THE IMAGE OF A
MOUNTAIN TOWN

J.M. Besquet

ABSTRACT

The Image of a Mountain Town
Jean-Michel BESQUET

This study proposes a model designed to resolve the existing ambiguity that has developed in the mountains from a confusion between place and images as a result of tourism.

The history of human settlements in the mountains has produced three distinct types of urban environments: agrarian communities, resource towns and tourist resorts. These are recognized by their images as distinct mountain places. Agrarian communities established a symbiotic relationship with the mountain environment, while resource towns turned inward, isolating themselves from their setting. Tourist resorts drew indiscriminately from these precedents in an attempt to become unique as mountain places and universal as places for tourism. Thus, with the development of tourism, new mountain towns have often developed confusing images about the relationship between urban environment and mountain place.

The town of Banff in the Canadian Rockies is an example of confused images about a mountain place. Images are confused, in this famous tourist town, between the possible interpretations of tourism as either preservation or recreation, and how such interpretations would influence the experience of the mountain place. Although it initially developed as a service center for tourist activities led around the Banff Springs Hotel and the National Park, the town of Banff eventually became itself a tourist destination. Because of the values associated with the history of the Hotel and with the mandate of the Park, there is little consensus between local residents, private developers and public officials about acceptable design interventions on the urban form.

The experience of place is a phenomenon carried through images. Images express the meaning of the place, based on individual and collective values. When images are confused, the sense of place is also confused, and the experience weakened. The challenge is to manage the experience of place through the design process so that a proper integration of urban environments in the mountains should convey meaningful images and a powerful sense of place.

KEY WORDS

Urban Design - Urban Planning - Sense of Place - Images - Mountain Towns

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

And I would like to dedicate this work:

To my mountains.

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* Courtesy of the French Tourism Office

**Courtesy of Sherry Dorward

***Courtesy of Travel Alberta

THE CONFUSION
OF IMAGES
IN MOUNTAIN
PLACES

The mountain environment evokes powerful images. Inaccessible and forlorn, lofty and desolate, the mountains inspired military expeditions, religious mysticism, romantic and artistic aspirations. Hannibal and the Alps, the Prophet and the Mountain, Christianity and Mount Sinaï, Mount Olympus of Greek Mythology, Buddhism in Tibet, John Muir and Yosemite as well as Sir Edmund Hillary and Mount Everest are but a few examples of our tendency to perceive mountains as significant places. Images of the mountain environment have spiritual connotations in the history of civilization: "Every mythology has its sacred mountain,"writes Mircea Eliade in his historical study of comparative religions, "the symbolic and religious significance of mountains are endless" (Eliade: 1952, 100).

In mountain villages, traditions evolved from a succession of generations that drew meaning from the mountains and mapped this meaning back onto the landscape: the naming of peaks, ledges and *neves*, the telling of stories and the handing-down of collective memory, these were all parts of the ritual that bound the community together. In the mountains, traditional towns and villages reflected the rugged lifestyle of communities respectful of their surroundings.

With the industrial revolution, however, this relationship with the landscape was lost due to the ascendency of market-driven activities. The market mentality

created resource towns in the mountains which centered on resource exploitation, and which, oblivious of their surroundings, became responsible for a new set of images based on their relationship to the local industry. With the new consciousness that had emerged, the mountain wilderness no longer needed to be feared. Scientific knowledge had tamed it, technology exploited it, and economics just ignored it.

Tourism in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, and with it the proliferation of new towns and resorts in the mountains of Europe and North America, marked a turning point that intermixed these two approaches to mountain communities. The mountain wilderness became a source of spiritual and recreative values for the disoriented generations of the industrial societies. Far from the smokestacks, they sought cures for a score of afflictions. They praised the rugged simplicity of mountain places, and revived traditional values, replacing fear with awe, and nature worship with expressionistic delight.

With tourism, the values that predetermined the organization of the city were no longer dictated by the natural landscape; yet, they were not entirely separated from it either. The new towns were not "in" the landscape, so to speak, but "about" the landscape. Urban form was primarily determined by the subjugation of urban space in the mountains to the needs of the visitors. Eventually characterized by the "4S formula" of later-generation ski resorts, "Snow, Sun, Sex and Spirit,"(Chappis: 1978) tourist towns have increasingly become the setting for a temporary illusion that highly sophisticated and fully functional urban environments now exist in the mountain wilderness.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

In the process of marketing mountain places, tourism has created a confusion of images and meanings between traditional and industrial precedents of urban form in the mountains. Tourism has to provide standardized services as part of the tourism industry yet it depends on what makes each environment unique for tourist experiences. As a result, tourist towns in the mountains lack a clear image and communicate a variety of often contradictory messages.

Successive attempts to fulfill the contradictory needs of tourism have perpetrated this state of confusion. They have generated *new* urban forms which have become a part of the total experience of the mountain landscape, increasingly accepted as *authentic* precedents of urbanization in a mountain setting. This marketed ambiguity between consumption and experience has produced artificial images commonly confused with authentic images of mountain places.

The confusion of images is all the more detrimental because it has a negative influence on the creation of future images. When we try to project possible future images of these towns in order to guide development, we are negatively influenced by the present lack of identity and the state of ambiguity. The confusion of images undermines the experience of authentic place essential to tourism (Relph: 1976). It opens the door for arbitrary interventions which only serve to confuse the image further.

This Master's Degree Project will examine the historical development of the tourist town image and its present state of ambiguity and confusion, and propose a model whereby this problem can be resolved. It will then apply the model to the town of Banff which is presently experiencing this type of confusion.

MANIFESTATION OF THE PROBLEM

The preservation of places as a source of authentic images has become an important concern for tourist towns in the mountains. Mountain designer Sherry Dorward (Dorward: 1990, 225) expresses her concern and the importance of place as follows:

> Insufficient sensitivity to the natural landscape is not, of course, the only reason that natural topographical clues are ignored. The tendency to give them short shrift in design is compounded by financial objectives that argue for mass production and density, by the power of modern construction technology to alter landform, and by the common preference for speedier - and therefore more disruptive - modes of transportation. The power of these factors diminishes, however, where there is a respect for place.

Market-driven images of mountain places re-interpret the mountains as a product known, processed and made available by tourism, no longer apprehended by experience. When this situation is allowed to develop, it opens the door to any image that suits a trend, a fad or a style that will sell, and with it the sense of place disappears. Such images have perpetrated themselves in mountain places with enough frequency that a number of touristic destinations have become concerned with the authenticity of their image. Today, there is often a conflict in mountain resorts between the quantitative and the qualitative demands of tourism. New developments are increasingly expected to fulfill the paradoxical needs for standardized services that are equally legible for all resorts, as well as produce authentic images that give the resort a sense of a unique mountain place.

The problem created by the confusion of images is that it has become very difficult to distinguish between unique images of contemporary mountain towns. The problem is further complicated by the fact that new images of mountain places can

still be created today. The state of confusion is significant and it has become necessary to distinguish between all of these images. Legibility of the cityscape is crucial in rebuilding the image of the town. It is, according to Kevin Lynch, "the ease with which parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern." Legibility is a function of identity, character, places and community (Lynch: 1960, 3). It is these latter elements that combine to form images, and it is on their basis that the observers select what they see, organize it and endow it with meaning (Lynch: 1960, 6).

In the town of Banff, a similar concern is mounting. It appears that a clear identity of the town did not emerge in the wake of successive developments. Ted Hart, Chairman of the Banff Municipal Committee, expressed this concern by saying that "you can't be half Whistler and half Canmore"(Hart: 1989). The comparison suggests that the image of the town of Banff is derived from two earlier agrarian and resource eras, based on the Canadian Pacific Railway company operations and the development of the Banff National Park, without being rooted in a strong sense of community identity.

The town of Banff was originally intended to provide service support to touristic activities associated with the Banff Springs Hotel. However, it has now become a part of the touristic experience to the point where the service industry, the tourist industry and the local urban environment are totally intermeshed within the same townsite. In 1989, Banff residents voted almost two-thirds in favour of a municipal incorporation (Koch: 1989, 6) that would transfer responsibility for municipal affairs from Parks Canada to the community. The resolution of confused images is the first step towards establishing an identity for the community. Without it, developments freed from the tutelage of Parks Canada would become meaningless, and the resulting haphazard urban form would eventually be to the detriment of both the residents and visitors.

METHODOLOGY

In this study we subscribe to the theory that place is a perceptual phenomenon. As a phenomenon, place is distinct from the reality of the environment of which it is a part; at the same time, the human experience of place can be observed, described and appraised. Place is more than the sum of the observable elements in the measurable reality of the environment; it leads to a subliminal sense that there is meaning in the fact that these elements should exist together. This sense of place can even be experienced as what was called the "spirit" of the place in ancient Rome; conversely,

it can be made to disappear totally, as is the case in cities of the industrial revolution, where the value of some organized spaces became universal and independent from the local environment. The latter condition has been called "placelessness." This study focuses on the fact that the confusion of images between artificial images of tourism and authentic images of mountain places undermines the experience of place in the mountain environment by perpetrating a sense of placelessness. Although the industry of tourism does require a measure of placelessness, a sense of placelessness is not desirable.

In terms of a phenomenological approach to appraise the experience of place, *any* experience of place is sufficient. That place can be experienced, and that this experience can not only be communicated and recognized, but also be itself the source of another experience of place through the power of its images, are the relevant issues. If properly utilized, *an* experience can become a powerful tool for analysis and design for other experiences, and for experiences in general. The experience itself can be appraised and evaluated, by objectively comparing its images with the measurable reality of the site. Also, to recognize the special sensitivity of the experience is important to the design process, since the individuality of designers is an indivisible component of their responsibility as professionals. A phenomenological approach is, therefore, important in the creative process from a professional point of view: it distinguishes the designer from the artist.

This method is based on a similar argument made by Gaston Bachelard in the introduction to his *Poetics of Space*:

> One must be receptive [...] to the image at the moment it appears [...]. The poetic image is a sudden salience on the surface of the psyche, the lesser psychological causes of which have not been sufficiently investigated.[...] Because of its novelty and its action, the poetic image has an entity and a dynamism of its own; it is referable to a direct *ontology*.

> Very often, then, it is in the opposite of causality, that is, in *reverberation*, [...] that I think we find the real measure of the being of a poetic image. In this reverberation, the poetic image will have a sonority of being. The poet speaks on the threshold of being. Therefore, in order to determine the being of an image, we shall have to experience its reverberation in the manner of Minkowski phenomenology. (Bachelard: 1964, xii)

In Chapter 1 the notion of place is introduced with personal experiences of specific places in the mountains. In that chapter, the power of the images conveys the power of the places. The subjectivity of some of the comments is necessary as a means to offer a distinction between different types of places. What is described as cold and uninviting may not necessarily have been felt by someone who has only experienced one of these places. Still, what is important is that *an* emotional reaction

can be conveyed, and used as a tool to differentiate between places. In Chapter 3, it is commercial advertisements that are used to introduce a model of integration of place and images because the designers of these pictures harnessed their own sensitivity to the meaning of mountain environments in order to communicate an experience of mountain places and to provoke a response from the viewer. In cases like these, the reputation of commercial designers is not based on whether they are right, but on whether they are successful. In this study, we have the same aim: there are no right and wrong places or images, only designs that give a successful sense of place. However, the reasons for success can be gauged, measured, analyzed, and guidelines can be established on the basis of experiences. Finally, in Chapter 5, it is necessary to identify urban and rural environments in the town of Banff. To do so, images are used and each is presented with a caption and a description. The whole process is part of a method (presented in Chapter 3) which seeks patterns of coherence in the townsite; in Chapter 5, it is the "story-line" which is relevant to the analysis, the fact that a coherent urban or rural environment can be presented and given a distinct identity on the basis of existing elements on site.

The first step in the analysis will be to understand how images are formed about the mountain environment and mountain places. This will involve secondary research into existing theories of images and meaning of the environment, and the review of the historical evolution of a number of different mountain town images. The next step will be to establish a model as a basis for the identification of these different images of mountain places. The last step will focus the analysis on the town of Banff, to distinguish between images of Banff as a mountain place and as a tourist town. This analysis of Banff will lead to alternative strategies and recommendations for implementation so that various images can coexist without the confusion that would give rise to a sense of placelessness.

OUTLINE

This study is organized into two parts. The first part, from Chapter 1 to Chapter 3, is an analysis of the issue of place and images in the mountains, and the derivation of a model of mountain places; the second part, Chapters 4 and 5, is an example of how the theoretical findings from the first part can be applied to a town like Banff.

The first chapter opens with a discussion of the importance of place as a cultural component of tourism. The notion of place is first introduced with places of Nature in the mountains, showing how it is through overlapping images that a sense of place is experienced and communicated. The influence of the man-made environment on mountain images and sense of place is then gradually presented. Traditional built

form is contrasted with the impact of modern constructions in resort design. The chapter continues with a discussion of meaning and images, borrowing from existing research on the topic, to offer a possible explanation of how place is experienced. Thereon, the importance of meaning and images on the design of tourist places in the mountains is stressed, especially in terms of how the different archetypes combine with meaning and values to produce a state of confusion of place and images.

Chapter 2 suggests that the image of modern tourist towns has in fact evolved as a combination of the archetypes of traditional agrarian and resource communities in the mountains. Chapter 2 further suggests that confusion exists when the agrarian and the resource prototypical images are not properly integrated within the same urban space. A strong sense of place is possible when the proper relationship from images to place is maintained. Chapter 2 relates images to design theory by correlating urban form to the values and life-style of the community, and shows how design and a sense of place in the mountains have evolved with the changing relationships between the community and the mountain environment.

Chapter 3 proposes a model for the integration of place and images. It is suggested that the parts of a tourist town which give rise respectively to agrarian and resource images be re-interpreted as rural and urban environments. It is then suggested that the relationship to place be designed in a tiered approach. Instead of the usual attempt at creating a relationship between all environments, it is recommended that, in order to create a sense of place in the mountains, the rural environment should become a transition between the urban and the natural environment. It is suggested that this structured approach can be used to create clear images and a strong sense of place. The model proposed in Chapter 3 builds on recognized theories of environmental psychology, tourism and urban design - those of Erwin Goffman, Dean McCannell, Ian Nairn and Gordon Cullen in particular. Chapter 3 concludes with a presentation of how Gordon Cullen's technique of "Serial Vision" can be adapted to distinguish between rural and urban images in the same urban space. Throughout Chapter 3, commercial photographs for the promotion of mountain resorts in France and Canada are used to reinforce the proposed model and theory, because these phototgraphs strongly rely on images as a means to market place; how successful they are in doing so illustrates the theories of relationship between place and images presented in the chapter.

The second part is a practical application of the model which starts in Chapter 4 with an introduction of the situation in Banff. The confusion of place and images in mountain towns is evident in Banff from the reaction of residents, visitors and various officials. It is a source of concern when the town is faced with an increased

demand for developments before it has achieved an explicit sense of its identity. This chapter addresses the notion of identity in the town of Banff. It examines how the existing image has evolved from a succession of changing notions of tourism as either "recreation" or "preservation," and how these were themselves a reflection of the social and the cultural values of their times. Chapter 4 also shows how the "agrarian" and the "resource" images specifically interacted in the history of the town of Banff, in terms of these notions of "recreation" and "preservation." The chapter concludes with a look at possible future directions, and how these may in turn lead the way for an integration of images and a renewed sense of place in the town of Banff.

