific orientation was unmistakable—a *reorientation*—the orient seen in reverse, from a Western gaze. Reoriented and, perplexingly, simultaneously de-oriented. The title of one of Harrison's globe drawings states it clearly: "The World Centrifuged."²⁰

This type of global applied itself to the world without question and magnified its optics into ever-widening ranges of disciplinary formations. It assumed that there is no turning back from the constant churning of conflict and resolution. In 1962, for example, Leften S. Stavrianos authored

20. Richard Edes Harrison, "The World Centrifuged," *Visual Telling of Stories*, www.fulltable.com/vts/f/fortune/reh/SH512.jpg. For a general discussion of his innovations, see Susan Schulten, "Richard Edes Harrison and the Challenge to American Cartography," *Imago Mundi* 50 (1998): 174–88.

the textbook *A Global History of Man*. Still today it reads with astonishing freshness, with chapter titles using words like *crossroads*, *surge*, *spiral*, *circle*, *challenges*, *variation*, and *struggle*. The book culminates with a plea for the United Nations, following chapters entitled “Forces That Unite the World,” and “Forces That Divide the World.”²¹ But in that same year, twenty-five years after Hiroshima, we see a different adjectival *global* that for the first time returned that gaze, completed it, and even, one can say, internalized it, adding a neo-orientationalization to the rotation of signifiers. The US was after all now in the East. And so it is here—in the field of architecture, no less—that we see the beginning of a difference that will play itself out between the old East and the new East and between a global as imagined in Japan and globalization as imagined from the perspective of US shores.

This narrowing of the Pacific still had astonishingly little resonance in the US, which, in art and architectural circles at least, reveled in a type of post-WWII neo-Europeanism. Stuart Hughes’s book *The Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought, 1930–1965* (1975) documented the narrowing of the Atlantic due to the wartime migration into the US of intellectuals from Europe. In art-historical circles, Irwin Panofsky’s *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (1960) reinforced Eurocentric perspectives. So strong was the emergence of Eurocentrism that Horst Waldemar Janson’s *History of Art* (1977) had only a few oblique references to Japan’s art, premodern of course, and Frederick Hartt’s *Art, A History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* (1985) had not even a single reference to Japan, even though by then Japan had made an impressive array of contributions to post-WWII art and architecture. Yes, the Japanese Art Society of America began to take shape in 1973, but it certainly was of a different category of awareness than a journal in Japan with the word *global* in the title.

Once again, is it possible that some of the leading intellectuals in Japan were more global in orientation than their self-occidentalizing American counterparts? They were clearly trying to force the issue, as evidenced by *Global Architecture*, which along with *A+U* (launched in 1971) was sitting on the desks of architects in the US written, mysteriously, in Japanese.²²

21. Leften S. Stavrianos et al., *A Global History of Man* (Boston, 1962), pp. 734, 741; for the final chapter “The United Nations,” see pp. 766–74. A similar book is Harris B. Stewart, Jr., *The Global Sea* (Princeton, N.J., 1963), whose author was the Chief Oceanographer of the US Coast and Geodetic Survey; the last chapter is entitled “The International Waters” (p. 118).

22. In 1974 the Museum of Modern Art hosted the exhibition *New Japanese Photography*. It was codirected by John Szarkowski, director of the museum’s department of photography, and Shoji Yamagishi, Japanese critic and editor of *Camera Mainichi*. The exhibition consisted



FIGURE 4. Arata Isozaki, “Demonstration Robot” at Expo ’70 (1970). Arata Isozaki and Associates.

If the emergence in Japan of young-generational, social norms greased the system, these were not all that was driving the bold use of *global* in *Global Architecture*. The key figure was Isozaki, who had graduated from the architecture department of the University of Tokyo, where he also attended postgraduate courses, completing his MA and his PhD under Tange.²³ At the time, Tange was assistant professor in city planning, but he had already risen to prominence after winning several nationally important competitions including the Hiroshima Peace Park (1954). Isozaki worked in Tange’s office until 1962, being groomed there as his protégé and receiving the plum commission to design the central plaza of Expo ’70, for which Isozaki designed a remarkable, three-story high performing robot (fig. 4). On a quieter note in that same year, Isozaki wrote the text for the first volume of *Global Architecture*, choosing as his topic Wright’s Johnson and Son Administration Building (1939). The article gives us a new starting point, as innocuous as it might at first seem.

of 187 photographs, dating from 1940 to 1973, presented as a series of one-man shows that identify the central concerns of fifteen photographers.

23. The reader should understand that this short article can in no way fully explicate the complex thinking and design work of Isozaki. I recommend Ken Tadashi Oshima’s excellent analysis; see Ken Tadashi Oshima, *Arata Isozaki* (New York, 2009).

