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The Aesthetics of Cooperation: Leland Stanford's Urban Form and the Spatialization of Pedagogy
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How might we imagine a university as practicing a trans-national humanist project? A humanist pedagogy informed by emerging world movements must directly address the project of the global university by asking how to harness cross-cultural affinities and transform intellectual and emotional energy into a cross-class, as well as cross-border, political project. This history of the first modern campus that I am presenting today is one attempt to provide such a pedagogical model that was offered in the late nineteenth century. I want to grasp the construction of the first campus as a significant aspect of a much larger proposal for a national labor policy that aimed at confronting the social challenges of a dramatically unequal distribution of wealth witnessed in the United States during industrialization. This proposal completely failed, it should be clear. The central policy I am going to address today—Leland Stanford's 1887 Bill of Co-operative Labor—can be understood as an early national economic reform proposal in the history of American politics. Stanford offered a middle class solution to a working class problem. However, Stanford's critique of capital, of education, of industrialization remain relevant and somewhat mesmerizing in its culmination of what is perhaps the most significant built monument deliberately dedicated to labor that the United States has ever seen, as well as an aggressive means of politicizing the relationship of capital, education, and the state that has come to define the global knowledge economy of our own historical moment. Furthermore recent financial crises which traumatized economies across the globe has inspired a resurgence of interest in alternatives to capitalism and Leland Stanford's critique and theory of cooperation is a timely contribution that lends itself directly to that discussion. Finally, and most importantly, I want to suggest that the model Stanford constructed necessitated a protocol for a new aesthetic strategy within a time and space in which the national market had seemingly reached its absolute limit. In which case, the aesthetic created here may be understood

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allegorically as a kind of dress rehearsal for the moment in history of universal commodification, the universalization of wage labor, and the ultimate limit of capital expansion. That limit is, of course, the world market which a number of theorists have used to describe and distinguish our own time, casually referred to as globalization, late capitalism, or, postmodernism.

The period of 1865 to 1895 is an era of tumultuous and widespread social conflict. Immediately following the Civil War, an explosive acceleration of industrialization produced a scale of labor exploitation that seemed to rival that of the now defunct institution of slavery. Beginning with the financial crisis of 1873, social disorder manifested itself in a culmination of strikes, worker stoppages, and a corresponding amount of worker layoffs. In addition to the more well known events such as the Great Upheaval and the Haymarket Riot, the last quarter of the 19th century witnessed more than 37,000 strikes involving nearly 7 million workers. With the 1871 Paris commune still fresh in mind, the disorder seemed prevalent nearly everywhere in the world. The promise of social progress which had long served as the rationalization of rapid industrial development had proved empty to so many and no apparent solution seemed forthcoming.

Beginning in the 1880s, Leland Stanford, owner of the Southern Pacific Railroad, US Senator for the State of California, had become an aggressive advocate of worker ownership over the means of production as a social system capable of overcoming the insurmountable antagonism between the unbounded power of an industrial oligarchy and the rising militancy of a nascent international labor movement. Stanford authored several pamphlets and newspaper interviews in which he argued that the capitalist relationship between worker and shop-owner had become obsolete in the face of advanced industrial technologies. Stanford promoted the creation of a new social character that would now apply scientific principles of cooperation toward increasing both national production *and* social intelligence, ultimately providing a third way between capitalism's vast unequal distribution of wealth and socialism's counter-image of the state with unlimited power.

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This vision of direct worker ownership of industry was, from the onset of the Industrial Revolution, one of the solutions that labor and agrarian activists considered for ending corporate exploitation of labor. The co-operative vision, including consumer and marketing cooperatives, reached its apex as the foundation of a democratic mass movement during the Populist era. Agrarian democratic thought responded to the rise of monopoly by advancing a new definition of the American conception of individualism. One who praised cooperation was not necessarily adopting a communist ethic, but rather emphasizing the importance of social cooperation as a means of creating individuals. Populists stressed, in a manner unprecedented in mainstream American political writing, that association with others underlies the meaning of a strong sense of individual character. Henry George's last sections of *Progress and Poverty* are a veritable ode to the arts of association. Lawrence Gronlund's phrase, "the cooperative commonwealth" functioned as shorthand for the indigenous American radical's vision of a democratic future up until the first world war, and more recently, marks a historical affinity with Michael Hardt's theory of the common. It is within this political atmosphere in California that Leland Stanford founded his university and served as United States Senator. The populist's vision of cooperative labor certainly overlapped with much of Stanford's revision of the American economy—a protectionist tariff, unlimited supply of greenbacks, new legislature on cooperation—and the populists nearly went so far as nominating Stanford as their presidential candidate in the 1888 election.