Chapter 5 specifically applies the technique of "Serial Vision," introduced with the model defined in Chapter 3, to distinguish between rural and urban environments in the town of Banff, and to determine how the transition occurs between the two environments. Chapter 5 does not intend to suggest a redesign of the urban space in Banff; rather, its intention is to find, in the urban space, existing and authentic images of rural and urban spaces which are responsible for a sense of place. Suggestions are made for knitting them together to mitigate the experiential confusion. Finally, Chapter 5 evaluates alternative approaches for the integration of place and images in the town of Banff, and makes a series of recommendations for design. The final part of the chapter distinguishes between different possible levels of integration of images, and how these, being essentially tied to the interaction between local residents and the visiting population, will determine the overall image of the town of Banff, from resort, to mountain tourist town or mountain municipality. It is recommended in this chapter that the town develop the image of a mountain tourist town, whereby a certain level of interaction is made possible to integrate the values of local residents with those of the visiting population.

The study concludes with an overview of findings and methods. It evaluates the results produced, and their applicability to mountain towns in general and to Banff in particular. Finally, it suggests how the material presented can be used for further study.

PART | I

Images and Mountain Places
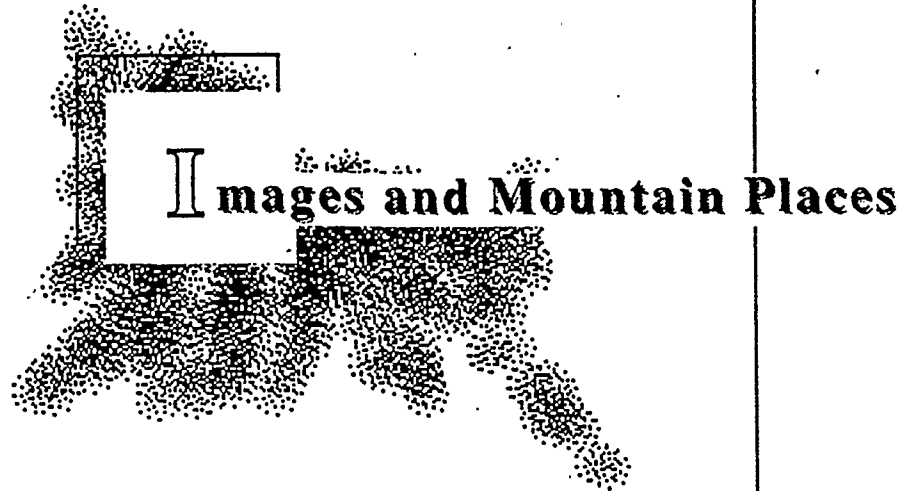
Chapter 1

IMAGES
AND
PLACE
IN
THE MOUNTAINS

Precedents of resort design in the mountains support the theory that visitors apprehend the environment in terms of value laden images (Kent: 1990, 43). Some, formed from cultural experience and commercial advertisements, they bring along with them; others, they develop on site. The evolution of design has thus been increasingly led by the need for mountain communities to build on images in accordance with the expectation of tourism and in relationship to the surrounding landscape.

Christian Norberg-Schulz describes tourism as a phenomenological experience of places in reaction to the placelessness of modern socio-economic activities[1] (Norberg-Schulz: 1980, 18). Designs which dissociate the organization of modern urban spaces from local cultural symbols, as a result of the global interchangeability of modern socio-economic activities, have in turn created what Dean McCannell calls a "ritual removal of culture."[2] Tourism and the visitation of places is a modern ritual whereby the human experience is made again complete as a cultural phenomenon[3] by re-incorporating the experience of places as a socio-cultural

activity. An authentic tourist experience, as envisaged by Relph (1976), is thus predicated on the existence and the communication of strong images which integrate mountain and town as a place because modern cities have become essentially non-place specific.

However, tourism is also an industry, and as such it is responsible for the very images of placelessness characteristic of modern urban life - of market dynamics and mass-consumption - which the visitors are seeking to escape. Marketing studies which try to define the experience of place as the product component of the tourism "marketing mix" call it place consumption (Ashworth: 1990, 6). The need to regulate consumptive behaviour inherent in a social activity like tourism is responsible for images based on the uses that are made of the local physical features by the tourist industry, as well as on the impact that these features have on the human experience.

As a result, tourism also creates images as a by-product of the tourist industry. Images and place are confused when tourism weakens the sense of place that is so important to the success of the tourist experience.

Tourism thus always poses the threat that a place may become a commodity, that if it "can be processed, treated, and decorated like any other commodity," it will become meaningless - an "absurd landscape" (Relph: 1976, 129). This threat comes from the fact that "conventional tourist architecture and synthetic landscapes and pseudo-places" (Relph, 93) give rise to a feeling of isolation and indifference, the feeling which characterizes absurdity in a landscape, that choice and preferences are no longer important, that the landscape no longer makes a difference. The absurdity is all the more tangible in a tourist place in the mountains, since it is expected that mountains should make a difference to the tourist experience.

Place is essential to tourism because it provides a unique geographical setting within which the totality of the human experience is made possible and manifests itself as cultural differentiation[4] (Norberg-Schulz: 1980, 18). Place is a phenomenon, a perceptual response to environmental conditions, which expresses a feeling that coherence, unity and, therefore, meaning, connect the constituent elements of a particular site. A sense of place is the tangible evidence that a differentiation of the human experience takes place in response to environmental conditioning. The richer the sense of place, the more differentiated the human experience, the more valuable the site becomes as a cultural setting.

IMAGES AND MOUNTAIN PLACES

The image of a mountain place

It is important to understand how the mountains can be experienced as a place, and how the sense of place in the mountains may vary from one location to the next. To do so, images of mountain places that have not been changed by human intervention, yet have influenced the human experience as part of historical and cultural events, provide a good vehicle to explore the experience of a sense of place in the mountains. A comparison of place between the Glières Plateau in High Savoy of France and the Simpson Pass in the Ball Range of Alberta (See Fig. 1.1 and 1.2) will be used to illustrate the transcription from images to place.
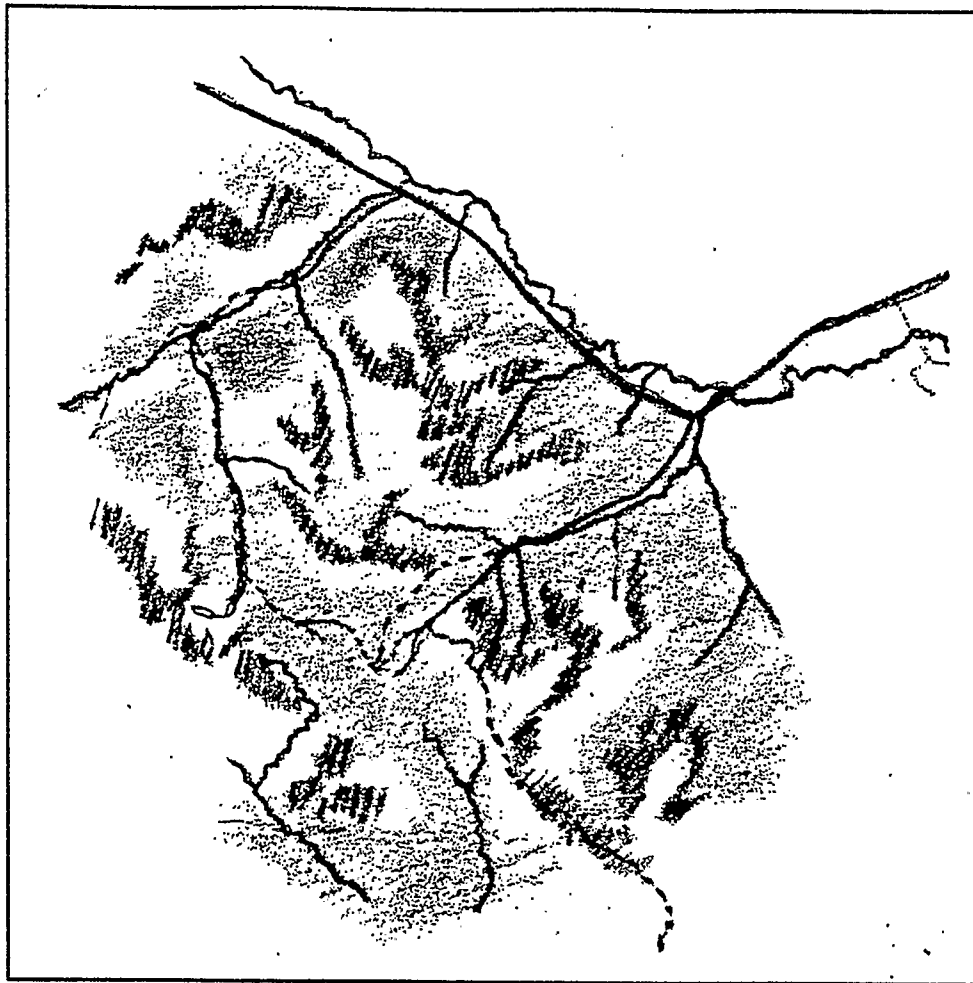
Figure 1.1: The Simpson Pass - 1:250,000

On one level, the two areas share remarkable similarities. Both comprise roughly twenty-five square miles, at fifty five hundred feet above sea level. Sedimentary folds have been shifted on end by the distant upthrusting that created parallel ranges: in their respective midsts lie the Simpson Pass in the Canadian Rockies, and the Plateau
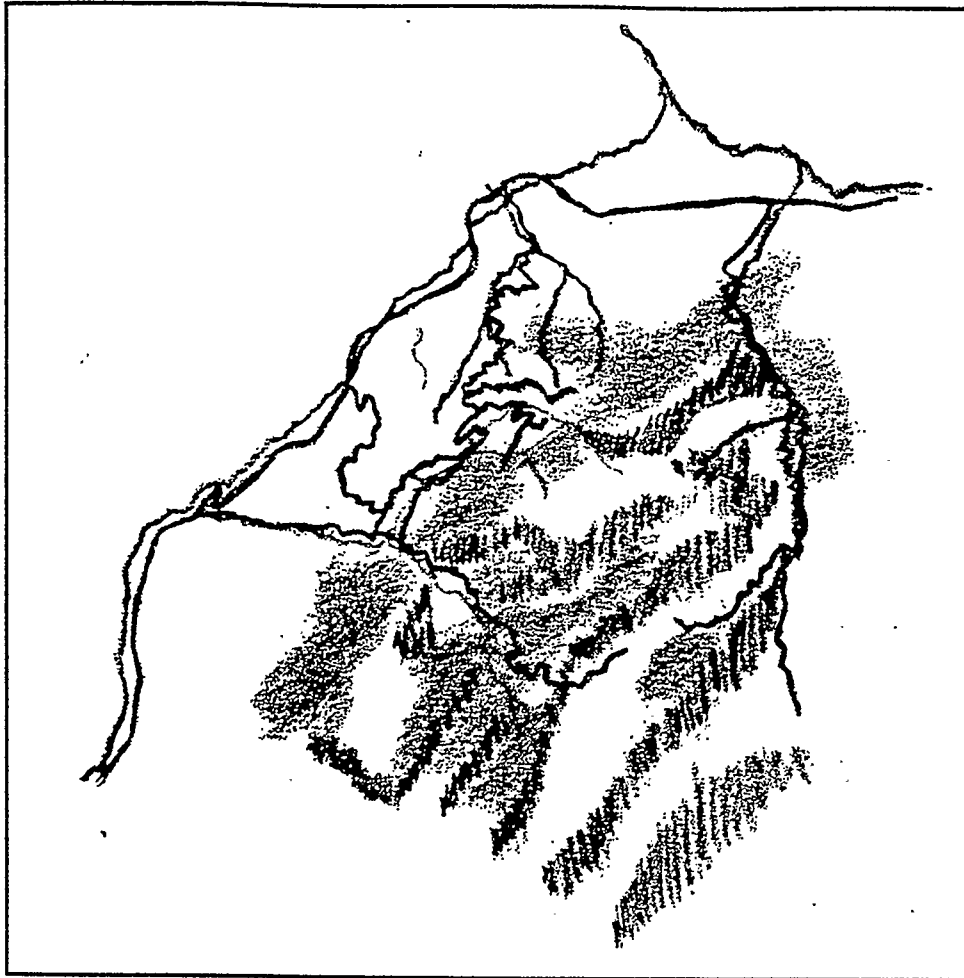
Figure 1.2: The Plateau Des Glières - 1:200,000

des Glières in the French Alps. Even though they are easily accessed from the road, they give an immediate feeling of remoteness that is accentuated by a rapid increase in altitude. This increase also causes a quick progression through the mountain ecosystems, but in both cases, although the ecological progression is tiered - montane, subalpine, alpine - it is experienced as a transition between two zones: forest and plateau. The closed-in forested environment abruptly opens up onto the wide expanse of the plateau or the pass, delineated by the grey limestone of a mountain cirque.

The history of both places is significant. While the Plateau Des Glières was a stronghold of the French Resistance during World War II, the Simpson Pass has represented a key passage for exploration and trading, used by Natives, European explorers and to this day by users of the backcountry.

Although the Glières and the Simpson Pass give a similar sense of the mountains as a place, they remain nonetheless two distinct places in the mountains. There is a difference between the manner in which place is experienced, and the experience of place itself: the *experiencing* of the place just described - the strategy of experience, of travelling through and moving about - is the same in both places; the *experience* of the place on the other hand, the passive, contemplative, and static observation of the mountains as a place of nature, is quite different between the Glières and the Ball Range of the Simpson Pass.

The five degrees of difference in Northern latitude between the forty fifth and fiftieth parallels and the respective climatic exposures have produced distinct biomes. The montane system of the Glières is high-canopied beech forest; chest-high, the distinctive feathery crowns of younger growth seem to float freely from the stem, like rusty wisps of smoke, while one travels on a deep carpet of dead leaves. In the Simpson area, on the other hand, stands of dark firs line the path: they open up intermittently to reveal spectacular views - Bourgeau Falls or twin avalanche couloirs - only to close again. The transition from the forest to the rest of the mountain is so abrupt in the Glières that the plateau looks naked and cold, a snaking footpath stressing the sudden expanse, making the plateau look almost convex. The Simpson Pass instead sits like a tilted dish. There is no abrupt transition to announce the Pass: the views simply close no longer.

The Glières is reflective of the Alps, of the terraced succession from *basse*, through *moyenne* to *haute montagne* (low, mid and high mountain); such a distinction does not exist in the Eastern Rockies. Instead, the Ball Range of the Simpson Pass conveys the intoxicating feeling of the vibrant youthfulness of nature portrayed by John Muir and Thoreau, of mountains still emerging from the earth, of waterfalls pouring from all the ledges and coniferous growth crawling upward, of soil still clinging to the rock. The Rocky Mountains of Canada are quite different from older mountain ranges, even the relatively young Jura and the Alps. Older ranges have already shed these layers of earth and are free of vegetation, dumping the soil in a rich green fertile layer at their base.

Such a differentiation of places conditions the tangible manifestations of place at every level of the measurable reality - when other images have receded into an archetypal or a symbolic background; it is when all senses are strongly stimulated simultaneously that place is experienced as a unique phenomenon.

When images are used to communicate the sense of place, the values and the meaning that are used to convey information are also highly conditioned by the expectations of the public, even at the expense of authenticity.

Genuine paintings of Canadian Rocky mountain landscapes, for example, seem crude to the untrained European eye. To the long tradition of studio-composed landscapes that favored artificial lighting of the human face and rural scenes, the palette of the painters of Canadian wilderness seems lurid and clumsy. Yet they relate a reality of light that exists nowhere else but in the Canadian Rockies. When they face the setting sun, vertical limestone cliffs register yellow hues, while the freshly deposited snow on sloped ledges diffuses the bluish cast of shorter wavelengths and, in contrast, accentuates the turquoise of the sky and the greyish purples of lingering clouds.

In the Alps, different conditions produce different landscapes. The altitude and the latitude of limestone formations are responsible for either a drier or a more vegetated landscape as well as an absence of snow. Snowed-in landscapes mainly occur above twelve thousand feet: the reflected light of glaciated landscapes casts onto pink and grey granite, and then refracts from the quartz and feldspar of the rock right through *verglas*, producing a contrasting green hue.