The incomparably individual process of Wright's work is the unprejudiced incorporation of the legacy of every civilization, of Whitman and Lao-tzu, of Aztec and Momoyama Japanese. Of the many works born of this creative process, the Johnson Wax Building represents a pinnacle of qualitative maturity. Here is space to which no civilization can lay claim.²⁴

The genius of Wright, for Isozaki, was not just the cosmopolitan fluidity by which he navigated through civilizations. Wright brought culture to a place where ownership with all the evil that it could possibly entail is transcended. If Japan was identified as a place where the land and a people owned each other, Wright stood out—in Isozaki's interpretation—as a person freed from such constraints. Isozaki saw in Wright not the great American architect of old and not the designer of the famous Imperial Hotel in Tokyo but something that even American commentators missed; Wright was a traveler *between* civilizations. In that sense, Wright was not even an American architect but, shall one say, a global one.²⁵

I am getting ahead of myself, for there lurks hidden in Isozaki's argument a deep, obliquely positioned interrogation of the Japanese situation, one that would eventually lead to his book *Japan-ness in Architecture* (2006).²⁶ Celebrating the hybridity and openendedness of history as narrated by both Japanese and non-Japanese, the book stands as a project in tune with the sensibilities of this—our—day and age, when such viewpoints are more or less taken for granted in intellectual circles. Back in the 1960s, when the thirty-year-old Isozaki was first formulating his ideas, the situation was far different. In fact, the arrows were pointing in the exact opposite direction. Tange had come out with *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture* (1960), which he wrote in collaboration with

24. Isozaki et al., "Johnson and Son, Administration Building and Research Tower, Racine, Wisconsin, 1936–9," *Global Architecture* 1 (1970), pp. [2–3].

25. That Wright's Imperial Hotel was demolished in 1968 added, perhaps, to the new relevance of Japan.

26. See Isozaki, *Japan-ness in Architecture*, trans. Sabu Kohso, ed. David B. Stewart (Cambridge, Mass., 2006). Among the various points that Isozaki makes in this book is that the history of architecture is *eo ipso* historiographic, as it has to deal with the often contradictory locations of history's construction. The discussion of "Japan-ness," for Isozaki, is, therefore, not a question about authenticity, nor is it a rehearsal of a linear archaeological narrative, but about different histories in different historical moments, with Japan the best example. A country that internally and externally is often portrayed as having a particularly deep history is in actuality a country where, in Isozaki's eyes, its history in the context of the practice and theory of architecture can be shown to be a shifting signifier. It is this never-to-be-fulfilled searching for Japanness that defines the "Japan-ness"; see Isozaki "Yayoi and Jōmon," in *Japan-ness in Architecture*, pp. 33–46.

the young Japanese-American photographer Yasuhiro Ishimoto.²⁷ Though there had been previous publications on the villa, this book, in its separate Japanese and English editions, was something of a hit and went into seven printings. The photographs effectively married Katsura's architecture to a twentieth-century Bauhaus-inspired aesthetic, as has been pointed out in the scholarly literature. The book even had an introduction by none other than Walter Gropius, who extolled the anticipated fusion of technology and tradition.

Tange's text in the book said something different. It was not about East/West, much less about modernism and the Bauhaus. He presented the case that the villa has to be seen as a fusion of a tough, simple farm aesthetic rooted in the world of the ancient Jomon (Japan's original hunter-gatherer culture from circa 14,000 BCE–500 BCE) and the abstract and elegant aesthetic of detachment that came from Japan's aristocratic tradition.²⁸ It was a creative argument because the seventeenth-century designers of Katsura had no idea that there was such a thing as the Jomon, the Jomon only having been discovered in the late nineteenth century and even then their significance really only acknowledged in the 1930s and 1940s during WWII; even Tange, it seems, only came to know of the Jomon in the 1950s. After Japan's defeat in 1945, Marxist-oriented intellectuals argued that archaeology could play an important role in refashioning Japanese identity now that the emperor was no longer the national focus. The phrase "imperial Japan" was replaced with the phrase "cultural Japan."²⁹ In fact, the term *bunka* (culture) emerged in the immediate aftermath of the war as a prominent element in rhetoric about rebuilding the nation, and the Jomon were celebrated as a way to highlight the common people.³⁰

By reaching back to an imagined Jomon and tracing Japanese subsequent rice farming history, Tange was hyper-nativising the idea of a populist tradition. Nonetheless, Tange's argument was focused on the dynamic

27. See Kenzo Tange and Yasuhiro Ishimoto, *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*, trans. Charles S. Terry (New Haven, Conn., 1960).

28. See *ibid.*, p. vi. Reaching back to the Jomon was rather unexpected as it was still a sparsely researched field, not yet associated with Japanese nationalism and probably unknown to most Western readers. The first Jomon sites to be designated as protected were Kamegoaka (1944), Korekawa (1957), and Oyu (1956). See also Dana Buntrock, "Katsura Imperial Villa: A Brief Descriptive Bibliography, with Illustrations," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 1 (Nov. 2012), cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-3/katsura-imperial-villa.

29. Walter Edwards, "Buried Discourse: the Toro Archaeological Site and Japanese National Identity in the Early Postwar Period," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 17 (Winter 1991): 2, 3.

30. See Junko Habu and Clare Fawcett, "Jomon Archaeology and the Representation of Japanese Origins," *Antiquity* 73 (Sept. 1999): 587–93; see also Bert Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations: Japanese and American Artists in the Early Postwar Years* (Honolulu, 2001).

and productive synthesis of opposing forces—a type of body and soul argument—that he felt would translate for the contemporary situation. “The cultural energy which budded at Katsura can, I think, be brought to full bloom in this new period.” He then adds, “In this sense I stand on the Katsura tradition.”³¹ The book did not hide the fact that Japan’s aristocratic sensibilities, unlike those of Europe, were not alienated, so he elegantly assumed, from the world of the primitive Jomon. No revolution of egalitarianism was necessary here. Japan could leap from the Jomon into the modern without undergoing the messy processes of democratization. Stated differently, the new post-WWII democracy did not really impinge upon the old Japan.