However, there is another line of political thought that allows us to obtain a further grasp on Stanford's proposal. Stanford's earliest writings align him with that of a corporate liberalist tradition whose central figure is Pennsylvania's own Henry Charles Carey. In the 1850s, Carey set himself the impossible task of projecting onto the world stage the interests of a numerically small and somewhat uncompetitive class of individuals. American manufacturers at the time were relatively weak in relation to agricultural workers as well as at a competitive disadvantage in the world market. And yet, because Carey's doctrines were part of a worldwide intellectual challenge to British

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imperialism, his books were translated into nine languages and he traveled across England and Europe on a speech circuit for decades. Carey's intellectual contribution to the 19th century was the quest to liberate American economic thinking from what he saw as the pernicious influence of contemporary British political economy. He developed what we would now call a theory of unequal development: through international trade, more advanced areas of the world gained at the expense of the less developed. Britain's overdevelopment of products and lack of a sufficient home market led to a dependence on colonies and international free trade, which, in turn, held all other countries in a permanent state as providers of raw materials. Thus, a free-trade economy would inevitably result in the demise of American resources, and an inability to develop its own unified national market.

Carey's theory, in effect, aligned one stream of republican thought directly with American labor. Protectionists stressed internal domestic competition over foreign competition for the precise reason that the former promoted greater invention and capital stock accumulation while the latter resulted in the degradation of the worker through the lowering of the wage rate. Within the closed system of the national marketplace, internal competition would keep prices down, ensure that the manufacturer did not reap all of the benefits, as competition would necessitate higher wages, full employment, and a diversity of occupations. Thus Carey's protectionist theory offered what he called a "harmony of interests" among capital and labor, a favorable attitude to business was, ultimately, the precise means of securing a larger reward for the American worker.

With the use of high tariffs, free land, and education, liberal republicans forged a program that promised to dignify the laborer while at the same time celebrating middle class values and the free enterprise system. Frugality, hard work, and respectability remained their watchwords, the desire for wealth continued to be lauded, and no limitations were placed in the way of those who wanted to achieve great wealth. It is within this context that we can now turn to Leland Stanford's

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theory of cooperation that emerges in the 1880s as a national economic policy strongly influenced by the labor ideas of both populists and antebellum protectionists.

Already in 1873, Stanford is delivering a speech to workers in which he describes the railroad as the only faithful “breaker down of monopolies” since it had been the means of “preventing corners in sugar, candles, soap, molasses, and newspapers, and telegraphs.”

Five years later, in open letter to the Committee on Corporations, Stanford writes that

“an attack on railroads, like attacks upon all other species of property, is an attack upon labor, and more particularly common labor, because the road from the time the first pick or shovel is put into the ground until it is completed, equipped and ready to be put into operation, represents only labor, and labor largely of the most common kind. After its construction, it has no usefulness, no earning capacity, except as labor, and in large part common labor is applied to it. Its benefits, whether to those who use it, who ride upon it, who freight upon it, or those who may own it, are all directly the results of labor.”

Thus, his early public addresses are an elaboration and an aggressive extension of Henry Carey’s ideas: not only is there a harmony of interest between laborer and capitalist, but

Stanford has pushed the equation further, suggesting that capital—including machinery, land, and intelligence—is nothing but aggregated labor. Labor is the creation of all profit and therefore indispensable to the economy, whereas the capitalist was the sole benefactor and therefore merely *useful*. Civilization is premised upon the work of groups of individuals and here we grasp Stanford’s ontology of collectivity based upon the belief that left without labor for one month, or for a year, all of human history would vanish as though in a thunderclap.

In which case, a capitalist system must be devised that privileges labor over capital, that organizes the fair distribution of wealth around the capacity to work, rather than the capacity to own wealth.

From the period of 1878 to 1885, Stanford extends his argument by aligning a theory of economics with a cultural theory of progress and advanced education. He began to author several

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pamphlets and newspaper interviews in which he argued that the capitalist relationship between worker and shop-owner had changed and that this was in fact proven by widespread labor unrest. He argued that this recent global upsurge in direct action taken by workers was, in effect, a new sign of global intelligence, one critical result of industrial technology's ability to increase workers' wide-scale interaction. Advanced technologies such as the railroad—so often the precise target of class conflict—had changed the human sensorium, creating a new social character that now required scientific principles of cooperation to increase both national production and social intelligence.

Significantly, it is less the ingenuity of the inventors, but rather labor unrest that is the driving force behind the introduction of this new space that will be called a campus. Stanford clarifies that labor is the driving force of the system and the inextinguishable source of its accumulated values. Thus, this new machinery called a campus is explicitly the capitalist's answer to the strike, the demand for higher wages, and the increasingly effective “combination” of workers. The first modern campus must now be viewed as much more than a mere aesthetic project. It is also an ideological one as its ambitious intention was aimed at nothing less than the resolution of the contradiction of labor and capital itself. At the same time, we are forced to acknowledge the realization that, if the progress of capital produces ever greater misery for the workers, then it must also be said that class struggle—the increasingly articulate and self-conscious resistance of the workers themselves—is itself responsible for the ever greater productivity of capitalism.