As a result, in order to respect these specialized conditions of the Alpine landscape as an archetypal expression of mountain scenery, landscape depictions of rare instances of the human presence in the Western Canadian landscape - forested clearings and log dwellings where dark green and light pinks predominate[5] - have been favored for popular consumption over the usual images of mountain wilderness. Through the process of communication, images can thus be confused with place.

Images and the built form

Human interventions and the man-made environment have introduced new images. They bring a new level of relationships in the experience of a place, and their images bespeak the reciprocated influences of place and culture. The degree with which this new level of relationships is integrated with existing levels directly determines the extent to which the sense of place is enriched. On the one hand, the built form can enhance the existing environmental conditions and serve to mediate between human experience and place. On the other hand, the built form can disrupt the existing balance, so that it effectively hinders the interaction between experience and place.

The difference is generally created by the original bias towards experience. The traditional bias is a sum of diverse sensorial clues which express the integration of

the human level with other levels of relationships. The modern bias, on the other hand, is essentially visual, and the experience of the mountains is reduced to the collection of visual images as explicit evidence of place.

Traditional buildings fit in the mountain environment partly because they are constructed from the natural wood and stone provided by the mountains, and partly because their designs are a response to the severe climatic conditions of the mountain environment. The image conveyed by buildings constructed with raw natural materials is an extension of the natural environment: it reflects the union between human intention and the natural setting. Their forms become a genuine component of the mountain environment in two ways: first, to work with raw natural material means that the natural processes have to be respected and become a part of the structure; second, age means that the eroded material reverts back to its original natural environment.

The main relationship of modern buildings with the natural environment is their siting. The new building materials are chosen to minimize costs and to employ generally practiced construction techniques. Imported construction and design also have an impact on the urban environment, because imported modern construction does not generally take into account the need for the building to function as an outdoor shelter. In the winter especially, users of the urban space feel at the mercy of the natural elements. This conveys an image of inadequacy: the lack of overhanging eaves and the location of buildings and pedestrian networks in areas of snow build-up created by the built form itself leave the inside of the building as the only shelter from the natural environment(Dorward: 1990, 256, 357). From the inside, however, oversized and thin-glassed window panes make the outside look bleak and desolate, impoverishing the view by framing it. When compared to the feeling imparted by traditional environments, one sees in all its details where the imported design is inappropriate for its setting.

A traditional environment has been adapted to fit the needs of its occupants. It is constantly changing because the needs of the people and the mountain conditions change constantly. The transition from inside to outside is part of a continuum: nooks and porches protect from the wind, crackling wood fires provide warmth, and small windows tightly frame close-by views - a stone wall, the darkened inside of a dry barn, some trees and, rarely disclosed, a summit or a distant slope. The mountain views always seem incidental. This is no accident since, although the mountains are fundamental to this tradition, they are a part of life which requires neither reminding nor glorifying.

Figure 1.3: Panoramic view of Val Thorens

The Master Planning of Val Thorens is that of a mountain place well sited in its surrounding. It harmonizes with the peaks and ridges on either sides, and it is located on a natural bench in between. It gives a sense of a sheltering place in the barren alpine environment.

Figure 1.4: A close-in view of Val Thorens

From within, Master Planning has created a cold place that loses the human scale, and appears as forbidding as the mountain environment.

With its obsession with views and commercialization of places, modern design has instead put the visitors on the edge of the mountains rather than in them (See Fig. 1.4). It lacks what makes the mountains so significant in a traditional environment: the human capacity to relate them to human activity. The compelling contrast between forlorn peaks and a cozy wood fire requires infinite subtlety, and the graduated mediation of a rural place. It requires an experience of the context and an obsessive attention to detail (See Fig. 1.3).

The traditional urban environment has developed incrementally: it is shaped by winds and snow melt, and by the human hand. When the visitors are caught in a harsh winter wind, they find that their instinct directs them immediately to the places already designed for warmth and shelter; instinctively they feel that someone else has stood there and felt the cold as they themselves do at that very moment. The thrill of the mountain environment is this feeling of safety and comfort grown from experience and tradition. It is lost in modern environments. Once designed, imported built form is difficult to adapt. Furthermore, it teaches nothing about mountain living: industrial buildings convey industrial images. These are based on a technological meaning that ignores the local environment, and which, when the buildings age and decay, brings rubble to the mountains. The technology is non-place specific, and its waste by-products are implicitly foreign matter.

MOUNTAIN IMAGES AND MEANING

In order to properly design for the mountain environment, the mountains need to be understood as places, in terms of the special meaning they hold for the human experience, and how this meaning is expressed through images of the place.

Images of the mountains stem historically from two possible approaches to the natural environment: the natural as a given, and a source of spiritual values; or the natural environment as a place of projection of man's own psychological tendencies - be these the darker, socially repressed side of man, or the brighter, socially condoned instincts (Ittelson: 1974, 29). Examples of these images of the mountain environment can be found in various paintings from different eras. In Medieval paintings, nature is symbolized as ominous: the mountains are presented as barren places devoid of vegetation, a forbidding wilderness, a source of mystery and of danger. In traditional Chinese landscape paintings, or in recent Western photographs, those of Ansel Adams for example, the mountains are shown as a stylized environment that is a source of spiritual values. Today, it would appear that the mountains are seen as the last wilderness of our civilized worlds, and valued as such. Tourism is often, therefore, predicated on the provision of a safe, comfortable and convenient vantage point from which to partake of this last wilderness.

The meaning which is conveyed by these images is a mental attribute based on personal, social and cultural experiences and learned values. Although images trigger meaning, meaning is essentially the "reflection" - so to speak - of the individuals and their value-system onto the elements selected out of the environment.

Clare Gunn suggests that values act as a screen in the sense that "all stimuli from land and development are first filtered through our value systems" (Gunn: 1972, 100-104). Popular values associated with the environment are the exotic, the challenging, the cultural and educational, the historic, the healthful, the grand and majestic, the spectacular, the entertaining, the intriguing, the sporting, the patriotic, and the beautiful. Visitors give the environment mental ratings from good to bad, depending on the values they associate with it. These ratings change over time as the visitors' perception of the environment changes, either because the physical environment is being altered to fulfill the expectations of visitors, or because their value system adapts to it.

A stone trough on a plaza, for example, will make a quaint postcard for tourism; a planner may look at it as a valuable historic landmark; a transportation planner may see it as an outdated obstruction to be relocated, while children may proceed to use it as a wading pool and local elders may be prompted to reminisce about the days when cattle was a common site in the village. Each person singles out aspects of the same object based on the very different meanings they suggest. Children simply focus on the basic form and the familiar use for a large water container; tourists focus on the unfamiliarity of the object; the planners focus on its relationship to other elements in the environment, and the older person sees it as a symbol of a life gone-by.

Images

An image is the result of the filtered perception (Rapoport: 1977) of the physical environment which confers more relevance to some elements in the environment than to others.

When places are sold and tourists are treated as place consumers, it is the meaning behind the place that is the object of consumption. Images are the pull factors that draw visitors to a site (Kent: 1990, 44). Clare Gunn suggests that the traveller goes through a cyclical sequence of imaging (Gunn: 1988, 87-90) from "pre-image," through "actual participation" to "check." Visitation is prompted by the initial mental image that potential visitors form about a site; once the visitors are faced with the reality of that site, they build a new set of images on the basis of their own participation and driven by their need to authenticate their initial mental image through experi-

ence; finally, the original image is replaced by a revised image, which, once conveyed, becomes again a pre-image for the benefit of subsequent potential visitors.

There is also a difference between individual images and consensual images. Parts of a schema are shared by a group of people so that they identify the same elements out of the same environment. The nuances of meaning that are given to these elements are a function of personal, social and cultural differences.

This relationship between individual images and consensual images is fundamental to the communication of images and to the confusion of images of tourist places. Images are an important means to communicate experiences, so they become the standard against which the tourist industry evaluates tourist places, before, during, and after visitation. Because the images formed about a place by individuals with a similar socio-cultural background will prevail over other images, a new value system has a strong influence on the evolution of the sense of place. Outside images of the local environment will cause outside values to be responsible for the evolution of local urban form. Because of tourism, the sense of place will evolve away from local values, so that images formed about the mountain environment are slowly replaced by images formed in the market environment.

The need for images

Images are important because they represent particular memories of a place and how we feel about it. Our perception of the environment is influenced by all the direct and indirect images that have accumulated and are relevant to a specific experience.
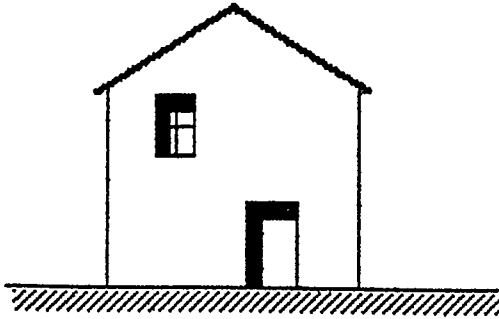
Figure 1.5: Archetype of a House

Mountain Images

Archetypes have strongly influenced design interventions. The archetype is a prototypical image, the least amount of visual information necessary to identify elements of the physical environment. For example, the archetype of a house is a pitched roof over four walls (See Fig. 1.5).

The archetype of mountain dwelling, a chalet, is characterized by the exaggerated slope of the roof, the large overhang of its eaves and the smallness of its windows (See Fig. 1.6 and 1.7). These features are explicit references to

Figure 1.6: Archetype of a Mountain House

Figure 1.7: Nordic Club, Kimberley, British Columbia,

The archetype for a mountain building is used as the form for the Nordic Club house, to express a fit with environment.

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the snow conditions
which have become an
important characteristic
of the experience of the
mountain environment in
Western Europe[s].

The archetype for a
mountain is an uneven
slope with a secondary
peak (See Fig. 1.8). This
derives from the simpli-
fication of a mountain sil-
houette. Both elements
are necessary, or the
archetype becomes am-
biguous: it could then
just as easily stand for a
roof or a pyramid (See
Fig.1.9).

When this arche-
type of a mountain is
used, a mountain land-
scape (See Fig. 1.10) can

Ambiguous symbol : a roof? a pyramid?
a mountain?

Figure 1.8

Main Summit

Uneven slope   Subsidiary
                    summit
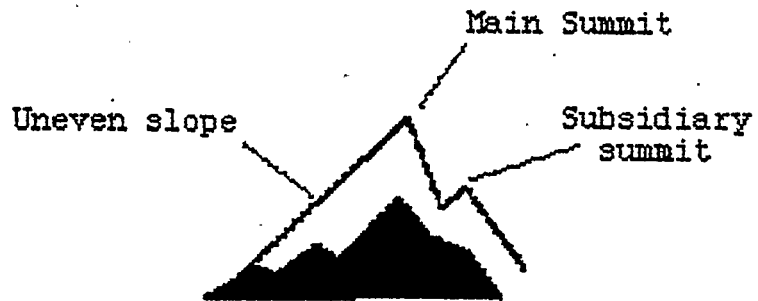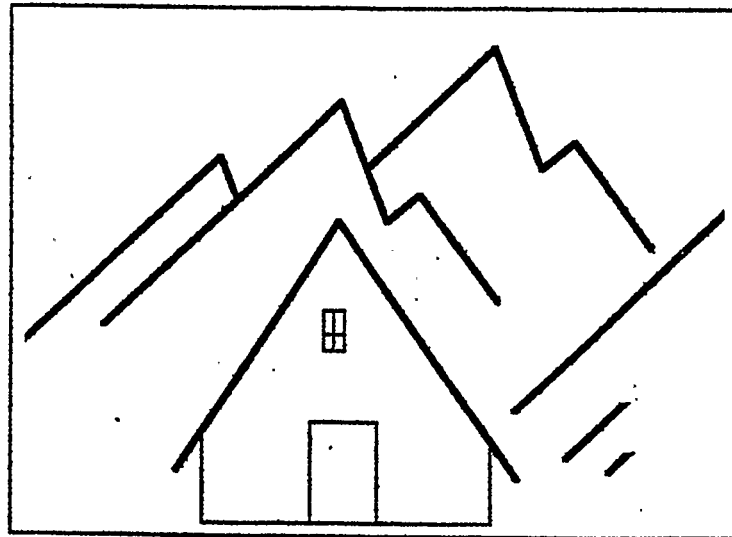
Figure 1.9

Figure 1.10: Archetypal Mountain Place

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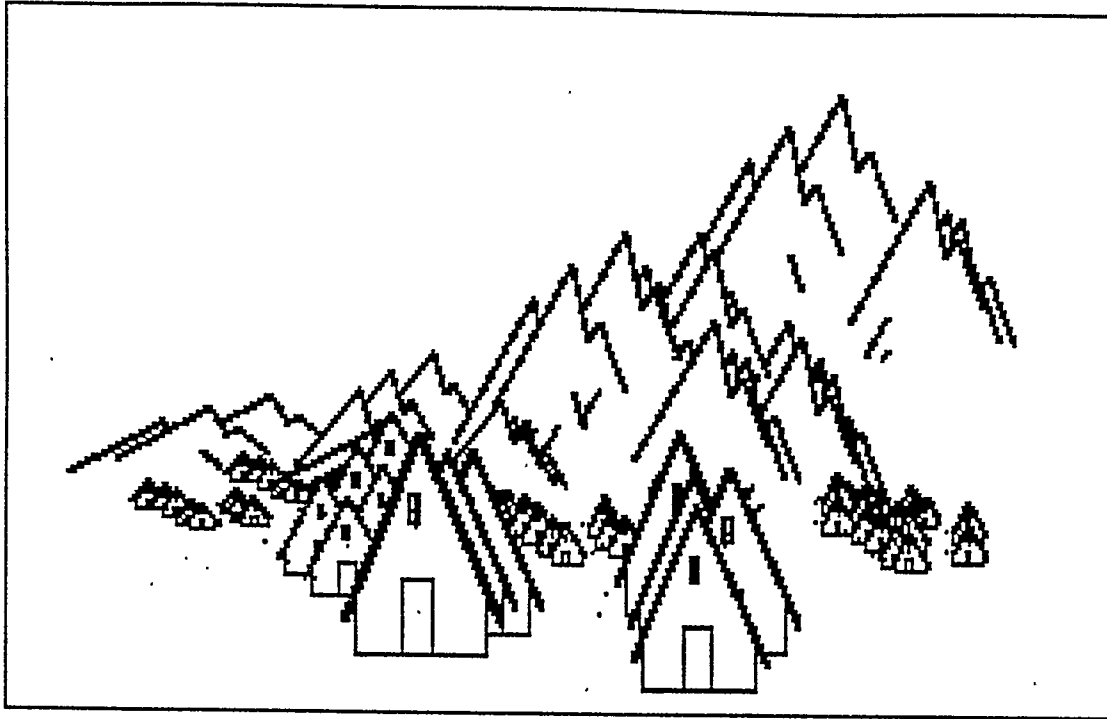
Figure 1.11: Archetypal Mountain Scene

be created by repetition and overlap. When the landscape is further repeated and distorted, it creates a mountain scene (See Fig. 1.11).

This constructed scene may be compared to an actual tourist depiction of the condominium village of Méribel in the French Alps (See Fig. 1.12). The similarity between the two images is worthy of notice. The obvious conclusion is that modern designs of mountain towns are based on archetypical perceptions, not on specific mountain places. This is a normal aspect of the tourism industry, where most designers appear to spend very little time in the actual mountain place - relying on photographs and maps for their work - and where the industry is primarily concerned with immediate marketability.