Tange reinforced his position with yet another blockbuster book, *Ise: Prototype of Japanese Architecture* (1965). Its aerial photographs, granted by special permission from the government (since the building was technically not supposed to be seen by anyone except the emperor and the priests), show the shrine floating like an island of tranquility in a sea of sacred trees, the message reinforced by Tange’s moving tribute to the deep spirituality of the site. The title says it all. This was nothing less than the starting point, the new starting point, of the Japanese architectural tradition.³²

Tange did not have to spell out the geopolitical argument. It was clearly about survival, revival, and the proud silencing of trauma; yet the choice of the two buildings disguised a particular cunning. Ise Shrine was not damaged by war. In fact, its rhythms of rebuilding—in 1932 and 1952—had, by sheer accident of history, framed the war and thus allowed the war to be easily ignored in the context of the building. As to the Katsura Villa, it was not a castle but indeed an aristocratic retreat. As any historian of Japan would know, the aristocratic tradition represented by the creators of Katsura stood in opposition to the military shogunate that had stripped the elites from their position of power, giving them little to do except, quite literally, to drink tea. Katsura was thus a safe place to be in the post-WWII interrogations of Japanese history because it could be seen as untouched by militaristic contaminations. The topic of architecture’s central role in the Japanese geopolitical imaginary was taken up by others. *The Roots of*

31. Tange and Ishimoto, *Katsura*, p. 36.

32. See Tange et al., *Ise: Prototype of Japanese Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 16–18. Also contributing was Noboru Kawazoe, an architectural critic and editor of the magazine *Shinkenchiku*. Since 1925, Shinkenchiku-sha Co., Ltd has been Japan’s leading architectural publisher. The company’s periodicals include: *Shinkenchiku* (New Architecture), *Jutakutokushu* (Special Housing), and *JA* (Japan Architect). *Shinkenchiku* was first published in 1925. *JA* was launched in 1956 and introduced Japanese architecture to an overseas audience. *A+U* (*Architecture and Urbanism*) was first published in January 1971.

Japanese Architecture had photos by Futagawa with text by Teiji Itoh, who wrote that in times “of political chaos and changing social conditions . . . great and true art” can provide “the consolation needed: neither shallow fads nor counterfeit methods could prevail against uncertainty and fear. Hence we find that the great system of Japanese architecture which has come down to us today was gradually developed in this era of war and turbulence.”³³

The impact of Tange’s book was pronounced, and not just in Japan. As astonishing as it might seem, we see for the first time the linking of the word *tradition* to the concept of Japanese Architecture. The 1962 *Guide Book to Japanese Architecture* was a typical title since the late nineteenth century, but beginning in the 1970s we see the emergence of the word “tradition” as a required modifier, as in the book *Traditional Domestic Architecture of Japan* (1972). Obviously, pre-nineteenth-century Japanese architecture had been studied in Japan long before the word *tradition* came into vogue, but the elevation of that word in English-speaking contexts returned to the Japanese contexts a certain legitimation of its ethnocentric perspectives. It is not a coincidence that just as the word *global* begins to get pronounced, the word *tradition*—as a Western reinforcement of its expectations of the East—now emerges, undercutting its very premise. The US-sponsored global always tends to see the otherness that it encounters, the proverbial “locals,” as conflict prone, and thus needs tradition as a way to build a culture of ethnographic quietude. This for sure was not the *global* of *Global Architecture* that rejected both the technocentrism of modernization and the traditioncentrism of localist self-consciousness.

With this as backdrop we see that Isozaki’s emerging position on Japan was as different as from from Tange’s as day from night. Johnson Wax Building was Isozaki’s answer to Tange; it was *his* Katsura. The challenge was clear. Nationcentrism versus a new, experimental, global sensibility. World foreclosure against world openness. One can even say that two different archaeologies were at stake because the polemic revolved around the status of history and how to locate it in a postdestruction environment. Tange sought to stabilize history around the image of a cultural interiority that could become reproductive as a fantasy of continuity. It was an approach that was to gain increasingly worldwide traction in the 1970s and 1980s. By way of contrast, Isozaki sought to destabilize any easy alliance between Japan and its history—a history as a linear, destiny-producing track through time—by reinvestigating the modern. A corporate headquarters rather than a sacred shrine.

33. Yukio Futagawa and Teiji Itoh, *The Roots of Japanese Architecture* (New York, 1963), pp. 9, 10.

The path by which Isozaki found his alternative interpretation of modernism's history came with a twist. When Isozaki left the office of Tange in 1962 to start his own career, he published a tongue-in-cheek article, "City Demolition Industry, Inc." about a "discussion" he had with a murderous urban planner:

The city . . . was the killer of all killers and, worse still, being anonymous, it was a curious enterprise to which no responsibilities were attached. And he felt that in order to create an age in which the killing profession would again be an art, and in which this human act could be performed with pleasure, there was nothing more urgent than to destroy these inhuman cities.