Stanford addresses the senate floor with his Bill of Cooperation to the Senate in February of 1887. The purpose of the bill is to allow those with little or no capital to unite in economic ventures that they could not afford on their own. The anticipated objection that this was an already guaranteed right by corporate law itself, Stanford agreed, but before a group could incorporate for any purpose under existing laws, it had to show financial solvency. His bill provided for the association of individuals without any capital whatsoever. Stanford held that “twelve sewing girls without the slightest capital save health, skill and industry, have the same right to form an association

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to carry on a business of dressmaking that twelve millionaires have to form a company for the prosecution of manufacturing enterprises.”

In support of his bill, the senator discusses in several national newspapers the way in which capital is simply organized labor, that corporations are extended partnerships, and that all workers with intelligence could organize cooperative societies and work for themselves, proving that the antagonism between labor and capital was much more imagined than real. A perfect cooperative society, Stanford argued, would gradually eliminate the managerial class. [[He began foregrounding the logic of “relative surplus value” or what Marx called “labor’s free gift to capital:”

It should be borne in mind that the labor employed not only creates its own wages, but creates the premium which the enterprising proprietor receives for originating the employment. Viewed from this standpoint there is a sense in which the labor so co-operating is hiring an employer—that is, it is paying a premium to enterprise to originate and direct its employment. Capital is paramount and labor subordinate, only because labor consents to that form of organization in our industries which produces that result.

(Stanford, “Labor” 3) [...]To comprehend it in all its breath, however, let us assume that in all time all labor had been thus self-directing. If instead of the proposition before us to change the industrial system from the employed relation, and place it under self-direction, the co-operative form of industrial organization had existed from all time, and we were now for the first time proposing to reorganize the employment of labor, and place it under non-[self] direction. I apprehend the proposer of such a change would be regarded in the light of an enslaver of his race. He would be amenable to the charge that his effort was in the direction of reducing the laboring men to an automaton. We may safely assume that such a change would be impossible.

It is perhaps Stanford’s most striking material: the image on the one hand of the Viconian assertion that what human beings have made, they can also unmake, that capitalist exploitation is quite simply

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an issue of labor's consent. And on the other hand, the image of a reversed historical situation that conceives of wage labor as a form of enslavement or indentured servitude, a position argued in the present day by the work of economist David Ellerman.

The mention of automatons reveals Stanford's concern with developing an economic theory that functioned as an educational practice. Not only would increased production and employment alone justify this legislation, but cooperation involved another dimension: it would create a more intelligent people. In a co-operative, individual differences were eliminated at the peril of science, government, and the general welfare of the population. The maximization of individual potential, for both men and women, was part of this new discourse and pathos of social improvement. For Stanford, there is no opposition between economy and culture, or science and human development. The theory of cooperative labor is immediately a humanist and pedagogical development. A new space was now necessary. A social field of everyday relations based, not on improving the morality of the working class as would soon be pursued in the paternal experiments at Pullman and other corporate industrial towns. The real benefit of cooperation over philanthropy and paternalism was the way it enabled individuals to "find their fullest development in association" with others ("Cooperation" 1). Education is grasped here not as a mere adjunct to the economic system, but its defining feature. All of this is presented at the 1885 signing of the deed to incorporate Stanford University:

Through cooperation each individual has the benefit of the intellectual and physical forces of his associates. It is by intelligent application of these principles that there will be found the greatest lever to elevate the mass of humanity [...] Hence it is that we have provided for thorough instruction in the principles of co-operation. We will have it instilled into the student's mind that no greater blow can be struck at labor than that which makes its products insecure. (Address of the signing of the Deed, 26 November 1885)

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The Stanford's decision to build a university so close to the flagship state institution at Berkeley was ridiculed as was the tremendous work involved in building, from scratch, an entirely new city. His closest friends and consultants urged him to donate, or simply commission a new museum in San Francisco. But for Leland Stanford, it was entirely unsuitable to bestow the money in an already existing university such as Harvard or Berkeley. What is so often left out of the accounts of the origin of this institution is precisely why, and against all reason, an entire city had to be built with a university at its center. For Stanford, the problem amassed precisely from the decision that the social principles and values he recognized and accepted were unable to be asserted into these already existing institutions. The problem was precisely that it was vitally necessary to make the future formation of a currently unavailable collective subjectivity possible.

Thus, the dilemma Stanford set out to confront is that of the modern intellectual, or more specifically, the question of how an educational and economic social arrangement could reform and remake an alternative to the emerging exploitative system of market capitalism. The utopian spirit of the project is registered early by those reporting on its development out in California. A journalist writing for the *Argonaut* in 1887 captured the extent to which this city, even before it was built, functioned as a kind of *Novum*—as something not yet known in the world. The journalist observes,

The endowment for this university is not for the purpose of enabling the curled darlings of fortune to achieve college distinction in the gymnasium or with a bat and oar to win rowing matches and games of baseball or cricket; nor is it to become a charity institution where the stupid son of some idiot sire is to be educated, simply because the family is poor and the parent's ambitious to have their child attain graduating honors as an excuse to be above physical labor. This endowment means the period of class education is going by; the period of class advantages is slowly drifting [away]. There is only one rock upon which this

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university can be wrecked, only one dangerous direction, which is toward the imitation of any other existing university or college in this world.