Finally, an image can be formed by replacing the hard line of the archetype by value and texture, to obtain the "typical mountain image" that follows (See Fig. 1.13). A number of familiar urban elements are missing from this picture: steeple,
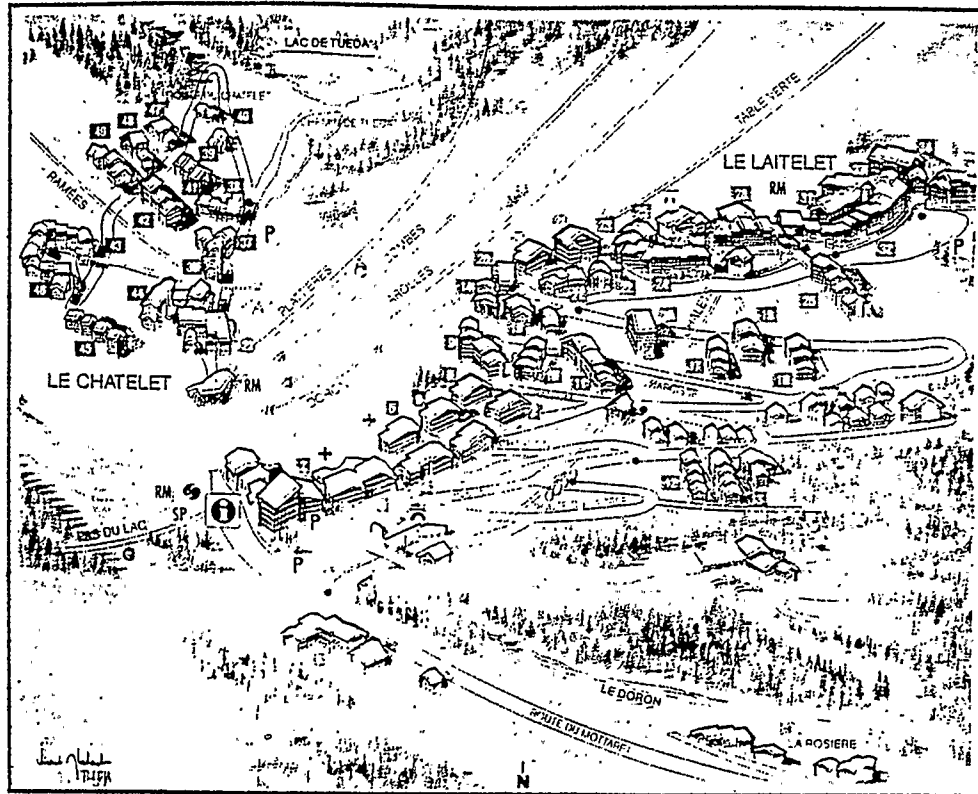
Figure 1.12: View of Méribel

The design of the French resort of Méribel, is a typical example of a planned reiteration of archetype, designed for commercial expediency and popular consumption. It does not address the place, either in its previous cultural manifestations, or in a new, incrementally planned approach to the mountain environment.

plazas and clearings. However, it is fairly consistent with the new types of scenery that are now designed as part of the mountain experience. Planning is important to avoid grave blunders, such as building in an avalanche path, or useful to take short cuts on traditions, such as locating urban centres in sunny locations. However, the design of a mountain place takes place at the human scale as an alteration of form constantly adapting to changing mountain conditions.

Figure 1.13: Typical Mountain Scene

The confusion of images

The history of resort development in the mountains is a history of dissonance and coherence between images and values. Historically, the manner in which the mountain environment has been perceived by tourism has been translated into a number of images, from the quaint and quiet to the futuristic and extravagant. These images appealed to many different influences, ranging from the seductive timelessness of traditional mountain villages to the otherworldly quality of futuristic ski resorts. These influences have changed over time, as trends turned into fads. The more the image relied on tourism as opposed to local values, the more the meaning associated with the place was in danger of being affected by obsolescence, as witnessed by the number of mountain towns now struggling with once potent images that have turned *cliché* (the alpine resort of L'Alpes d'Huez, for example, or Kimberley in the Canadian Rockies).

Images become confused when images of different places are superimposed on local images. This confusion of images reinforces the conditions for placelessness: the imposition of images becomes an intellectual mechanism which replaces the actual sensorial experience of place as a phenomenon.

This has been a result of the attempt to merge two different value systems in the same place - a local value system that is community-oriented, and which complements and co-exists with nature and its processes, and an imported system, consumerist, individualistic, exploitative and concerned with products. By adding images of different places through the merging of different value systems, the overall resulting image becomes meaningless.

Because confusing images are communicated, the confusion itself can be perceived. It is perceived differently by the local residents than by the visiting tourists. The ultimate outcome of this state of confusion is that confused images have become themselves part of the set of images that are communicated as the reality of place of the new tourist towns.

Images are an important vehicle of information for place consumption. Because they pre-condition the experience of place, they can either enhance or undermine the sense of place. Paintings, for example, have been significant vehicles of information to the extent that they have superimposed a symbolic reality to the reality that they are intended to convey. The early images of the Canadian mountain scenery have been translated in European terms, so that information about the place could be read by European eyes, but to the point of denying the reality of the place they were intended to depict. Visitors then overlook authentic and typical scenery in search of a false sense of authenticity.

FOOTNOTES

1- Science and technology have produced transportation and telecommunication tools such as the telephone, television, or the automobile; these have removed individual participation in community activity from any geographical constraint.

2- An interesting distinction must be made in the definitions of tourism in terms of the behaviour of the tourist. Tourism can be perceived as either travel or place visitation. References to tourism as a travel activity all point to what can be loosely categorized as conceptual experiences, such as pilgrimage, scholarly travels and even the mendicant-monachism of the Orient (Gunn, 1988, 83). References to tourism as place visitation point to physical or spiritual experiences that necessitate for the market population to be transported because the transportation of a local commodity such as a hot-spring, a cultural experience or a view is impossible. In the former case, tourism is merely the industry that arises out of the travelling needs, and it has no impact on the conceptual experience. In the latter case, tourism is concerned with a commodity which is essentially an indivisible part of the local geography. In the nineteenth century, travel and place visitation have been combined with the emergence out of Great Britain of well publicized works of Stevenson, Whymper, the French writer Jules Vernes (whose characters were most often British) and others. The tourism industry has therefore been divided between the provision of travel services, and the sophistication of lodging and local activities. The marketing of tourist services has integrated travel services and place visitation under the notion of a tourist package around the need to "get away.". However, transportation technology has become quite banal, and telecommunication technology has popularized the transportation of spiritual and physical local commodity in the form of images. As a result tourism marketing has had to deal with this possible shrinking of the market share of the tourism industry by focusing on tourist products and centered around place-visitation - creating resorts, and even to the extent of manufacturing hybrides between place visitation and transportation such as cruise-ships. Tourism is therefore essentially dependent on commodities the consumption of which requires the transportation of the consumer.

3- There is a "chicken and the egg" argument between religious dynamics and market dynamics as a part of the phenomenon of urbanization. Jane Jacobs argues that the phenomenon of urbanization is largely the result of market activities, contrary to previous notions that urbanization was the result of religious congregation.It

would seem however that the convergence of population towards a specific site for spiritual reasons will give rise to inevitable market activity, whereas market activities may prove detrimental to the spiritual quality of a place. The problem with tourism is that it is a place-specific market activity which essentially depends on a place-specific spiritual phenomenon. There is a constant threat that the market activities will eventually stifle the spiritual phenomenon. When this happens either the spirit of the place vanishes and with it its economic value, or it gives way to the market phenomenon described by Jane Jacobs. The question is whether touristic developments are a hindrance in the phenomenology of place or a modern step in market phenomenology, for places which, like mountain places, have no viable economic resources to support the development of diversified community activity.

4- It can be said that cultural differentiation originates from environmental differentiation and the sense of place is a phenomenon of cultural perception. This is to say that because the internal mechanisms responsible for human experience do not significantly vary from one individual to another, one gets a sense of possible human reaction to a given natural landscape, and a very precise sense of how a social group reacted to a specific landscape by the very nature of the built form. Therefore a legible place is a meaningful place.

5- Even this use of pink often turns out to be produced without a good understanding of how the winter landscape comes together as a visual image.The pink hue that has become such a common part of these paintings only exist in the natural landscape as a retinal image caused by the grey areas on the snow to counterbalance the greens. Forested clearings are too closed in to reflect longer wave radiations.The retinal effect that produces a pink is strong because the snow is bright, and the grey zones on the snow are as a result almost pure grey. In the paintings, the pink hues have often being used in a mechanical attempt at colour harmony; a more subtle use of the technique and much closer to the reality of the winter landscape is to incorporate shades of pink amongst the many hues of foliage so that they simply sustain the ghost image on the retina that will naturally form from the greys of the painted snow.

6- Of course, this is not the case in dry mountains, such as the Himalayas, or the Southern Rockies. Natives of these mountain places may not recognize the archetype, unless they have been exposed to images based on it. Similarly, a confusion of images results when this archetype is imposed in these mountain environments.

Chapter 1

THE CONFUSION
OF IMAGES
IN MOUNTAIN TOWNS:
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The history of human settlements in the mountains includes the formation of several different archetypal forms. These archetypes can be associated with three identifiable types of mountain communities: traditional agrarian villages, resource communities, and tourist resorts.

The confusion of images of mountain places as a result of tourism has come from an overlapping of values between the archetypes of agrarian communities - which essentially produce an image based on the mountain as a place, and of resource communities - which essentially produce an image based on the mountain either as a resource to be exploited or as a constraint to be overcome.
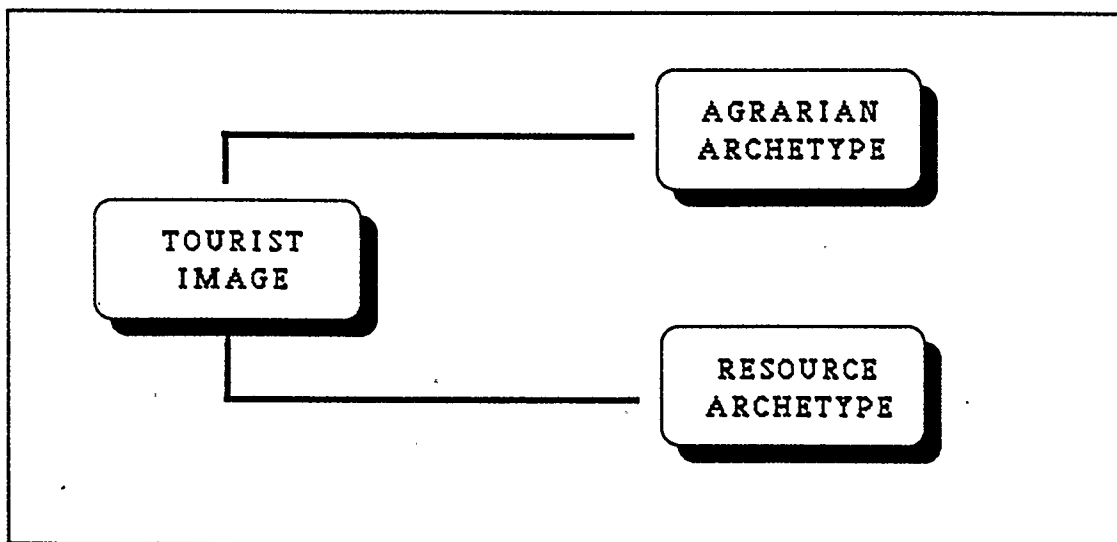
Global climatic changes between warming and cooling trends have opened the mountain environment to human colonization and caused these human settlements to adapt to a great variety of conditions. Traditionally agrarian, the urban form of these original settlements is remarkably similar in mountain villages around the world despite local cultural variations (Dorward:1990, 17). The mountains are implicit in the traditional agrarian environment, an accepted setting that provides the conditions for life. These original mountain villages became an inseparable part of their environment, from the materials they used to the manner they settled in the mountain landscape.

The mountain environment has also had a role to play in the evolution towards and into an industrial society, with settlements that centered around mineral resources, hydro-energy and manufacturing. The industrial ethic introduced a new approach towards settling in the mountains, one which regarded its surroundings as a constraint for an urban space determined primarily by its industry. In a resource community, the urban environment is no longer a setting for the life of the community, but another component of resource exploitation, or an obstacle to be overcome.

The development of tourism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries finally introduced a third form of mountain settlement, the resort. The resort is the image that tourists most commonly have of the mountain environment. It can be looked at as a combination of the values that underlay the agrarian and the resource communities. The many attempts to reconcile these two systems of values is a source of the confusion of mountain images. The resort has taken on two distinct and almost contradictory goals to be partly achieved through the same organization of urban form. On the one hand, it must work against the natural constraints that the mountain environment imposes on the tourist industry; on the other hand, it must preserve and even enhance the experience of the mountain environment as the central experience of tourism.

TRADITIONAL AGRARIAN COMMUNITIES

The archetype of a traditional agrarian village is that of a compact yet free-form urban settlement (Dorward: 1990) that appears to have naturally evolved as one of the mountain's many ecosystems (See Fig. 2.1).
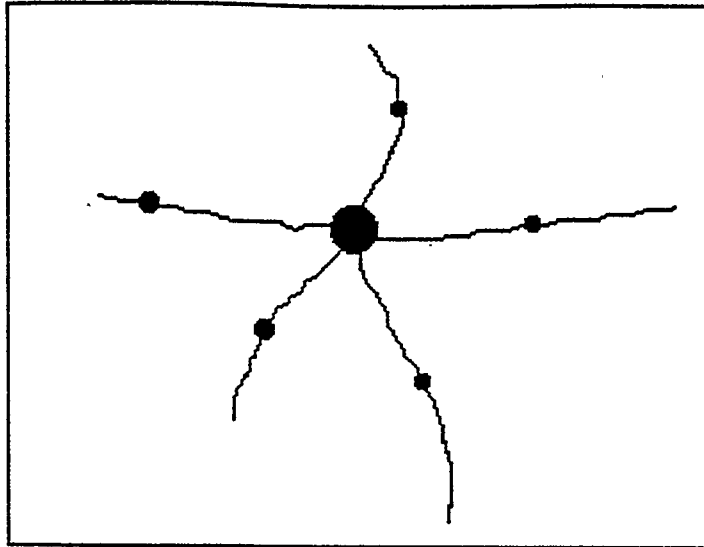
Figure 2.1: The agrarian archetype

Mountain villages are traditionally sited on rocky outcrops, old moraines, ridges and ledges, in order to spare the most fertile land for agriculture. Sherry Dorward suggests some fairly consistent patterns of settlement in the mountains in terms of form, appearance, organization, size and scale. Mountain villages are compact, and the three-dimensional form of the village mirrors the shape of the surrounding landscape (Dorward:1990, 21). The texture of the urban environment merges in the natural environment because of a repetition of architectural elements, mountain villages being always at a human scale, respecting the natural constraints of community size. Most villages have a focal element, larger in scale than the surrounding elements, and a space - plaza or market place - for community activities. Traditional urban form in the mountains evolved very slowly and was the result of traditions deeply seated in the generation-long connection with the mountain landscape.

Once a basic urban form had been established, it was not easily changed, because succeeding generations perceived the urban landscape almost at the same level as they did the natural landscape. What little evolution of the urban form did take place resulted from repairs or additions to existing structures, or from spotty expansions

on the mountain side, generally in the form of shepherd's shelters. Streets in the village were simply a continuation of the surrounding footpaths. There was little distinction between town and community, since the notion of a town boundary was not part of the local image of an urban environment (See Fig. 2.2).

The system of values which developed together with the design of urban form is community based, process-oriented, and pluralistic (Vincent: 1987). The individual is part of a family which in turn is part of the community, and everyone has an assigned role in the relationship between the community and the mountain environment. The way of life is essentially rural, which should be differentiated from agricultural. Agriculture is an industry. A rural community lives symbiotically with its environment - in this case, the mountains. The means of livelihood, sustenance, raw materials, entertainment, culture, meanings and value systems all stem from the natural environment.