To which he adds,

When I think of the hollow sound of the slogans for building, renewing and improving cities—in reality the political propping-up of the metropolis—I come to think in terms of destruction as the only reality.³⁴

And it was not just cities that were under attack, physically and metaphorically; there was also discussion about "annihilating all the editors of magazines in our country who are too timid to challenge the status quo in city planning and architecture." The text was seen as so bizarre by the editors of *Japan Architect*, where it was published as a concession to the brilliant young architect who at the time was still in the employ of Tange, that they ran it not as an article but as an advertisement for a real company. It was one of the greatest architectural parodies of the age, some ten years before the famous destruction of the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex in St. Louis in 1972. It pointed to the rebuilding of Japan's bombed-out cities not as statements of heroic progress but as a different type of destruction.³⁵

It was an argument that resonated with box office successes like *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962), and *Mothra vs. Godzilla* (1964), the latter of which had the tagline "How much terror can you stand?" The plot features a greedy developer, Kumayama, president of Happy Enterprises, who has placed huge machines to suck dry a part of the ocean near Tokyo so he

34. Isozaki, "City Demolition Industry, Inc.," in Isozaki, *Hankenshikuchi* [Unbuilt] (Tokyo, 2001), pp. 18, 25.

35. During this time, Japan was undergoing upheavals with respect to a budding New Left protest movement toward which Isozaki later admitted he was sympathetic, as it forced him to reevaluate the core principles of his professional identity as an urban planner. See also Claudia Derichs, "Japan: '1968'—History of a Decade," in *1968: Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt*, ed. Richard F. Wetzell (Washington, D.C., 2009), pp. 89–94.

can put luxury condos there. When a giant egg washes up on shore, it is purchased by Kumayama, who plans to make it a tourist attraction. The investigative reporter Ichiro Sakai, played by the famous actor Akira Takarada, argues to no avail that “This egg should belong to everyone.” And indeed, the egg hatches two giant larva that ultimately defeat Godzilla to save humanity. The moral tone about war is obvious from views of a nearby island devastated by nuclear testing and a vast, bulldozed field primed for real estate development. It is from beneath this soil, a now-dry sea bed, that Godzilla arises, emerging from the muck as every real-estate tycoon’s worst nightmare.³⁶

The pop-cultural interrogations in Japan of nuclear holocaust and capitalism are both obvious and well-studied, but less noticed is the question of how Japanese history itself is portrayed. One of the culminating moments of *Mothra vs. Godzilla* depicts Godzilla tearing down a building that had been destroyed in the war and just laboriously rebuilt in 1959. The trailer portrays Godzilla pawing away at the Nagoya Castle, leaving it as a pile of rubble. Huge letters spelling out “a shattering, soul-searching experience” are written over the building—as indeed such an event would have been. In the posthistory world of pop culture, nothing is sacred, which brings us back to *Katsura*, a book that indeed points backward as if the problems of contemporary Japan might be solved with a good dose of aristocratic cleanliness. From my point of view, scholarly interpretation of that text should focus less on the Bauhausification of the villa than on the attempt by Tange to stand modernism on the legs of tradition to produce a reactionary agenda. In comparison, Isozaki’s “City Demolition Industry, Inc.” and *Mothra vs. Godzilla* made a significantly more impressive and complex argument.

Isozaki carried this pretend design of urban destruction out into the world of architecture with his *City in the Air* (1962), a project that could be easily misunderstood as futuristic or as having something to do with trees and branches and thus as conforming to Tange’s metabolist doctrine (fig. 5).³⁷ In reality, the project of clustered capsules suspended in the air on giant cylinders rising from the ground references not just the timber bracketing system found in Japanese temples but also bomber

36. See *Mothra vs. Godzilla* (originally released in the US as *Godzilla vs. the Thing*), dir. Ishiro Honda (1964).

37. See Richard Koshalek, David Stewart, and Hajime Yatsuka, *Arata Isozaki: Architecture 1960–1990*, ed. Kate Norment (New York, 1991), p. 34. Isozaki reinforced the idea when he later wrote of the project as a forest. But since urban destruction is such a key part of his thinking, I am loath to ascribe this as the only possible interpretation; see Isozaki, *Hanken-shikuchi*, p. 76.

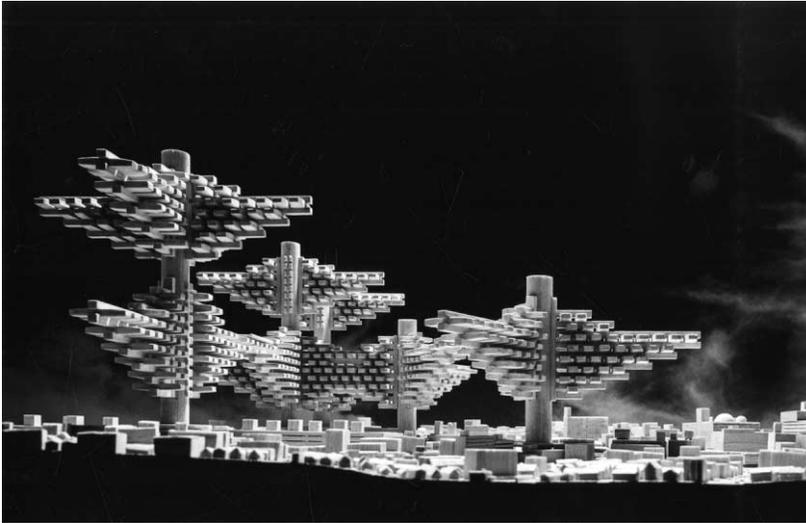


FIGURE 5. Isozaki, model of “City in the Air” (1962). Photo by Yukio Futagawa. Yoshio Futagawa/GA Photographers.

formations or perhaps, even more ominously, mushroom clouds.³⁸ What was being destroyed by this city in the air was not some old Japan, for beneath it, quite clearly, is the white modernist city. *City in the Air*, in military dispassion, cleanses modernism of its residual humanity. It is as if the engineers of global war have become the engineers of the city itself. *City in the Air* is a masterpiece of cynical disguise. A related black-and-white drawing and photomontage hints at the ominous truth. It simulates an aerial photograph of a city and more specifically of the site of *City in the Air* following some future conflagration (fig. 6). The foundations for the huge towers have all the appearance of enormous bomb craters dotting the landscape of rubble and white ash heaps. It is an astonishing image—some fifteen years after the end of the war—and an even more astonishing inversion of expectations. “The city that has been incubated,” he writes as explanation of the drawing, “is destined to be destroyed. A ruin is the future of our city and the future is ruin itself.”³⁹ Isozaki was designing nothing less than architecture in the context of global war. The *Life* magazine article title “Global War Teaches Global Cartography” seems like the perfect caption.