The writer's invocation of the generational shift from a period of class education to a classless one, demonstrates the degree to which this project was completely alien to the history of education in the United States. It's important to emphasize that the word "campus" was not used once by those designing and constructing this space. Before 1900, the "campus" was synonymous with the word 'yard'—a term used as far back as 1639, and still used today, at Harvard. *Yard* had a specific connotation. The colleges of the colonial era functioned as a single building that stood surrounded by an open space referred to as the college *grounds*, the college *green*, or the college *yard*. "Campus" designated the same space until around the last decade of the 19th century when the term appeared for the first time in Webster's unabridged dictionary.

The referent we have today when we say the word 'campus' is an urban construction that unifies in one gesture the building and its environment, the architecture and the urban plan, the text and the context, the individual and the collective, the content and the form. And in doing so there is an assertion of spatial autonomy. At the time, the aesthetic of urban autonomy was considered old-fashioned and reserved for aristocracies, religious spaces, or early Romantic conceptions of poetry.

Certainly the romantic qualities of the structure have been discussed at length and are recounted every time the history of the school is invoked thereby dismissing the need to address any political aspects of the project. This practice of "selective tradition" is exacerbated by the fact that the preeminent historian of the American campus is a professor of Architecture at Stanford University. Paul Turner refers to the Stanford Campus as the "most romantic story in the history of American education" as he recounts how the death of Leland and Jane's 15-year old son drove them to create a beautiful campus so that "the children of California will be there children." Indeed, but I think the romanticism at the core of the Stanford's endeavor is best understood if we recall Fredric Jameson's distinction that the "object of representation" within romance, is less the depiction of a

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radically different society, so much as it is the narrative structure that enables a social order to somehow reproduce itself—so that new forms and freedoms may come into being in the first place. The romance, and particularly the utopian text, uniquely *educates* its contemporary audience by enabling them to inhabit a new kind of environment that is coming into being, an inherently spatialized operation similar to what Louis Marin calls *figuration*.

Marin's groundbreaking semiological analysis of utopian narrative emerges from a close reading of the formal operations specific to the genre. "Utopia," writes Marin, "is not a topography, but a topic," a rhetorical figure designed to continuously undermine the very place from which it emerges (115). This is accomplished by a temporal disorientation at work in the utopian narrative that conceives of present desires, concerns, and politics in terms of the future. That is to say, the narrative utopia functions as a particular form of praxis as it attempts to occupy a middle ground between the concrete, phenomenological, literary experience of everyday life within a particular historical moment and an abstract, theoretical perspective of an as-yet distant future, thereby enabling readers to perceive the world they occupy in a new way. Figuration is Marin's term for this in-between state. This mediary position, that is so central to Jameson's cultural pedagogical project, maps the place of a future forming within the horizons of the present, between the world that is and that world which is coming into being. Marin distinguishes the utopia text as, "A schema in quest of a concept, a model without a structure, the figure produced by utopian practice is a sort of zero degree of the concept" (163). As it presents an 'active picture' of history-in-information, rather than a static, theoretical description of a fully formed or understood historical instance, the narrative utopia provides some of the skills and dispositions necessary to inhabit an emerging social, political, and cultural environment.

The utopian narrative thus requires the reader to position herself as both familiar and unfamiliar with the offered textual world, as both within and outside the text, and thus offers a pedagogical philosophy, akin to what Mariolina Salvatori, in the field of writing studies, refers to as a

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“‘philosophical science’, as a theory and practice of knowing that makes manifest its own theory and practice by continually reflecting on, deconstructing, and getting to know one’s theory and practice ...” (30). Whereas with the *didactic* approach to the history of the campus that we find in the work of Paul Turner interprets the structure by legitimating previously established and known procedures that define authority and authorship primarily through mimicry, a *pedagogical* approach instead works to develop a conception, or figuration, of the space whose lived experience and theoretical understanding only later become possible. This is also what Barthes describes as the “performance of discourse,” the very activity of making the world through language, a pedagogical position that, as it unfolds, quite literally engenders something new in the world (36).

Indeed, what Barthes, Marin, Jameson and Salvatori propose is a pedagogical approach that broadens the very conception of writing studies itself as a social science. By extrapolating the notion of ‘writing’ onto objects previously thought to be ‘realities’ or ‘objects in the real world,’ we instead displace our attention to its *formation* as an object and its *relationship* to other objects thus formed. It is precisely this sense of pedagogy as engaging in a particular kind of praxis, a specific representational activity, that I mean to emphasize in the following close reading of Stanford’s university city.