In a study of a Val D'Aoste village, John Vincent shows that the community is the ultimate frame of reference for the individual member of the village:

> There is an almost exaggerated loyalty to the community. The belief in the superiority of one's native soil, [...] and the correct relationship between sons of the soil should be 'd'accor' (harmony). [...] An ethic of hard work is associated with the locals' image of themselves as tough country (campagnard) and mountain (montagnard) people. The ethic of equality, and independence, and hence participation according to one's interests and commitment, provides a framework to regulate relationships between members which keep the co-operatives working (Vincent: 1987, 109).
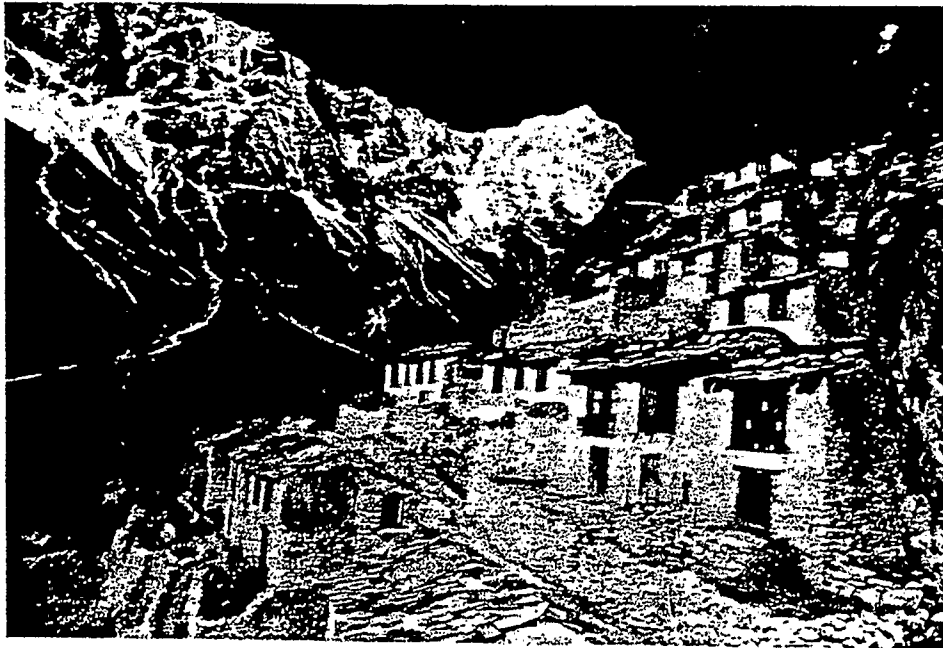

Figure 2.2: Houses in Namche Bazaar, Nepal

The life of the community is process-oriented. There is no long-term goal; there is no planning. Life follows cycles, essentially determined by natural seasonal cycles. The cyclical nature of human activities is split between work and leisure activities, characterized by a switch between orderly and chaotic behaviour. Finally, individuals are pluralistic in the sense that they are not confined to the expertise required by the role they assume in the community. Every individual has developed a number of skills that they exercise routinely in the community, to the point that they can all take over for each other as the need arises.

RESOURCE COMMUNITIES

The importance of the mountain environment for the industrial revolution started with the natural availability of mineral resources. The increased use of hydro-energy caused mountain settlements to be naturally predisposed to manufacturing, with locational factors centering around resources and energy, and the availability of a labour pool. Since transportation was a fundamental problem in a mountain setting, the industry favoured small manufactured items of a rather high unit price - clock-making for example. This in turn allowed the part of the industry that was mainly a production of crafted goods - such as wood working, assembling, etc., to be farmed out to surrounding villages during the winter months.
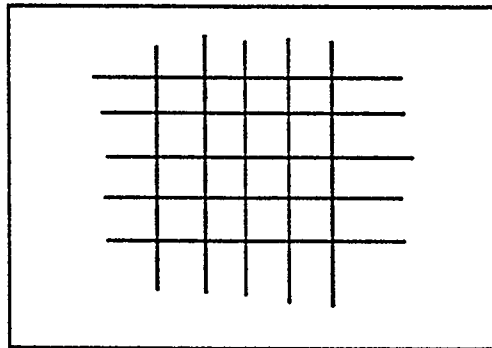
Figure 2.3: Resource archetype

Resource communities offered a sharp contrast to the values of agrarian communities (See Fig. 2.3). Whereas agrarian communities are founded on community cooperation, the value systems of resource communities is based on individuality. Where the agrarian community is process-oriented and pluralistic, the resource community is goal-oriented, and its mode of activities is specialization. In industrial environments, activity systems are task-oriented. The relationship is no longer with an identifiable environment, but with a structure of production. Activities

exist in the pursuit of a goal - essentially production - be it the accomplishment of the task, or the use of the system of production for one's own end. The efficient accomplishment of tasks means that individuals become specialized. Cooperation within a community of individuals with interchangeable skills is replaced by a competition amongst individuals whose skills assume a place in a hierarchy which subordinates goals to each other.
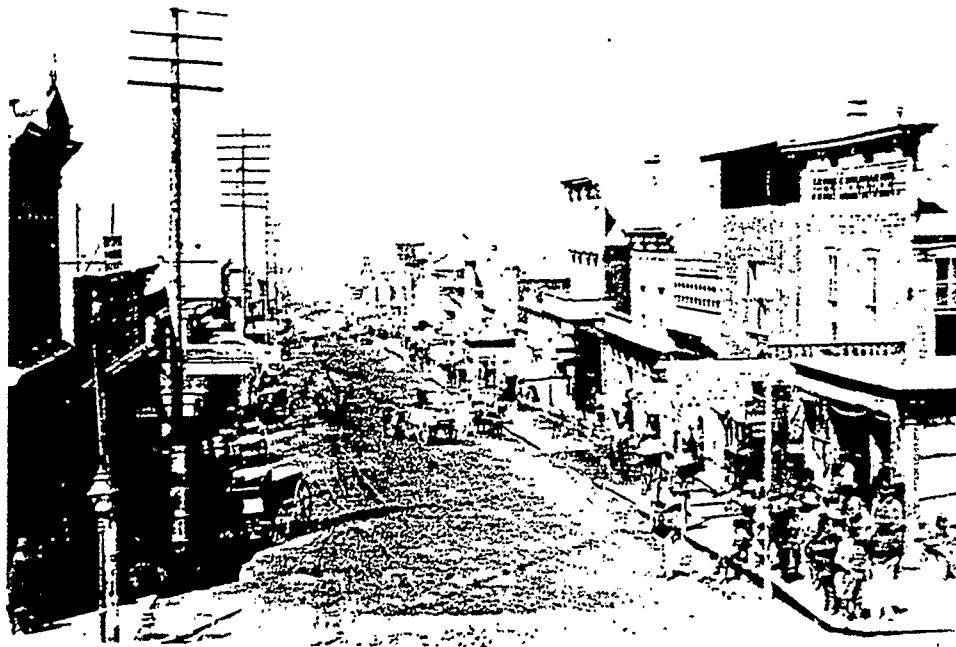
Figure 2.4 : Chestnut Street In Leadville, Colorado.

Images of resource communities in Europe are that of tightly knit urban environments that have expanded against the sides of their valley, using every square inch of usable land in the process. In North America, the image is that of a geometric and well-ordered environment in sharp contrast with the surrounding landscape (See Fig. 2.4), as if it offered an alternative to the land, conceptually dissociated from the wilderness.

Two different types of images emerged between Europe and North America. In Europe, resource mountain towns became dense settlements that attracted the surrounding rural population. They used most of the available land in narrow mountain valleys, linked to a network that connected them to the hydrological source of energy. They quickly became business and market centres for the surrounding villages. There did not seem to be any explicit disdain for the natural environment, just indifference.

In North America, puritanism created a somewhat different image (See Fig. 2.5). It held nature in contempt because it saw it as a source of base instincts, and strictly useful as a resource to be tamed and exploited. However, the explicit disdain for the mountain environment did not translate into a clear notion of town boundary, probably because of the very small urban densities, a lack of consensus and the Puritanical notion of individual responsibility.

The mining and railway towns of North America did not mirror the mountain landscape. They were built quickly and with little sensitivity to their surrounding environment. They almost all used a grid pattern as a town layout (See Fig. 2.5). Individual settlements were quite dispersed, and did not reflect a strong feeling of

Figure 2.5: Silver Queen mine, Aspen, Colorado

community other than a simple need for urban services. Roads did not relate to any special urban place, just to one another. The main street was generally more intensively developed with a mixed land use between commercial and residential developments. These towns were often mechanically laid-out, and their architecture was imported to reflect colonial or Victorian influences.

It is difficult to gauge the cultural values that were responsible for these new urban environments. One can safely assume that these values have evolved from a mix between frontier spirit and puritanism. The frontier's spirit suggests little cultural need for a community, and therefore little demand beyond the simplest functional needs. The frontier spirit would most likely have been responsible for main street commercialism - general store and public houses. Puritanism on the other hand may bring more light to the use of a grid layout as a basis of urban form. A grid has two major characteristics: it is geometric, and it is non-hierarchical. Its geometry is comparable to the ordered urban environments characteristic of the Baroque and the Renaissance, which expressed a belief in the destiny of mankind to be makers and masters of their world. However, where European towns all radiate from a complexity of focused plazas, the grid typology used in North America denies any geographic centre to the town. Indeed, Puritanism grew in Europe as a revolt against the excesses of the Catholic church. Puritanism stood for simplicity, and demanded that cultural manifestations in the community be plain and unadorned, applying the teachings of egalitarian philosophies in daily life . Puritanism had little use for the wild natural environment. Holding idleness in the greatest of contempt, and seeing in nature the source of reprehensible instincts, it had no recreational interest in the wilderness.

TOURIST RESORTS

It is here argued that the images of the tourist towns of the early twentieth century were based on the exploitative values of the resource communities compounded with the aesthetic images of the picturesque agrarian villages of Europe. There are two value systems side by side that are a result of the cross-over between the resource and the traditional agrarian images of the mountain environment. In the mountain resort, tourist activities are individualistic but process-oriented (based on experiences); and although the industry is still community based, it is now goal-oriented.
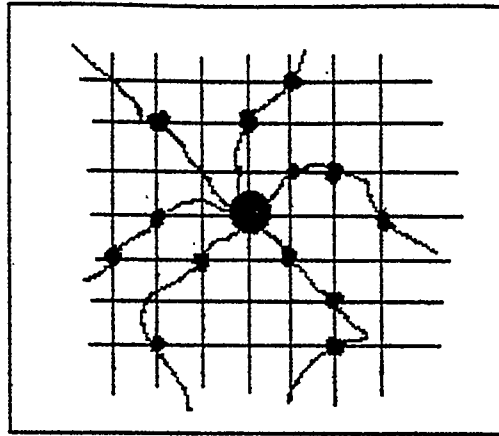
Figure 2.6: The ideal tourist archetype

Ideally, the archetypes of agrarian and resource communities should be integrated in a meaningful manner (See Fig. 2.6). Areas of significance should be shared by both environments as is demonstrated in the diagram above. Instead, the overlap of the two images in most tourist towns is confusing (See Fig. 2.7). Significant areas in the resource community of the tourist industry do not correspond to those in their rural counterpart.

Tourism is not just an industry; it is also a life-style. Although a temporary activity for individual visitors, it is the on-going local life-style with which the visiting population characterizes the tourist town.
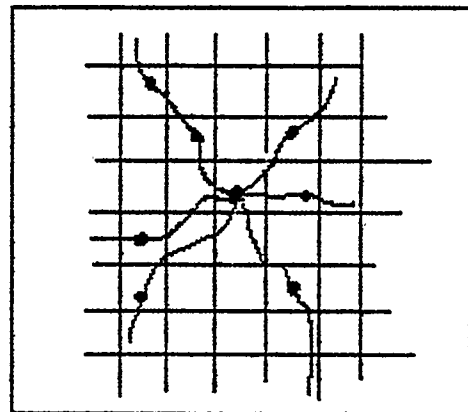
Figure 2.7: The confusion of the arche-types

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The activity system of visitors is process-directed towards experiences and consumption, whereas that of the local population is goal-directed towards production, services and profit-making. Visitors have found many elements in the traditional environment that had disappeared from their urbanized lifestyles. The tourist experience is highly pluralistic: there is a plethora of different types of tourist activities requiring a certain amount of skills (e.g. skiing, climbing, even dining and site-seeing).

There is, however, a wide gap between the tourists' perception of the mountain environment and that of the locals'. The difference is founded on a confusion of customary use of space, time and systems of activities. For example, tourists approach the leisure activity of recreation in a very organized, orderly fashion. For the locals, it is customary to utilize the tourist place for their own play activity which they traditionally conduct as disorderly behaviour after work. This conflicts with the "tourist idea of a holiday in the peace of the mountains" (Vincent: 1987, 116), and the orderly use of recreative space by the tourist population. In fact, the tourists use the tourist place with the same attitude as the locals have towards work since their holiday is a continuous linear portion of linear time.

Figure 2.8: Mottaret, In French Savoie

As a result, there is an overlap in uses of urban spaces and implied activities in those spaces, so that the meaning of a community in a tourist setting is fragmented and polarized (See Fig. 2.8). Visitors and residents alike are trying to hold on to their own sense of order, meaning and reality, while at the same time being attracted to and trying to cater to the other side of the community. The confusion stems essentially from these implied relationships between the natural environment, the human community and the individuals. For example, John Vincent remarks that

providing service for strangers requires imitation of 'servile' behaviour; behaviour which is to a degree an imitation of that of a servant. [...] One cannot wait to be asked for a service, one has to attentively offer it, while the Maurician ethic of equality requires obligations to be requested and then

reciprocated. Assistance is asked for, never proffered. [...] The symbolic message of this behaviour is that of inferior/superior; the message is inequality (Vincent: 1987, 118).

The confusion of images that has arisen from the cross-over in value systems between resource communities and traditional agrarian communities has been translated into a number of urban forms. The impact of this confusion on urban form has been a polarization between mountain village and tourist resort. This has created a spectrum between the dissociation of tourism from local tradition and the focus of tourism on traditional environments. It is, therefore, necessary to consider this evolution in its historical context in order to attempt some categorisation of the confused images.

The confusion of images is the result of the creation of two distinct places in the same urban space. It is a resort phenomenon that suggests two sets of values and two sets of meaning with which to interpret the mountain environment: one is the local interpretation, the other is the tourist interpretation. The *use* of the mountain places by the local community is determined by the mountain environment because they have to deal with the site specific constraints that must be resolved to make the tourist experience possible, whereas the *meaning* of the mountain place for the local community has shifted towards the industry of tourism, away from the ancestral connection to the landscape. The experience of the visitors is the exact opposite: the *meaning* they expect to derive from the mountain place is based on mountain images, whereas the *use* they make of the place is based on a behaviour that is standard to tourism and on which they hope to rely whether they are vacationing in the mountains, at a seaside resort, or in a foreign country.

The image is confused because the mountain place is read as one unique location, despite the existence of two distinct places. As mountain places, resorts are a traditional agrarian community and a resource community overlaid in the same space. It is all the more confused because, while the mountain image is expected to provide a high sense of place, the market image is intended to convey a sense of placelessness interchangeable from seaside to mountain side. Not only is the overall image ambiguous, but the ambiguity is experienced differently by local residents and visitors.

Chapter 3

A MODEL FOR
THE INTEGRATION OF IMAGES
IN MOUNTAIN TOWNS

Place and images have become confused with the growth of tourism in the mountains. The confusion is detrimental to the tourist industry because it is responsible for a weakening of the sense of place that is so essential to a successful tourist experience. A model for the integration of mountain images is suggested here to reduce the confusion of place and images in the mountains. Aimed primarily at understanding the confusion created by tourism, it makes use of existing theories on how images are conveyed by place in an urban environment.

The model is intended to address the problem of confusion in a tiered approach: an understanding of meaning and values in the community; a visual analysis of the urban environment; and design strategies that combine value systems and visual design according to the possible goals and objectives of the community. Such a model is predicated on two types of other existing theories: theories about meaning, images and place in a tourist environment, and visual theories of urban design.