38. See Philip Drew, *The Architecture of Arata Isozaki* (New York, 1982), p. 6. Philip Drew points to the similarity of the design to the brackets that can be found on the South Gate of the Todaji Temple.

39. Isozaki, *Hankenshikuchi*, p. 47.

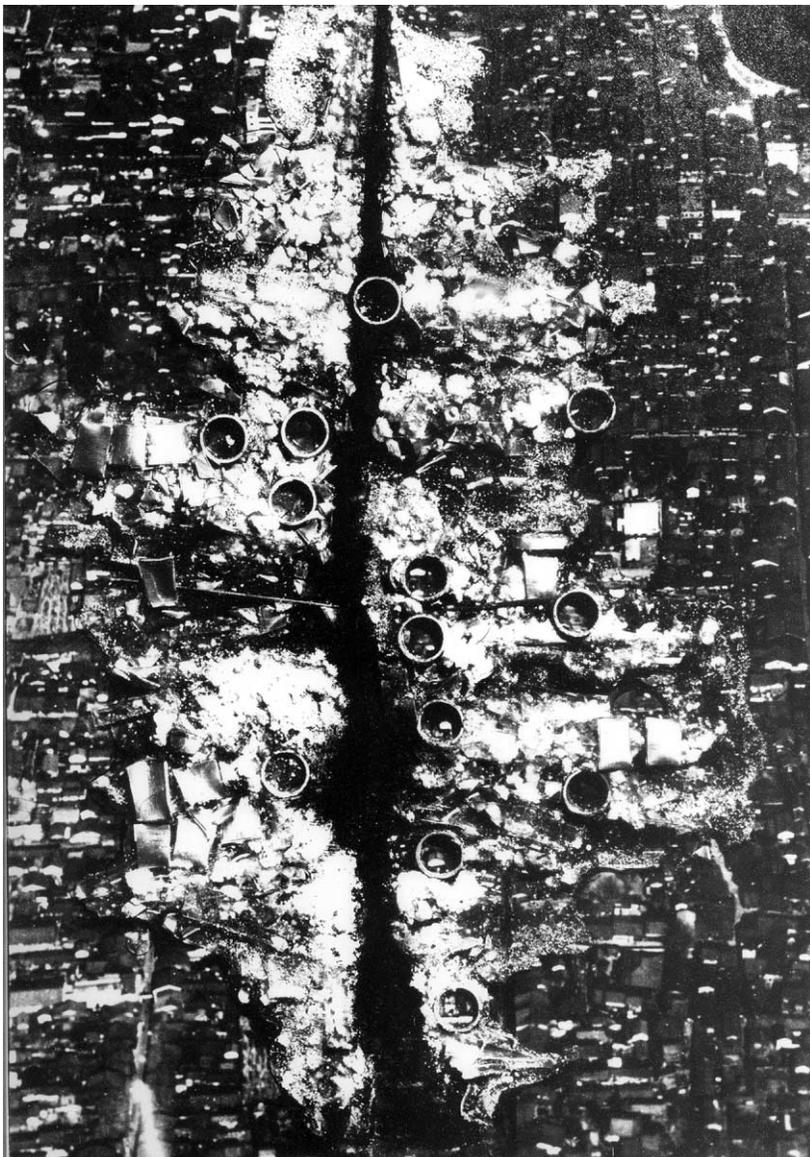


FIGURE 6. Isozaki, plan of “Incubation Process,” Shinjuku Project/Joint Core System (1962). Arata Isozaki and Associates.

If *City in the Air* is meant to represent the dead end of architecture, lost in the cycle of megalomaniac structures and eschatological devastation, where then to turn? Certainly not to tradition in the name of nationalism. In 1964, Isozaki proclaimed that the source of his inspiration was not

some old Shinto temple but, shockingly, the Korakuen Magic House, a fun house where an ordinary room can make you seem “to float in all directions. . . . You have difficulty standing straight. . . . You find that the depth of space increases and decreases, and occasionally the space rejects you.”⁴⁰ Isozaki’s newly budding antigravitational sentiments were put to a rather severe test when he got the commission to design a bank, the Oita Branch of the Fukuoka Bank (1966–1967) on the southerly island of Kyushu (fig. 7). On the outside the building looks solid, robust, and stoic, but there is the real possibility that it is a robot man standing on two three-story high pneumatic legs as if on a shore with a wave—the lower building—crashing at its heels. Toy robots were all the rage in Japan and some of them look similar to the bank, with its boxy body and straight, awkwardly mechanical legs. More specifically, the building hearkens to the building-scaled robot that Isozaki was then currently designing for the opening of Expo ’70.⁴¹ The implied monster/robot metaphor of the bank is augmented by an interior that is a barely disguised Fun House, with its diagonal cross walks painted blood red, its stair cases moving herky jerky through the building, its strangely angled windows, and bizarre-looking red ventilation tubes that protrude like snipped off arteries from the walls and ceilings—seemingly ready to spew out some goo from the building’s inner organs (fig. 8).