Indeed it is also this performative quality that Frederick Law Olmsted attempted to capture when, writing to his friend Charles Eliot back in Cambridge, he had no words to describe Leland Stanford’s intention, and ultimately referred to it as a “Universitatorium.” A portmanteau that would have made Humpty Dumpty proud, in its coinage of fusing both a university and a theatrical or performative space in order to describe something as yet unknown in the history of American education. It is significant that even Frederick Law Olmsted, no stranger to Promethean landscape projects, had no vocabulary for what Stanford envisioned.

I want to turn now to the material influences that led to this space’s *formation* as an object and its *relationship* to these previous spaces in order to develop this new language of campus space. The

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construction, planning, and design of the original buildings and floor plan at Stanford City, from August 1886 through the opening of the university in October of 1891, was a collaborative and interdisciplinary affair if there ever was one. It included critical participation from Leland and Jane Stanford, Frederick Law Olmsted, Francis Walker, president of MIT and 1st president of the American Economics Association, and the architecture firm of Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge. A trio that grew directly out of H.H. Richardson's firm in Boston. If these buildings look familiar, it is because this same architectural firm is responsible for the Shadyside Presbyterian church at the corner of liberty and center avenue.

The first line of influence is of course 19th century American utopian communities that are well known for their explicit use of architecture as a semiotic medium to embody their beliefs and distinguish themselves from mainstream culture. Architecture was the most visible expression of community self-representation, and extended beyond the standard use of architecture to signify meaning. Dolores Hayden shows us that utopian theorists often were very involved with the detailed plans for their ideal communities. Charles Fourier provided the most specific ideas and Hayden argues Fourier's structures were most adamant about the emancipation of women as he introduced housing with collective facilities in order to make private homes appear, "a place of exiles, worthy of fools, who after 3,000 years of architecture studies have not yet learned to build themselves healthy and comfortable lodgings"(35). These "unitary dwelling," or Philansteries, Fourier believed to be a spatial invention to overcome the conflicts between city and country, rich and poor, men and women through spatial arrangement. They were flanked by symmetrical wings that enclosed a series of landscaped courtyards connected by interior streets, 18 to 24 feet wide, three stories high, called "galleries of association." Most scholars, Hayden included, note the similarities to Versailles.

In 1825, we also have Robert Owen's utopian community of New Harmony, Indiana which was also based upon cooperative principles. This is exceptionally notable, because this was a

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collectivist agricultural and industrial community built in the form of a large quadrangle, referred to as “parallelograms.” Owen hired an architect, Stedman Whitwell, to prepare a model for presentation to President John Quincy Adams. “The model represents a square of buildings, each side of which is 1,000 feet in length, and each side contains every domestic arrangement that can be required for 5,000 persons.” This model remained on display in the House of Representatives chamber in Washington for several years.

In addition, the rigid geometric formalism of Stanford’s city, and particularly Olmsted’s earliest renditions of the plan, also suggest the work of Claude-Nicholas Ledoux. The foregrounding of circulation, the heavy formalism of the design, which we will soon find at Stanford City, shows strong affinities to Ledoux’s well known drafts for Louis the 15th’s *Salt Works Royale* in eastern France in 1775. We can also note the extensive and grandiose use of columns in Ledoux’s *Maison de Commerce* which will mark a significant reference point for the emerging structure at Palo Alto.

There are several other nascent forms of urban planning witnessed in the American nineteenth century and I show the semiotic relationship between them in another chapter of the book, but I want to quickly show a few here—the rural cemetery’s built at Mt. Auburn and Lawrenceville, of course, Frederick Law Olmsted’s and Charles Vaux’s Central Park plan, as well as the land grant college at Amherst, but I think most interesting and perhaps too close to home, is their early plan for a “retreat for the insane,” the final pedagogical landscape of the 19th century is, of course, the strict logic of the company town. All of these had been philanthropic enterprises rooted in the belief that improvement in environment could teach workers good habits, lead to higher rates of production, and a congenial way of life without social conflict.

What we find in Palo Alto, however, belies any correspondence with the philanthropic tenant that unifying a ‘proper’ morality with economic production could enable a route towards social justice. The aim of the earliest attempt to create an enclave dedicated to an educational institution

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was not to discipline; rather, the urban plan of this university was an experimental laboratory for conceiving a society outside of both government and paternal interest. The spatial organization of the first modern American “campus” offered a means to develop a new form of community based on artisan and craftwork principles of self-management and autonomy, where production, health, and scientific principles could unfold, and where the political turmoil crippling the end of the nineteenth century could be directly addressed and eliminated.

Despite the clear references to the utopian architectural tradition, as well as the semiotic raw material of the pedagogical landscapes of the nineteenth century, Stanford city should be immediately differentiated in that its autonomous character is the paradoxical result of its aggressive assertion of the local, of a geographically self-referential aesthetic practice, and it is this form of the form, which we must now turn.