Dean McCannell's theories about levels of authenticity between site, local population and visitor will be used to study the special nature of images in a tourist environment. Dean McCannell's model of "staged authenticity" and Erving Goffman's concept of "front and back regions" in a tourist place are useful to understand how the formation of images becomes confused by the relationship between site and value systems.

A system of categorization of images is also necessary. Design theories are used to implement the integration of place and images. Ian Nairn and Gordon Cullen have developed a number of approaches to visual analysis for an urban environment which can be applied to a site specific analysis in a tourist environment.

The table which follows (Fig. 3.1) is a synoptic summary of the evolution of images and place previously described. The model to be discussed in this chapter is intended to outline the basis for an image based on the merging of two systems of values in the same urban environment. The urban forms suggested by both systems should work in concert in order to produce a rich sense of place.
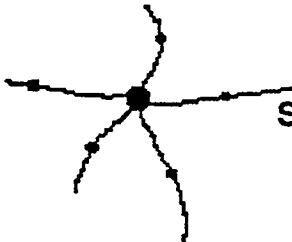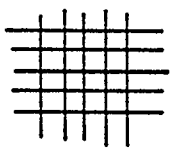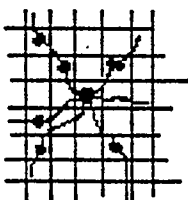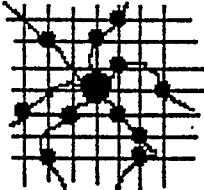
Basis of Images	Sense of Place

AGRARIAN IMAGE

Value base: Community, processes, pluralism

Connection to mountains: Cultural and ecological relationship

STRONG

RESOURCE IMAGE

Value base: Individualistic, products, specialization

Connection to mountains: Resource exploitation

WEAK

TOURIST IMAGE (Existing)

Value base: Mercantile; individualistic and processes for tourists, community and products for residents; opportunistic

Connection to mountains: Commercialisation

CONFUSED

TOURIST IMAGE (Proposed)

Value base: Community differentiation and actualization, goals and responsibility, deterministic

Connection to mountains: Stewardship, preservation

RICH

Figure 3.1: Summary of Form and Images in Mountain Towns

AUTHENTICITY, PLACE AND PLACELESSNESS

The issue of authenticity must first be addressed when dealing with the confusion of images in tourist places. To address it, there must be a good understanding of the history of values and meaning that have been responsible for the evolution of urban form. But authenticity is more than past experiences. In the Alps, for example, the history of modern resorts is not just one of traditional images of mountain places. Modern environments have been solely designed for tourism. Only if the resort properly fosters a local community and allows it to develop as a local culture with its own traditions, will it develop as an authentic mountain place. In a ready-made tourist environment, authenticity arises out of the capacity to support a stable mountain community.

Place and authenticity are very similar concepts (See Fig. 3.3). Authenticity is based on community; place is the core tourist product. It is through local cultural manifestations that the physical environment is given a meaning in terms of a human frame of reference, with architecture, fashion or local cuisine. Folkloric and local cultural elements are examples of this essential relationship between a community and the surrounding landscape, which is responsible for an authentic mountain place (See Fig. 3.2). Authenticity is a guarantee that the urban space is a mountain place, and the visitors will somehow attempt to adapt their behaviour to the local custom as a means to experience the place.

However, the more the local sense of place is replaced by the placelessness of a mass-produced touristic environment, the more the feeling of authenticity vanishes. The market approach, which has been used to deal with the demand for mass-tourism, has created spaces that are specifically designed for the use of visitors. When visitors mention an unpleasant experience of place, they generally refer to the food, the lodgings or the facilities that were available on site. With the rise of the tourist industry, and because they have been conditioned to anticipate tourist
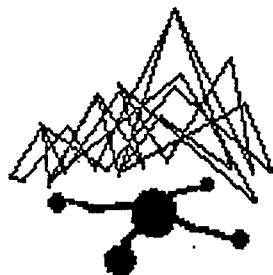
Figure 3.2: Sense of Place

A three-dimensional view of the diagrammatic representation of the relationship between community and place.

**Figure 3.3: Place and
Authenticity**

*This picture from
Chamonix conveys a
strong sense of place, and
is predicated on Chamonix
as an authentic mountain
place. This is expressed
by the image of local
tradition in a mountain
place, by the sensitive use
of texture and light, and
the subtle presence of the
mountains as an
unfocused and squat peak
behind the frozen mist of
a window pane. The sense
of place is so rich and
founded on such deep
authenticity that it allows
for additional activities
which use the mountain
site without having to
explicitly refer to it. This
enables the juxtaposition
of images of tourist
activities and of place. In
the lower left insert, the
place is explicit, but it is
all the stronger because
of its implicit presence in
the main picture. Place
and authenticity are two
sides of the same coin.*

Figure 3.4: A Commercial and Failed attempt at authenticity

This commercial photograph for the French Savoy resort of Flaine is trying to convey a sense of authenticity with the juxtaposition of alleged images of mountain products and a mountain scenery. It fails because it conveys images of commercialism, not of place. The picture looks like a billboard, and is ambiguous: it seems that the mountain scenery is used to market food, more so than the original reverse intention to market place.

facilities, visitors do expect to find part of the local environment prepared for their own use. The more they give up on a genuine local experience, the more they count on the compensation of sophisticated touristic services.

Visitors generally count on some form of standardization, even though their primary aim is to have an authentic experience of place. Standard tourist environments are necessary to offer visitors a familiar environment. However, when the concern for tourist services overtakes the primary experience of place, it leads to the confusion of images previously described. The confusion of images is directly tied to the failure of a transition between the standardized environment for tourism and the mountain place (See Fig. 3.4).

Staged authenticity

Erving Goffman expresses the need for authenticity with the concept of "front and back regions" (Goffman: 1973). A front region is a space open for touristic consumption (See Fig. 3.5); a back region is a space for the local population (See Fig. 3.6). A back region polarizes the tourist experience because it endows all aspects of the tourism experience with tangible evidence that the urban environment is genuine. Authenticity in the tourism experience is gauged on the availability of a back region, and its ability to support the front region.

This has led Dean McCannell to identify six stages from front to back regions in what he calls "staged authenticity"(See Fig. 3.7). The first three stages are front regions, the primary function of which is to supply tourists with the necessary services of the tourist industry. In the process, they have a secondary aim which is to reinforce the images that have prompted visitation in the first place and which give some evidence of the existence of a back region. It is a strange phenomenon when local people, along with outside entrepreneurs, try to act out being local, desperately and generally clumsily trying to market a portion of their heritage which seems of value to the visitors. The first stage is a front region, the first social space the tourists are faced with; this generally takes the form of a hotel, train station, and souvenir shops (See Fig. 3.9 and 3.10). The second stage is a front region that has been decorated to appear like a back region; a restaurant that uses local artifacts immediately comes to mind, and again souvenir shops (See Fig. 3.11). The third stage is a front region that is totally organized to look like a back region (See Fig. 3.12); reconstructed Bavarian villages are a typical example of the third stage of authenticity.

The last three stages are back regions. All three stages represent local places which display varying degrees of awareness of the presence of visitors in the townsite. The fourth stage is a back region that is open to outsiders (See Fig.3.13); "bed and breakfast" is a typical example of this stage. The fifth stage is a back region that is somehow cleaned-up or altered because tourists are admitted through (See Fig. 3.14), such as a bank, a local church, or a hardware store that sells fish bait. Finally, the sixth stage is the back region itself (See Fig. 3.15), in Dean McCannell's words, "the kind of social space that motivates touristic consciousness." This last stage can be a remnant of the place before tourism, or it can simply be a space that is unaltered by tourist activities (even though it may be a place for services). It is these stages which make the sense of place authentic. There is a growing number of tourist places where the true back region is strictly the domain of the staff, while images of other places - Swiss or Bavarian - are colourfully portrayed in their front region.
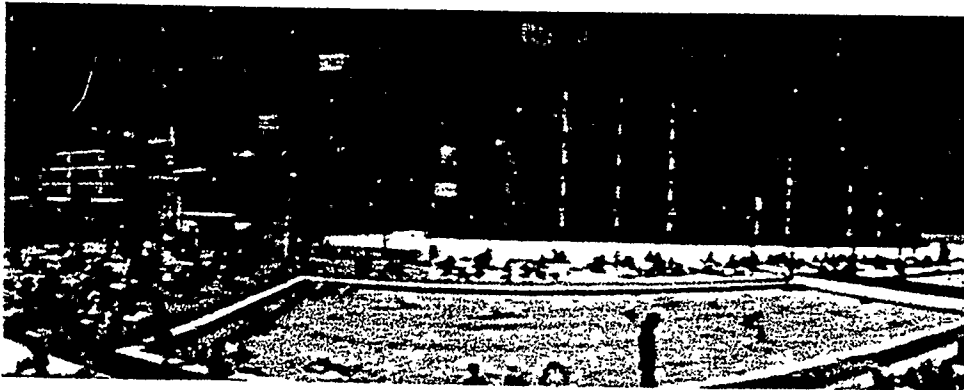

Figure 3.5: A Front Region, Les Deux Alpes in France.

Figure 3.6: A Back Region,
Les Deux Alpes in France.
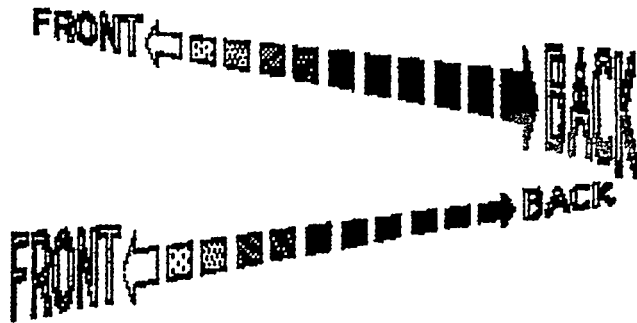
Figure 3.7: Front and Back Regions, a "Staged Approach"

Front and back regions can be considered two possible dimensions of the tourist environment. Front and back regions express the two poles of a continuum of experiences available to both the local residents and the visitors in the same space. Their experience is however different. The two systems of values with which the space is experienced creates two different places.

Graduated transition of places

Dean McCannell's model is useful to understand the type of relationship that can take place between the local residents and the visitors. However, from a design perspective, it can be simplified. The simplification consists of keeping the notions of front and back regions as the two poles of a spectrum from place to placelessness, and to summarize the other four stages as zones of transition between front and back region, with an increasing or a decreasing sense of place (See Fig 3.8).
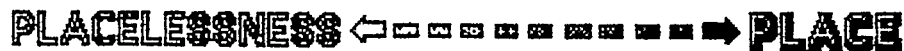
Figure 3.8: From a staged approach to a graduated approach

The aim is to recognize the valid presence of placelessness as a manifestation of the presence of tourism in the local physical environment, as an entry stage in the experience where tourists can feel comfortable, before easing into a more unfamiliar experience. It is then important to evaluate the sense of place in the urban space, and to make a judgement for each place as to whether the amount of placelessness present is appropriate. Where it is not, some intervention is going to be necessary to bring the place closer to being a back region, possibly allocating placelessness (such as parking lots or a shopping centre) to another space that can absorb it.

Figure 3.9: The Traveller's Inn in Banff, a Front Region

This is an example of a front region that is not supported by a back region.
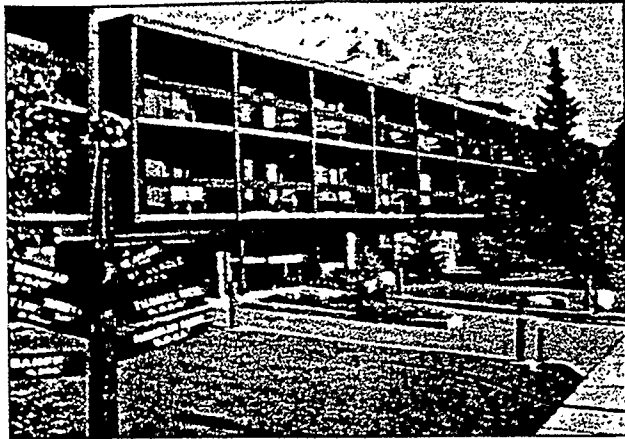
Figure 3.10: In Chamonix, a Front Region
In Chamonix, the tourist services are part of a front region, that is strictly intended for the tourism industry, yet does not interfere with the strong presence of a back region. Chamonix can almost be called an archetypal tourist mountain place.
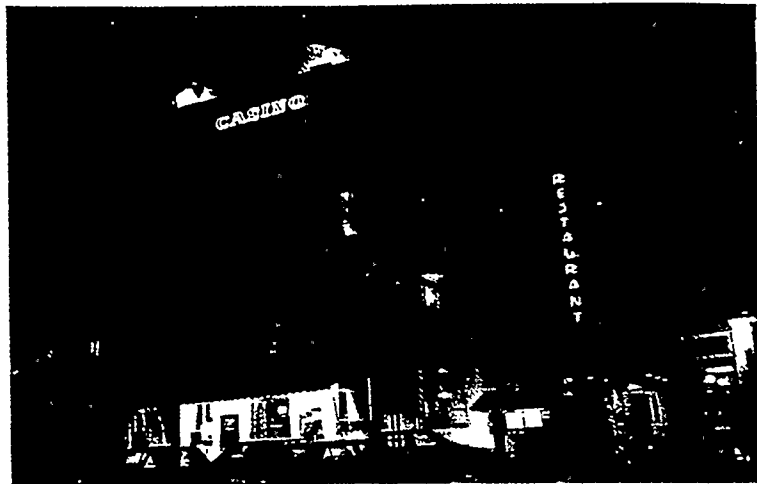
Figure 3.11: Hotel in Méribel: A front region made to look like a back region.

The hotel uses peaked roof, exaggerated overhang and wood in stylistic effort to imitate the archetype of traditional construction. But this is nonetheless a front region, complete with , sundeck, swimming pool and glass panelled green house, all of them highly foreign in the local environment, and simply there for the purpose of tourism. There is no relationship w h a t s o e v e r between the implied use of design solution from the mountains . Incidentally, the style exhibited is essentially small town bavarian; the local architectural style is a village type which tends to favour stone constructions and small windows.
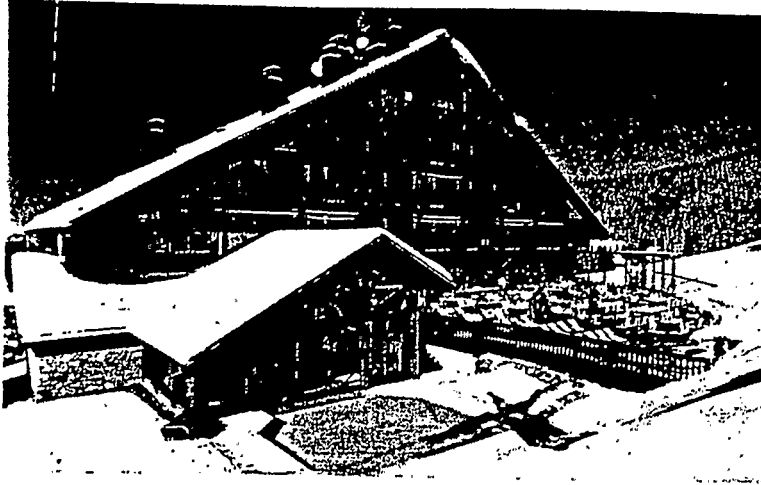
Figure 3.12: In Chamonix-Mont Blanc, a front region that is organized to look like a back region

The use of material and the organization of building replicates design solution used in the local environment. This however remains a front region, because of the nature of the activities that are taking place, namely sunning and mass-socializing.