The design can be thought as a moment of contemporaneity—as opposed to a moment of modernity—when we see a Japanness in which architecture is no longer built around a cult of cultural interiority and pumped up ancestry but around a discourse of metaphors, a history that is played out *in translation* through the guise of fun houses, Godzillas, evil real estate tycoons, “demolition experts,” and robot banks walking across the urban landscape.

40. Isozaki, “Space of Darkness,” in Oshima, *Arata Isozaki*, pp. 150–55. In this essay, Isozaki describes his fascination with spaces that distort and alter our perceptions. In 1974, Isozaki wrote an article on Cedric Price (1934–2003), an eccentric English designer well-known in architectural circles for his design of a Fun Palace. It consisted of a large factory-scaled building, serviced by travelling gantry cranes that could move walls, platforms, floors, stairs, and ceiling modules to create space for theatres, cinemas, restaurants and workshops. Isozaki’s article is more than a sympathetic reading of Price’s design. Isozaki clearly wants the reader to see in the person of Price a figure close to his own sensibilities. His description of Price reads as if Isozaki is describing himself. “His chief aim is to provoke and challenge by means of injecting systematised ideas that break clean away from existing notions” (Isozaki, “Erasing Architecture into the System,” in Cedric Price et al., *Re: CP*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum, ed. Hans Ulrich Obrist [Basel, 2003], p. 25). The article was originally part of Isozaki, *Kenchiku no Kaitai* [Dismantling Architecture] (Tokyo, 1975).

41. See Lisa Hix, “Attack of the Vintage Toy Robots! Justin Pinchot on Japan’s Coolest Postwar Export,” *Collectors Weekly*, 18 Nov. 2010, www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/attack-of-the-vintage-toy-robots-justin-pinchot-on-japans-coolest-postwar-export/



FIGURE 7. Isozaki, exterior of Oita Branch of Fukuoka Mutual Bank, Oita (1966–1967). Photo by Yukio Futagawa. Yoshio Futagawa/GA Photographers.

Isozaki's private struggle with the question of Japanness—finding himself caught between the opening provided by pop culture and the entrenchment of the architectural profession—manifested itself with particular directness in 1968, when he exhibited his *Electric Labyrinth* at the Triennale in Milan. It featured a forest of rotating winglike plexiglas panels covered with representations of hellfire from Edo period paintings with bright red “blood” splashed across them; there were also images of the corpses from the atomic bombings and big-eyed, famished demons. The panels were designed around a central vortex of spinning propellers through which one saw a fourteen-meter-long photo of a destroyed Hiroshima. “Destruction of the Future City” had collaged into



FIGURE 8. Isozaki, interior of Oita Branch of Fukuoka Mutual Bank, Oita (1966–1967). Photo by Yukio Futagawa. Yoshio Futagawa/GA Photographers

it strange, unwalled structures of twisted metal that look like the collapsed superstructures from a world's fair, or from some Godzilla movie. The whole was augmented by synchronized sound and light, with an infrared beam controlling the movement of the panels.⁴² It was, to say the least, about as strange an installation as one could possibly expect. Electric Labyrinth may have drawn on the destabilizing experientialism of a

42. See Emmanuel Petit, "Incubation and Decay: Arata Isozaki's Architectural Poetics—Metabolism's Dialogical 'Other,'" *Perspecta* 40 (2008): 152–63.

Fun House, but the message of its mechanized Medusa was of a different order. In clear antithesis to the heroic narratives of the metabolists, the installation with its spinning blades of history/death/horror represented for Isozaki a return to ground zero, a *cri de coeur* to start over.

Needless to say, the exhibition was not shown in Japan—which brings us back to Expo '70. After eight years of inner torment, Isozaki's repressed disillusionment with metabolism and architecture itself finally caught up to him. Isozaki saw Expo '70 as little more than the culmination of the world view of the nation-state as first formulated under the Meiji Restoration. It produced a world that tried so hard to be modern *and* Japanese that it produced in his view only kitsch and bombast.⁴³ Having in essence inherited this project from an older mindset, it was all he could do to bring it to fruition. Reviewing the events, Isozaki wrote that after it was all done, "when everything was as I had wished, it was impossible for me to cry out that everything was wrong—but it was wrong."⁴⁴ The night before the opening he writes that he "was felled by total fatigue both physical and psychological . . . [a psychosomatic] crisis."⁴⁵ It landed him in the hospital.

The plot thickens, for it was in the context of this turbulence in 1969 (a turbulence far different from what was happening in the US and Europe)⁴⁶ that Isozaki—not seeing any direct way out of the torturous problem of Japanness—wrote his piece on the Johnson and Son Administration Building for the first edition of *Global Architecture*.

To see the article as just another interpretation of a Wright building is to miss the drama that is at play. The building was for him a utopian project, though utopian might be too strong a concept. It showed the possibility of an architecture before the war, a possibility of something that would have to be won in a very hard way all over again, not just in a foreign country but in a country foreign to the very idea of the nonownership of culture. It was a hallucinatory object—a hallucinatory global.