After several years of public debate, Stanford’s Bill of Cooperation did not pass the Senate floor. However, the university city upon which he would expend his entire fortune, and that would maintain the co-operation of labor as a “leading feature,” began construction only five months later (Bancroft 112). The land granted for the university amounted to 8,180 acres—over half the size of Manhattan—and introduced a degree of monumentality that became the central means by which Stanford most successfully articulated his vision of a co-operative society.

Immediately the Southern Pacific Railroad extended two lines into the Almaden Valley that would run directly from Goodrich Quarry to the plain on his farm in Palo Alto. Over the following six years, tons of the stone were quarried by hand, sculpted and hardened, into classrooms for the university. The entire city was to be composed of a material substrate unique to Santa Clara County. This desire to sculpt an entire city out of local material was an integral feature of the university’s composition as one newspaper made clear:

Mr. Stanford has evidently determined that this memorial erected to his son shall be unique in every respect, from the immensity of the grant down; for the architecture is to have an

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individuality all its own in the history of universities. The buildings are to simulate the old adobe houses of the early Spanish days; they will be one-storied; they will have deep window seats and open fire-places, and the roofs will be covered with the familiar dark tiles, which are shaped like long chimneys split in two. [...] The architects were very anxious to use the beautiful rose-colored sandstone found in Utah, but Mr. Stanford was determined to employ none but native Californian materials. (“Leland”)

Indeed the commitment to “native Californian materials” goes much further than simply utilizing local quarries. In addition to the physical material, the conception of this space also powerfully embodied a unique narrative of Californian *history*. The most popular story about California at the time was a protest novel written by Helen Hunt Jackson, entitled *Ramona*. Published in 1884, Jackson’s *Ramona* appeared at a moment in which Native Americans were reviled and feared by whites, portrayed as obstacles to economic development and growth in the West, and deemed unworthy of respect and the legal rights of American citizens (Coward). Taking *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as her inspiration, Jackson sought to convey to the wider American public the enormity of the contemporary injustices of land dispossession and genocide against Native Americans in the West.

Within its first year of publication the novel became a national best seller (Moylan 225). But what emerged from Jackson’s rich descriptions of a bucolic landscape, a romanticized ranchero lifestyle, and a love between an aristocratic heroine and an Indian ranch-hand, was not a nation demanding self-reform for the national disgrace of Indian mistreatment. Instead, Jackson’s book fueled a spectacular production of books, brochures, magazines and newspaper articles that served as travel guides and inspired a constellation of *Ramona* sites across Southern California.

Within three years of publication, Stanford’s Southern Pacific Railroad had begun to play a central role in the publicity and actualization of the fictional *Ramona* landscape. In May of 1887, Leland Stanford’s railroad constructed a line that would directly reach Camulos Ranch, the officially established “Home of Ramona,” providing an immensely popular pilgrimage site for tourists across

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the nation (DeLyser 75-6). As Stanford began to speak publically about “creating for the first time an architecture distinctively Californian in character,” Southern Pacific excursion trains regularly stopped at Ramona’s fictional Camulus Ranch, “so that wide-eyed Bostonians, guidebooks in hand, might detrain, and bounce up and down on the bed in which Ramona slept” (McWilliams 73).

In this light we may understand the appeal and use of Mission architecture in the construction of this university as a means to invest in socio-historical forms. The ‘counterworld’ found in Jackson’s *Ramona* not only provided a glimpse of a simpler way of life to escape the alienating rhythms of industrialization; *Ramona* also equipped readers with the image of a pre-modern cooperative society by situating the focal point of work, family, and community life in the public/private space of the *veranda*.

For Stanford, these social practices of the past were not objects to be romantically consumed while hypocritically embracing the inevitability of a modern world; their local character was at once a critique and a *productive* organization that alone enabled the possibility of a progressive future.

We can see that Stanford adopted the spatial thematics of the California Missions as the stylistic feature of the form. Each building would reference this local history, not only in its use of the monastic quadrangle, but in its intention to create a harmonized and enclosed spatial ensemble. But enclosure and autonomy, the defining features of campus space, paradoxically did not signify a barrier or limit in Stanford’s deployment. And here we reach the paradox of this spatial form, and perhaps too, *the campus itself*: How can something autonomous achieve, by its very structure, a kind of universality? How could something grow based solely on its own structural merits? Or in the realm of economics, how is it possible for non-circulating money to somehow on its own reproduce more money?

We see this bizarre capacity for repetition dramatically come to the fore with the signature design feature of Stanford’s university city—its over-emphasis on the arcade. Rather than

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preserving arcade use for the inner courtyards, or entryways, Stanford University distinctly used the arcade to wrap the interior *and* exterior spaces of the entire structure. All buildings in the university, an ensemble of different sizes and shapes that would otherwise stand discordantly together, are aesthetically unified by this comprehensive element of the design. The Stanford arcade powerfully eliminates any contradiction between the building and its environment, between architecture and urbanism, thereby resolving the signature tension that heretofore defined “campus” planning for the entirety of Frederick Law Olmsted’s land grant universities.