Figure 3.13: Val D'Isère, a back region open to outsiders

This is the fourth stage of McCannell's "staged authenticity." The urban space that is used as a setting for tourist activities is simply a traditional back region.
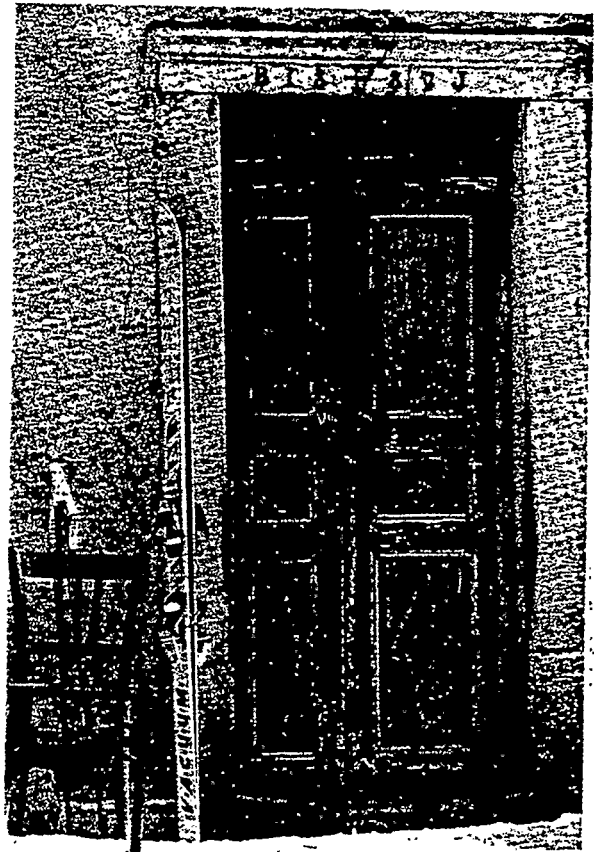
Figure 3.14: Val D'Isére, a back region altered because of tourism

This publicity shot of Val D'Isère combines tourism and authenticity by a picture that suggests a fifth stage of McCannell's staged authenticity. The skis by the traditional entrance symbolize the local awareness of tourism, and its integration as part of a total experience to living in the mountains. This is actually true of Val D'Isère where the local's sense of place, of stewardship, of community responsibility and identity is reinforced by its location in the national Park of Vanoise.
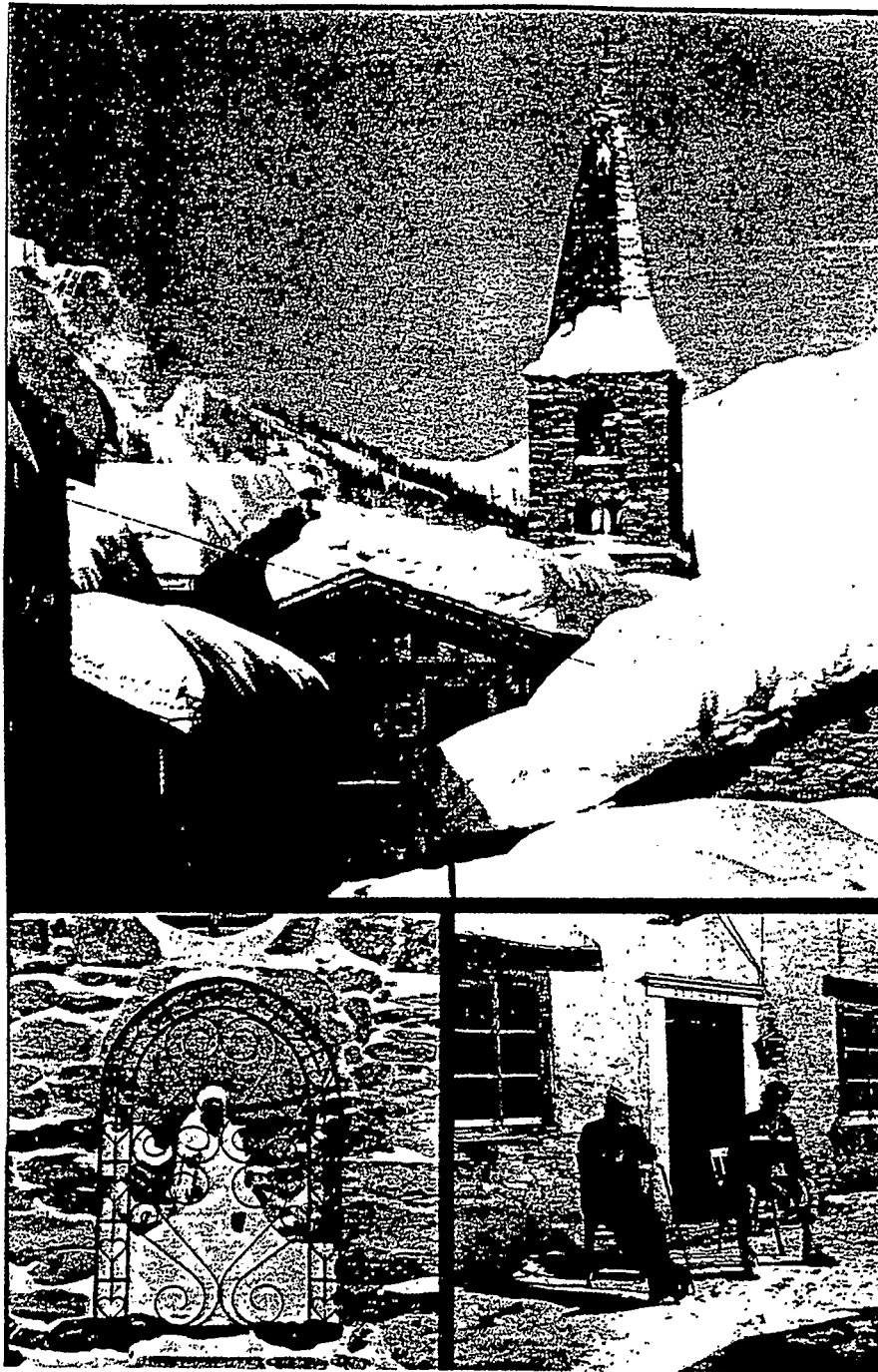
Figure 3.15: Val D'Isère, A Back Region.

These are images of an authentic mountain place, proud of its heritage and culture.

RURAL AND URBAN DEFINITIONS OF TOURIST PLACES IN THE MOUNTAINS

The notion of front and back regions also raises the question of unity of urban space. Although placelessness is a necessary component of tourism, it becomes responsible for a confusion of images and a weakening of the sense of place, if it is allowed to influence place through the urban form. To make the relationship between the front and the back regions richer, the sense of place that originates in the back region has to be preserved in the front region. In a way, place has to be "translated" in the front region.

It is normal to expect a multiplicity of images within the same urban environment. This multiplicity of images is a testimony of historical evolutions, and the richer the vitality of a city, the more numerous the images. In order for this multiplicity of images to be legible, images must be part of a coherent whole. The image-making process is an essential part of the touristic experience, and it must be a positive experience if tourism is to be successful (Lynch: 1960, 6).

The coherence of a tourist town is a special problem because of the relative artificiality of the evolution of urban form. Urban form in a tourist town has not evolved from progressive urban processes, but has been imposed by the needs of the tourist industry. In that sense, the problem of images of tourist towns is the same as that of most industrial towns. French resorts, those idealized "ski factories" of the 1950's, are not fundamentally different from, for example, the urban development of industrial England in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In both cases, the industrial town is organized to respond to the needs of the supporting industry: its aim is not meaning, it is function. Condominiums and new mountain resorts have used the same repetition of housing form that is so characteristic of suburban England and of the coal mining and steel industry's architectural formulas for the housing needs of the workers.

The reaction of Ian Nairn and Gordon Cullen against the placelessness of new industrial environments and to ensuing examples of suburbia applies equally well to a mountain tourist town, and for similar reasons.

> **The need to re-integrate the self-conscious identity with the unconscious universe, the need to return down the limb to the immortal trunk, to re-identify the human with the non-human [...] is the prime condition of personal re-creation. (Nairn: 1958, 355)**

This reaction by Ian Nairn against the placelessness of modern urban environments denounces a confusion of images in urban spaces which undermines the sense of place:

Applied science is rendering meaningless the old distinction between urban and rural life. (Nairn: 1955, 355)

This led him and Gordon Cullen to propose effective design guidelines for the classification of urban environments.

Classification of urban places

The first step in the method is to identify the type of environment that is at hand. It can be of four different types: metropolis(metropolitan), town (urban), arcadia (suburban), country (rural) or wilderness (wild) (See Fig. 3.16 to 3.20).

Ian Nairn calls the method a visual ABC (Nairn: 1955). It was intended to provide some form of congruence between urban form and surrounding landscape:

> The basic ideas behind sane visual planning are few and simple, forming four stages in a sequence that leads back from mess to order. First: to identify the type of environment in question and give each its proper classes of equipment and treatment. Second: to remove the clutter and obtrusive vertical elements. Third: to keep the elements of the scene related to one another, which means close together, by cutting out dead ground and waste land. Fourth: to camouflage improper elements that cannot otherwise be brought to order (Nairn: 1955, 355).

The advantage of Ian Nairn's method is that it relates degrees of urbanization to an implied relationship with the natural landscape, then translates this degree of urbanization into a corresponding visual lexicon of appropriate urban elements.

In the case of tourism, poor visual planning takes place when the rural environment spills onto the tourist urban environment. When this happens, the necessary juxtaposition of images leads to a confusion of meanings. The question to be resolved, then, is how much juxtaposition is necessary, and how much will lead to poor visual planning. It would appear that this is best resolved when there is a proper allocation of spaces between tourism and local community in the town.

The complicating factor in a tourist town is that the differing needs of the visiting and the local population allow the physical environment to be interpreted as either urban for the visitors, or rural for the residents: hence the origin of the confusion of images. The reality is that it is both, and that both frames of reference should co-exist.

Figure 3.16: Ian Nairn's Metropolis

"bustle, teaming with people, everything larger than life. It is the heart of things so you must expect to be bandied about and harassed by the traffic, overawed by the buildings. It needs monumental scale and crowds [...]" (Nairn: 1955)
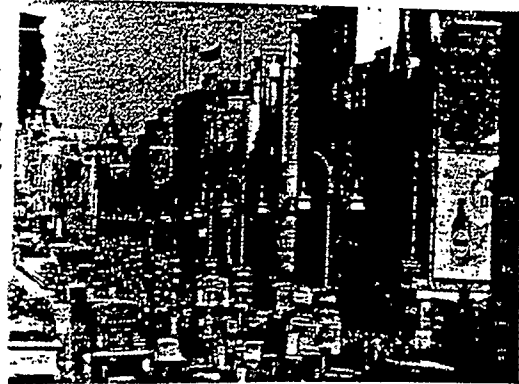
Figure 3.17: Ian Nairn's Town

"human scale; full of life, not an underpopulated waste land; perpetually changing enclosure, not endless avenues. A town is a complex and compact pattern like the inside of a watch, and every change should aim to make the pattern richer and not to blow it apart. [...] Country towns are smaller and simpler, but have the same need for enclosure and compactness[...]" (Nairn: 1955)
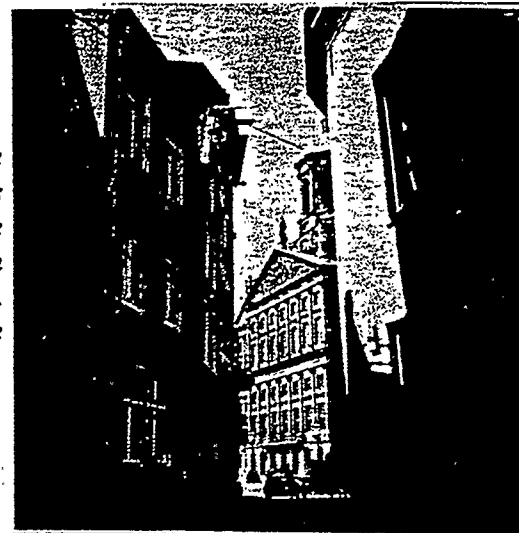
Figure 3.18: Ian Nairn's Arcadia

"a compromise for housing people near a town and still giving the effect of being rural[...]" (Nairn: 1955)
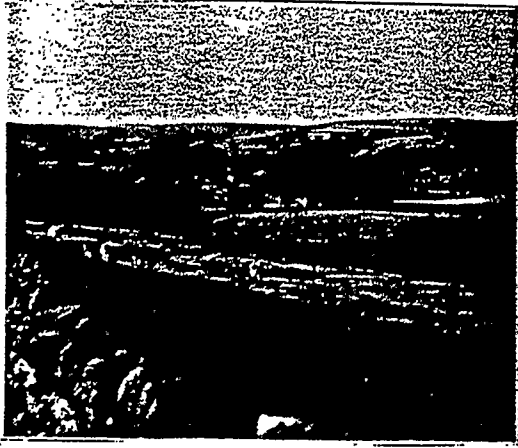
Figure 3.19: Ian Nairn's Country

"genuinely countryside things need no illusion or affectation - they can be as bold and brutal as possible. The vital thing in a rural landscape is continuity freedom from non-rural interruptions. [...]" (Nairn: 1955)
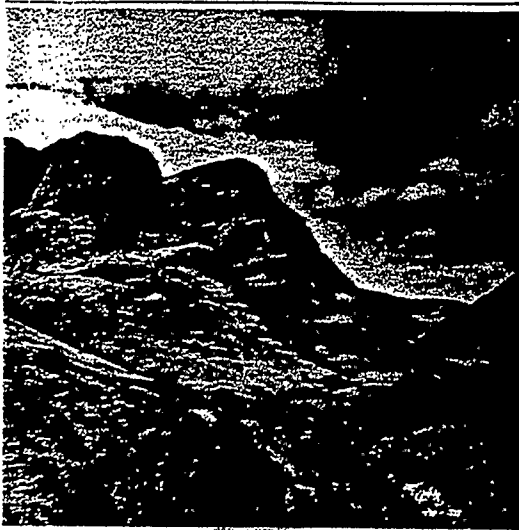
Figure 3.20: Ian Nairn's Wild

"nature must win. If a landscape contains any man-made activity that isn't cringeing in subservience it ceases to be wild [...] There can be no intermediate stages between wild and not-wild." (Nairn: 1955)

Front and back regions revisited

The distinction between front and back regions can now be reinterpreted as a distinction between urban and rural environments. Different rules of design apply for each environment, and the confusion can be traced where the rules have been mixed. There are perforce common zones between the two environments, as well as zones of transition, which occur naturally within the urban space. In the common zones, the sense of place must be strongest. These take the form of a square or a church that functions as both a central point of the rural environment and a focal point of the urban environment.

When the front region is reinterpreted as an urban space, it stands to acquire a stronger sense of place. Because the sense of place is not predicated on decoration but on the presence of a back region, authenticity is increased. For this approach to be successful, however, space and design in the front region should be predicated on services, not place. It is the presence of the evidence of the back region with significant forms and places such as steeples, monuments or plazas, which brings to the front region its real meaning - its "raison d'être." Its administrative, regulatory and even educational functions for the tourist population are thus authenticated by the evidence of the back region, as long as it is not to be confused with it.
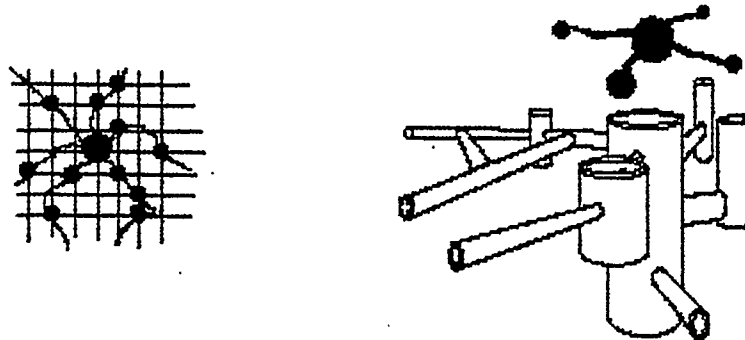
.Figure 3.21: Suggested relationship between the rural and the urban environments

For a sense of place to be experienced, it is suggested that the relationtionship between rural and urban environments shown in plan view be re-interpreted three-dimensionally in such a way that the functional aspect of the urban environment should correspond, yet should not interfere with, the rural environment, so that the resulting images are integrated, not confused. The implied diagrammatic representation conveys a sense of "enclosure" for the urban environment, and one of "continuity" for the rural environment, and shows how the two are integrated, yet remain distinct.