Isozaki, more by intuition than theoretical expression, understood the dialectical nature of the word *global* as an adjectival noun. No global with-

43. See Isozaki, *Japan-ness*, p. 56.

44. Isozaki, *Four Decades of Architecture* (New York, 1998), p. 72.

45. Isozaki, "Festival Plaza, Expo '70 Osaka Suita, Osaka 1967–70," in Isozaki and Kenneth Frampton, *GA Architect 6: Arata Isozaki, 1959–1978*, trans. Hiroshi Watanabe, ed. Yukio Futagawa (Tokyo, 1991), p. 86.

46. Perhaps one can say that the difference was that whereas in the US, protest movement focused on the nation state as an imperialist power trying to exert its will over others, in Japan, for Isozaki at least, the nation state had replaced its imperialism with self-aesthetization of the modern, buying into the narrative of its monumentality. Along these lines, one can add that in the 1960s and 1970s, Japan was unique in this, thus the global significance of Isozaki's efforts, for there are no clear parallels in post-WWII Germany or Italy.

out an antiglobal. No outward projection toward the interior without its alienated internal imaginary projected outward.

But if the Johnson Building was brought in from the outside like a Trojan Horse—from the US to the Japan within—the “inner” part of the project remained well disguised, because as a practicing architect Isozaki had to couch his ideas in the diplomatic language of design; he had to work *with* the problem rather than pronounce it. Fortunately for him, the strangeness of the Oita Branch of the Fukuoka Bank went completely unnoticed. Only later would Isozaki write that the “*Architectural Design* magazine has the interior [of the Oita bank] as a ‘Metabolist’ treatment and so on, each citation bending over backwards to defend its analysis. One of these days I really ought to set the record straight, but where to begin?”⁴⁷ It was a delicate game to play in a country where a discussion about the atomic bomb was still rather awkward—apart from pop culture cinematic translations—and any criticism of Japan by a leading Japanese architect was most certainly not going to have traction among the elite. Isozaki’s skills as an architect-diplomat need to be heralded. In the 1990s, Isozaki reminisced with some relief that in 1971 getting the commission for the Gumma Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts—a substantial commission—“at a time when I was recovering from the crisis after Expo ’70 was extremely fortunate from the point of view of my career.”⁴⁸ Indeed, it was a building that made his career, and in response he learned to speak with less edge but no less enigmatically. In the 1990s, talking about the Edo Period, Isozaki writes, “no sooner is the importation of foreign culture fully accomplished (as in a blood transfusion), than the nation immediately closes its ports.” In this “period of enclosure,” while its culture became “more and more polished and refined, the social energy [dried] up” (*INA*, p. 14). Isozaki admits that there might, therefore, be some truth to Kojève’s thesis. “I have to agree [with Kojève] that the aspect of life that follows certain formalised rules has long existed in Japan” (*INA*, p. 18).

So the question for Isozaki back in 1970 was how to go global—how even to pronounce the word—without producing its opposite, an anti-global response.

The purpose of *Global Architecture* is slowly becoming clear; Japan needed a new blood infusion, but it could not follow the historical models: Beaux-Arts coming to Japan in the 1880s, International Style in the 1930s, and capitalist modernism in the 1960s. For Isozaki, they only produced a return to Japancentrism. What more cunning way to introduce

47. Isozaki, “Erasing Architecture into the System,” p. 26.

48. Isozaki, “Takasaki, Gumma Prefecture, 1971–74,” in *GA Architect* 6, p. 116.

the project of otherness than in the guise of Wright, whom every Japanese architect adored. And once the door to this familiar but now newly strange world had been opened, that's when things began to happen. What *Global Architecture* proceeded to do was to take modern architecture built and perfected in the US and Europe (the new East), an entire social package of quality buildings—Johnson and Son Administration Building, Sea Ranch (a designed coastal community in California), Ford Foundation Building (designed by Kevin Roche); Oakland Museum; Richards Medical Research Building (designed by Louis Kahn); Bell Telephone Research Labs; Chapelle Notre Dame Du Haut (a Roman Catholic chapel in Ronchamp, France, designed by Le Corbusier), and so on—and airlift them, one by one, volume by volume, into the context of Japan, the old East. The point was not to recreate these buildings but to break down the perceived and real hermeticism of the Japanese world, its own Jomon-Shinto-induced modernism included, not to mention the US-enhanced embrace of “traditional” Japanese architecture. *Global Architecture*—as a pedagogical practice addressed more to an imagined audience than to a real one—was a sort of bulwark against Japan closing itself yet again against foreigners either in the name of history or in the name of modernism, a pathology that Isozaki felt to be an inescapable element in Japan's destiny. In the face of change, the two options for most Japanese, he argues, are nationalism or cosmopolitanism. “This dichotomy that appears as the only choice is, however, a false one,” he states. “I believe I have to expand the peculiar sense of beauty and manner (*maniera*) my island nation has produced into the global dimension; to the extent, sometimes, that may even cause a conflict. I do this not only as a stranger to the West but also as a stranger to Japan” (*INA*, p. 21). He wrote later in 1978, with a clear reference to the *Global Architecture* project: “In reassessing the landmarks of the Modern Movement we discover the importance of past formal principles and methods of producing these works of integrity.”⁴⁹

Though Isozaki did not use the word *global*—as he does here—until the 1990s, he struggled in the 1970s to create a position toward which it could have been used, might have been used, and indeed, by Futagawa in *Global Architecture*, was used.