The arcade also strengthened Stanford’s intention of orderly future expansion, a feature that would soon dictate the field of modern urban planning. Together the quadrangle and the arcade offers the stability of the whole structure the additional capacity for circulation, for movement into the future, toward an as yet unavailable mode of production. Enclosed, but at the same time, expandable, since the succession of Mission quadrangles permits the possibility of expansion into the horizon. The insistence on the local aesthetic of the California missions functions as the means of creating the endless possibility of future growth and circulation.

Thus, we have difference as unification; enclosure as expansion; worker as manager: these aspects of Stanford’s cooperation theory are the defining characteristics of this urban plan. This technological appreciation and contemporary re-visioning of the Mission arcades, this reevaluation of an architectural vocabulary found in Californian history and social memory, in order to conceive of an environment as a regulator of social welfare, as well as provide a new form in which scientific principles could be literally expanded into the future, allows us to grasp Stanford University as an important transitional figure. Whereas the capacity for future expansion and the cooperative organization of society allows us to consider Stanford’s city as undeniably modern, his declaration to create a “distinctively Californian” character, at the same time, prevents any placement of this urban vision into categories aesthetically or sociologically modernist.

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The significance of this structure for us today is the way in which natural resources, local history, topography, and social memory constitute living forces of authority that could equally stand with modern scientific ideas of social progress. The urban form that resulted in the first modern American “campus” can thus be described as what anthropologist Paul Rabinow calls “techno-cosmopolitan:” a stage of modernization in which an attempt is made to balance technology and the universal instruments that progress the general welfare of a population with historical and natural givens (Rabinow 12). The initial university plan demonstrates an exemplary kind of “modernization before modernism” (Rabinow 212).

The protectionist’s refusal to engage a world market functioned as a limitation that generated a kind of critical regionalist aesthetic. Understanding that a lack of territorial expansion will dramatically decrease economic power, the railroad president is forced to think of a means by which the property system can expand without necessitating unemployment or massive inequalities in the distribution of wealth.

Stanford’s economic solution is forced to become a symbolic one as it altered existing educational forms and provided a new model of social production. The enclosed quadrangle and the extensive unifying system of the arcade created a spatial totality that would become the distinguishing feature of the American *campus* in the twentieth century which, in turn, would be implemented for much different socio-economic purposes.

Of course Stanford’s vision of a cooperative economy was not prophetic of the future, yet the spatial practice of the campus has been and remains indispensable to American empire. Indeed much scholarly attention has been given to the modern university as a vehicle of US imperialism as it legitimated and perpetuated a body of knowledge that permitted national, cultural, and economic domination on both national and global scales. And if we recall that Stanford had been the prime benefactor of a massive accumulation of wealth by dispossession that resulted from the eminent

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domain of the railroad, we might conclude that it is no surprise that the logics of land speculation should ultimately arrive as the content of the form of campus space in the late 19th century.

Stanford's solution to formulate a system that can produce a future commodity, namely a new mode of production based upon a theory of autonomy, we may now firmly grasp as an allegory of finance. The operations of finance capital are defined by the appearance that money is simply increasing itself through some intrinsic capacity. Value appears as interest and return on investment, all without the interposition of the commodity and its congealed labor time. This is a major distinction from the "real economy" which remains (visibly) premised upon the material production and circulation of commodities.

My incomplete intuition goes something like this: The campus is a cultural form very well suited for grasping the logic of credit and fictitious capital. While Stanford was hoping to produce a new mode of production, what he created was a social means by which labor time could be transmuted into a spatial form through investment in land. A crucial feature of the Stanford endowment was that the land provided could never be sold, and indeed this railway of quadrangles runs parallel to the Southern Pacific railroad lines. The future cooperative worker Stanford believed to be a necessity of the economic system, was not yet available, in which case he sought a means by which to invest in the arrival of this future commodity. The extension of quadrangles into the horizon, running parallel to the Southern Pacific railroad, built to inspire and capture a future mode of production must now function as a trope of financialization in which subtraction of labor time necessitates the conversion of the temporal into the spatial. The campus is a kind of advanced credit on socialized labor. But the limit of the credit—of financialization in general—is the horizon of possibility after which it can no longer be supposed that new labor will indeed be eventually subsumed. I'll just leave it at that for now.

At the same time, the vision of class solidarity found at the origins of the campus certainly merits a rich context for addressing the utopian impulse within contemporary campus practices.

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Campuses will be under constant construction throughout the United States after the second world war, but only in the 21st century do we finally see a full force return to its utopic impulse as it is now being reborn as the corporate campus. It does seem relevant that the rise of the corporate campus corresponds geographically with an urban form defined by venture and finance capital (Silicon Valley) and historically with the rise of an unchallenged world capitalist market that is indeed approaching its absolute non-imaginary limit.

Marissa Mayer, *Yahoo's* new CEO, recently abolished its work-at-home policy ordering everyone to work in the office. According to their human resource department's email, the policy change is to foster a more collaborative culture through face-to-face interaction among employees. Mayer has stated, "if you want productivity, then you want people working from home, but if you want *innovation*, then you need *interaction*."

At *Yahoo* Mayer is implementing all the *Google* lessons that encourage having your life revolve around the campus so you can spend a significantly larger chunk of time at work. *Google* famously does not require anyone to come into the campus to work, however the perks offered there are legendary: they include "subsidized massages with massage rooms on every floor; free once a week eyebrow shaping; a course taken called 'Unwind: the art and science of stress management;' a course in advanced negotiation taught by a Wharton professor; an author series and an appearance by the novelist Toni Morrison; oil change service; dry cleaning, hair salons, and a gym." Silicon Valley introduced to the twenty-first century the benevolent corporation: a rhetorical alignment of corporate power and humanitarianism that has not been confidently voiced in this country since the company towns of the nineteenth century. Indeed the new *Google* campus in Mountain View will offer housing to employees that will maintain the look and feel of the corporate culture. According to a *Google* spokesman, the company's overarching philosophy is "to create the happiest, most productive workplace in the world."

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Written in 2003, Christopher Newfield's *Ivy and Industry: business and the making of the American university*, raises the possibility that the most visible defense of humanist freedoms against Taylorized control in the workplace, has now moved out of the university and into the business world itself, as demonstrated in contemporary management theories we find at Yahoo and Google. Newfield shows that the concept of “humanistic management,” the free development of individual faculties through independent and collective activity, is one of the productive processes that was born out of and distinguished the modern university. The university differentiated itself from older formations of American colleges by devoting substantial energy and purpose into *economic profit as well as* a new conception of universal education that would directly lead to *personal development* of both faculty and student. The university thus bridged the corporate and artisanal worlds by preparing a class of people for market success through the adoption of non-market—or craft-labor—activities of research and teaching. Newfield argues that it is precisely this middle class conception of academic humanism where aesthetics and labor were not imagined as opposing fields, but instead provided a formal basis for a craft-labor view of professional and daily life.

So what the earliest versions of the modern American university originally offered late nineteenth century society was a legitimate form of individual *autonomy*, a capitalist narrative of upward mobility based on *craftwork* principles geared toward self-development that identified teaching, philosophy, and administration as inseparable institutional practices. One suggestion of Newfield's work is that this renewed energetic celebration of craftwork, process-based labor that we now find central to the theorization of corporate management offers an unprecedented opportunity for this nineteenth century project—the potential of a humanist social organization on a global scale—to begin its argument anew.

It is an outrageous proposal as it places humanists in the uncomfortable position of identifying models of political agency in spaces they want to condemn, spaces that are antithetical to the anti- or extra-capitalists values to which they often wish to make the university subordinate. But

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I hope this has now begun to sound like a slightly unhelpful criticism. The campus remains a curious enclave of unfinished business in which the future seems spectrally present in the present as something else.

Notes

Stanford specifically addressed the benefit of a cooperative industrial system for woman in his 1887 Address to the Senate: “One of the difficulties in the employment of women arises from their domestic duties; but co-operation would provide for a general utilization of their capacities and permit the prosecution of their business, without harm, because of the temporary incapacity of the individual to prosecute her calling. And if this co-operation shall relieve them of the temporary incapacity arising from the duties incident to motherhood, then their capacity for production may be utilized to the greatest extent. Every man of the industries would be open to and managed as well by women in their co-operative capacity as by men” (Stanford, “Co-operation” 8).

See Jameson’s “Dialectic of Utopia and Ideology” in *Political Unconscious* as well as “Cognitive Mapping” in Kumar’s *Poetics/Politics: Radical Aesthetics for the Classroom*.

See “Archeological and Historical Survey of Greystone Quarry.” In Archeological Evaluation of the Greystone Quarry in the Santa Teresa Hills: report, 1978. Stanford University Archives. SCM 120.

“Leland Stanford Junior University.” *New York Tribune*. Undated clipping in Stanford Archives, Scrapbook #9, p92.

San Francisco Examiner. April 28, 1887.

See *San Francisco Examiner*. April 28, 1887.

The influence of the German system on American higher education is well known and marked by the integration and enhancement of research in public universities facilitated by the Morrill Act for land-grant institutions, the founding of John Hopkins University in 1876, and the establishment of PhD degrees at Harvard, Yale, and Columbia. On this historical appeal of the German university system in the American context, see Veysey 125-133. In a large comparative study, Andy Green linked the development of nineteenth century education systems to the general development of the modern-state, especially its relationship with its citizen subjects. See Green. For further discussions of American higher education and nation building see Smith 235-272; Nevins; Lowen; and Noble.