Turning to the scholarly literature on Isozaki, the common argument is that beginning in the 1970s Isozaki, leaving behind the technocentrism of metabolism, began to move between East and West, and that as a conse-

49. Isozaki, “An Architecture of Quotation and Metaphor,” in Drew, *The Architecture of Arata Isozaki* (New York, 1982), p. 189.

quence of Western influence his buildings began to take on a classicizing look. One scholar related him to the great German Enlightenment architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel and to the Austrian modernist Adolf Loos.⁵⁰ Another saw connections to the Italian baroque.⁵¹ The general presumption was that Isozaki was an open and erudite person, who had read a lot and who, taking on the pose of self-conscious individualism, moved with little angst in the general current of US postmodernism. The architectural historian Udo Kulterman celebrated the “radical dimensions” of his designs, but attributed them to “eclecticism.”⁵² What I see as a geopolitically scaled—and self-targeted—ontology in crisis was seen by Kulterman as a bland cultural fluidity that ultimately did not sit well with most critics who—still living in a *preglobal* imaginary—generally favored the line that Japanese architecture should look clean and severe and thus embody a happy fusion of the modern with the traditional. In 1991, a large, celebratory monograph on Isozaki appeared through *GA* with an introduction by Kenneth Frampton, one of the leading architectural historians in the US. In framing the unusualness of Isozaki’s architecture, he argued that in the process of moving past the metabolists and toward a position of “neutrality” Isozaki, influenced by Cedric Price’s Fun Palace (an unbuilt, industrially-scaled multimedia building, 1964) and by Archigram and Stirling, produced out of his “paranoid male fantasy” a “technological Dadaism” and a “*maniera* of dematerialization.” It was all made possible because Isozaki possessed a “sensitive mind in an apocalyptic age.”⁵³

Insightful for sure, but the point of my paper is to separate the attempt to understand Isozaki as a practicing architect from an attempt to position and theorize the provocation that the word *global* implied in that particular moment in 1970. *Global Architecture* pointed to a cultural and pedagogical practice aimed at the broader profession, with Isozaki seeing himself as just one particular flavor. It pointed to the growing asymmetry between the global as developed and instrumentalized by the US, a post-WWII global—a global of airplanes, the Pacific Ocean, Pan Am, great circles, emerging markets, urban planning, and the more difficult, experimental, unspeakable yet learnable *global* of a deterritorialized, psycho-civilizational ethos—violated *and* necessarily self-violating, both ontologically and epis-

50. See David B. Stewart, “Gods and Men,” in *Arata Isozaki: Architecture 1960–1990*, p. 17.

51. See Hajime Yatsuka, “Arata Isozaki after 1980: From Mannerism to the Picturesque,” *Arata Isozaki: Architecture 1960–1990*, p. 23.

52. Udo Kultermann, “Arata Isozaki,” *Contemporary Architects*, ed. Muriel Emanuel (New York, 1980), p. 385.

53. Kenneth Frampton, “Post-Metabolism and the Dissolution of Architecture: Amplification and Neutrality 1960–75,” in *GA Architect* 6, p. 108.

temologically. One was created and affirmed in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor; the other in the aftermath of Hiroshima; the one was the language of the victor, the other the language of the loser, both shocked into awareness. One speaks of a culture of anxious mastery; the other is haunted by uncertainty. One produced a new and powerful way to comprehend the world (from Global War to Global Village); the other produced a conjecture arising from a reversal of expectations. One circled back toward a monotheistic singularity; the other circled outwards toward a polyvalent future, but both were dialectically haunted by internal antiglobal presences. One put that antiglobal at the troubled periphery; the other at the center.

The first global drifts toward the geopolitical real of economy and trade, while the second stays within the orbit of an imaginary—perhaps even something that could be called an aesthetics. But the irony is that the two are mutually interdependent in that if the first is a global consciousness, the second has all the beginnings of a global conscience, staying afloat only on the thinness of surfaces in the realm of post-Holocaust humanism. For a brief moment in time, these two globals were balanced against each other, almost touching.

For sure, Isozaki's global is the more complex. It emerged as an aftereffect of the war when its events could start to be represented/representable (in Milan) and simultaneously—especially in architecture—not represented/not representable (in Japan), requiring a compensatory prosthetic/disguise (Wright), the healthy flesh and blood of a modern architecture and *its* history in distinction to Japanese history. The global was being pulled *into* the problem of something that one can call the future, the future of modernity, but it was also pulled *past* the present. Needless to say, these nuanced, strategic imaginaries were steamrolled into oblivion with the rise of what we now call globalization.

At stake in the history that I have outlined is, therefore, not the history of global self-envisioning, but rather the recuperation of the historicity of a new formation, even though one cannot say that it has yet even been formed, or can ever be formed. This global was not stationary, either in space or time, nor was it a simple critique of technology and power. Instead it circled around much softer substances, namely geography and history, to ask the question: Where is creativity—architectural creativity, more specifically—to locate itself in the postnuclear, post-Holocaust world? My aim was to bring *that* effort and *that* problem to light; it is a problem that needs to still be both thought and thought through.

What I aimed for here was to separate out, but also to interlink, the history of *global* as a proliferated adjectival modifier with a history of its imaginary. My fear is that because the former ends, so to speak, in globalization,

the latter disappears from view or returns only as a liberal project of tolerance and inclusion. Yes, Isozaki's global is built on tolerance, but it goes beyond to create a postnationalistic epistemology. Better stated, it is an epistemology created out of the maw of nationalism and so can only remain, at its best, an inherently tragic claim.