The relationship between the urban and the rural environment can be illustrated by transcribing the two dimensional diagram previously suggested in three dimensions. In plan, the two levels *overlap*, whereas in elevation they *correspond* to one another (See Fig. 3.21). In the urban network, significant areas exist where a strong sense of place is felt. However, the two levels remain highly autonomous, and can be evaluated independently with different standards of success. The key breakthrough is that the *urban* environment should not have to relate to the *mountain* environment. That is the role of the *rural* environment. The urban environment should instead relate to the rural environment. The rural environment thus becomes a transition between the urban environment and the wild mountain environment. The most significant and richest places are those where the urban and the rural environment are totally integrated, yet where the relationships are kept distinct (See Fig. 3.21 and 3.22).

The advantage of this approach is that it recognizes that the residents and the visitors may have common values, yet evaluate and relate differently to the built environment. By subdividing the urban environment in front regions, back regions and regions of transition, conceptual clashes as to what is fitting will be reduced. Instead the design issues can focus on how to build proper images in terms of who is most likely to use the space and how they are most likely to use it.

The visual planning strategy suggested by Ian Nairn (Nairn: 1955) is different in an urban and a rural setting. A tourist town in the mountains is a case where the two strategies should coexist at different levels, while producing an integrated sense of place in relationship to the site. Most often, it results in a confusion of images. The relevance of Ian Nairn's strategy to this situation is that its aim is to bring unity by keeping only essential elements in the landscape and to camouflage elements that could not be removed.

According to Ian Nairn, the key to unity in an urban setting is "enclosure"; in a rural setting, it is "continuity."

. This is achieved in an urban setting by respecting the architectural integrity, removing suburban private open spaces, and by keeping fixtures "slender and site unobtrusive." An important suggestion is that vacant corners be filled "with buildings, not gardens," and that "dead space [be given] back to pedestrians."

In a rural environment, on the other hand, the built form should be gathered up so as to give a sense of place instead of a sense of sprawl. Unity is ensured by an informal networking of roads and footpaths, and with fixtures that do not project into space, because they are either buried (in the case of wires), or contained on surfaces (in the case of *signage*).

Figure 3.22: Placelessness in Val Thorens

In Val Thorens, the needs of the visitors have been met by the creation of an urban environment that ignores the rural element. As a result, the urban space conveys a feeling of placelessness that is reinforced by the inability of the architectural styles to provide an adequate fit with images of a mountain place.

Figure 3.23: Sense of Place in Chateau Lake Louise

Chateau Lake Louise, on the other hand, is a place that provides a high sense of place. This is due to the recognition of rural and urban elements. By definition, the CPR's "Chateau" style is predicated on the notion of a highly sophisticated manor. The manor relates to the outside in a rural manner, with a series of smaller and dependent buildings interlaced with their immediate surroundings. The inside of the manor simply relates with this outside, providing comfort and a high complexity of interior activities. The great success of the style is that, although the facade is multi-faceted with small windows, the small size of the windows, the self-centeredness of interior activities that naturally extend to outside activities, make the breath-taking view of Lake Louise and the glaciers incidental. The sense of place is all the stronger as it seems to have never been contrived.

VISUAL SERIES

Once a good understanding is achieved of the different value systems that are present in the community, it is helpful to analyze what type of images can be formed

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┌─────────────┐
│  Meaning    │
│    and      │ ── Images ──── Sense of Place
│   Values    │      ┌──────────────┐
└─────────────┘      │              │
                     │   Visual     │
                     │   Series     │
                     └──────────────┘
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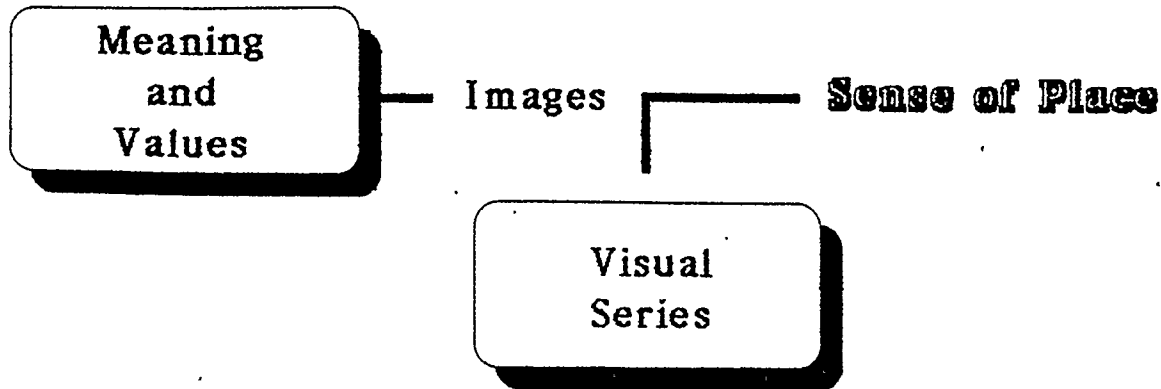
in the urban space, in terms of the distinction between rural and urban spaces.

In order to evaluate the visual themes in the urban spaces, this model uses "visual series." It is a "serial approach" in the mathematical or musical sense of the term. The value of the serial approach is that by focusing on series, the whole environment can be viewed in terms of a value-free visual syntax (Dondis: 1973, 11) that makes use of composition, direction, tone, colour, texture, scale and proportion, dimension and motion. A full discussion of a visual syntax is beyond the scope of this study. It is, however, a necessary component of the application of a serial approach to images.

The first mention of a "visual series" used to "read" the urban landscape was proposed by Gordon Cullen in Townscape. Using overlapping frameworks of analysis, Gordon Cullen first approaches it with what he calls "Serial vision" (See Fig. 3.24). The most simplistic form of serial vision is a visual sequence of experiences. However, in its more sophisticated form, "serial vision" is a search for a set of "visual series" in the landscape, in the manner that "serial music" looks for tonal series, or mathematics identifies arithmetic or geometric series.

Series are established in terms of a visual reaction to the sense of place. This is a significant departure from expressing place with "icons," images of high impact elements that symbolize the place. Instead, what is sought is the consistent manner in which space is articulated to create a sense of place.

In Gordon Cullen's methodology, place is apprehended either directly as "Here and There" relationships, or indirectly as a visual reaction to Content. Instead of

a "Here and There" relationship, Content is expressed through "This and That" relationships. Elements and spaces are viewed in their interdependencies, and the manner in which these interdependencies define the series. The final aim of the approach is what Gordon Cullen calls "Functional Tradition," the quality of the environment that makes it implicitly legible by the user. For example, it has previously been suggested that visitors to traditional villages in the mountains will instinctively know how to use the built form to protect themselves from the climatic conditions.

The serial quality of the composition should eventually lead to some form of integrated overall image, an "urban story," or "myth." One should thus be able to "caption" each image in the sequence, so that the sum of the captions somehow

Figure 3.24: Gordon Cullen's Serial Vision

Gordon Cullen showed that we approach the urban environment as a sequence of images. This phenomenon of "Serial Vision," as Cullen calls it, constitutes the first step of Cullen's methodolgy. In the present model, Gordon Cullen's Serial Vision is expanded to the concept of Visual Series. Visual Series provide an analytical method, which seeks common "themes" or "series" to a set of images, and which gives this set of images a measure of coherence, of unity, and therefore, of meaning, which is eventually experienced as a sense of place.
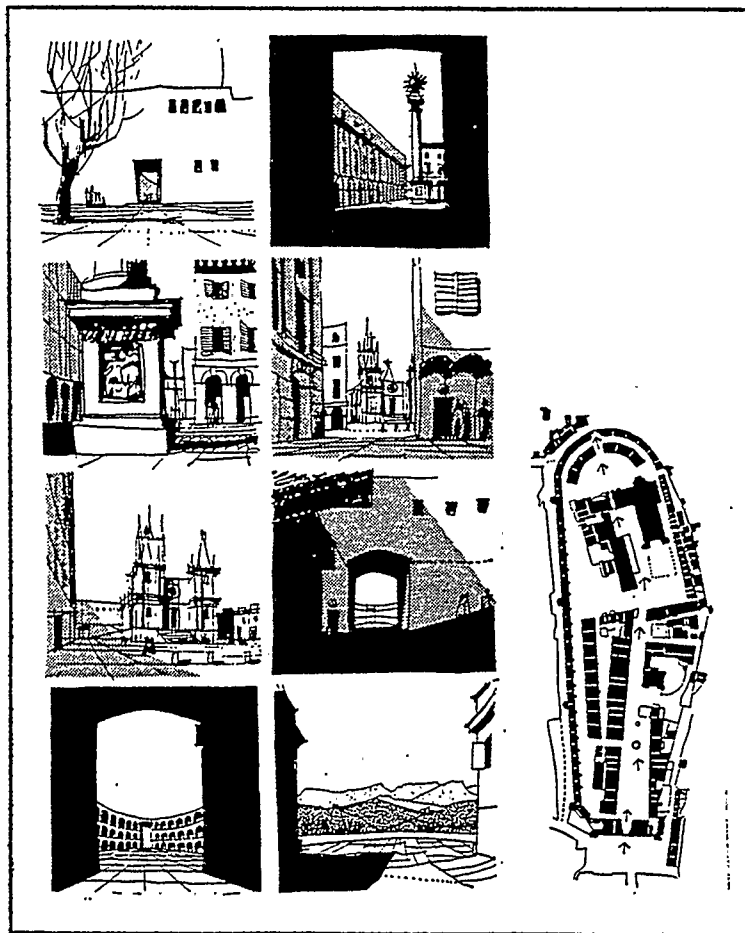
spells "a story." Such captions can be quite subjective, in the sense that they reflect one's individual response to images; alternatively they can be a standardized description of the visual content of each image. What is important is that the serial nature of the images should lend itself to a story-like description of space. It is through the making of such a story from one's own instinctive emotional reaction to the environment, that a sense of place can be felt about the urban space, and for design purposes, can also be communicated, from individual image to consensual image.

The proper juxtaposition of different value systems in a tourist environment makes for a rich thematic structure. Up until now, the intention has been to design for coherence by removing all but the touristic frame of reference, thus impoverishing the image and reducing its relevance to place. One can view a confused image as an image where the levels of meaning have collapsed into one another instead of respecting their structural and visual integrity. The resulting image is ambiguous, and, with each successive intervention, the urban form is narrowly reinterpreted to fit only one schema at a time. The meaning of the place changes constantly, and eventually results in a sum of inconsistencies. A "Serial" approach allows different value systems to coexist. It allows for a unified interpretation of the urban space as place.

Procedure

The model that has been presented in this chapter is an integration of a number of theories of environmental psychology, tourism and urban design. Specifically, based on the notions of place and authenticity, front and back regions, and of categorization of urban spaces, it has been suggested that an urban space for tourism in the mountains be divided between its urban and its rural components. In order to preserve a clarity of images and a sense of place, the various levels of relationship between wilderness, rural and urban environment have to be kept distinct, and the urban environment has to relate strictly to the rural environment. Finally, it is suggested that a search for "visual series," adapted from Gordon Cullen's technique of "Serial Vision," be used to identify authentic local examples of rural and urban environment. The various steps of the model, as it should be applied in practice, can be summarized in the integrated approach which follows. This approach summarizes the relationship from image to place described in the previous chapters, building on meaning and values to understand images that lead to a strategy for either a set of design guidelines or a basis for a design intervention on the urban form.

(I)	Meaning and values

(1) Conduct a historical analysis of the evolution of urban form in the city.

(2) Identify conflicting values that may have contributed to the confusion between images of the place.

(II)	Analyze images

(1) Compile images about the town.

(2) Select commonly occurring images of urban space.

(3) Show the relationship to site.

(4) Distinguish between Rural and Urban images.

(5) Treat the Rural and Urban images as a series.

(a) Apply Gordon Cullen's visual series by qualifying each image of the series, using either Gordon Cullen's qualifiers or qualifiers of visual communication: balance, stasis, spontaneity, repetition, distortion, etc... (Dondis, 1986, 104)

(b) Show the serial transitions from front to back regions.

(6) Use Cullen's framework of Place and Content to analyze how the images evolve from front to back regions.

(III)	Alternative image strategy for community and tourism

(1) Identify the possible relationships between the local community and tourism that lead to shared images of the tourist town.

(2) Recommend and implement the alternative which suits best the goals and objectives of the community.

(3) Suggest relevant strategies for the proper integration of the two value systems, and the removal of confusion and possible ambiguity.

In the end, this approach should be entirely relevant to the local situation. It is less intended to be a formula than a means to unravel the confusion of place and images common to tourist towns in the mountains. Once the different bases for images in the townsite have been identified, strategies for integration should be devised on site to resolve the ambiguity of images. Optimally, these should vary from one case to the next, and ideally they should be a reflection of the unique relationship that has developed over the years between the local residents and the visitors, and of how the local community intends to see this relationship evolve in the future.

PART II
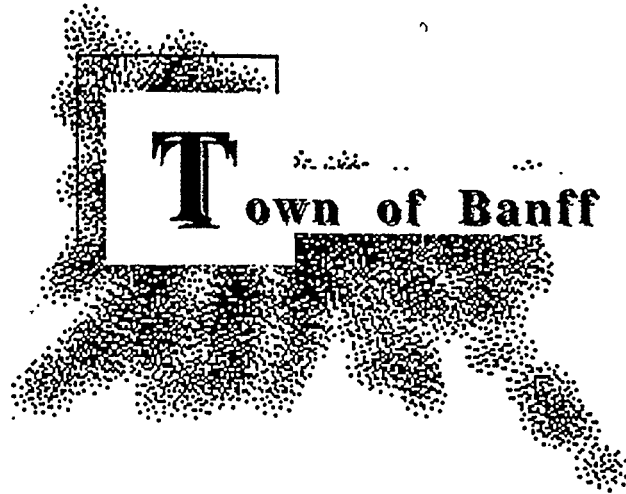
Town of Banff

Chapter 4

THE TOWN
OF BANFF:
MEANING AND VALUES

Banff is the best-known tourist town in Western Canada. Nationwide it is one of the most popular tourist destinations, second only to Niagara Falls in annual visitations. Initially developed in the nineteenth century to support the CPR-built Hot Springs Hotel, it naturally became the service town to the Banff National Park. Recently the town of Banff has evolved into a year-round resort, with a substantial growth in the townsite and the local economy.

This recent growth had some impacts on the image of the town of Banff: little was done to bring to the townsite the special quality which made the National Park and the Banff Springs Hotel famous. Instead, the town has passively benefited from the international reputation of the Park and of the Hotel, owing its success to an ideal location on the transcontinental axis of the country. Because it has not become an international destination for any special quality of its urban environment, local residents find they resist with difficulty the commercial expediencies that have motivated the latest developments. The degradation of the urban environment is a source of concern, since the increasing majority of travellers use neither the backcountry nor the Banff Springs Hotel, spending their time instead strolling along the city streets. John Whyte of the Whyte Museum strongly vented a mounting local exasperation with the situation:

> The crazies are lining up and planning to move in on Banff like vultures on a dead water buffalo as the carcass of a once peaceful mountain village is presented to them. (Whyte: 1989)

Indeed, the public, officials and residents agree that the quality of the urban environment in the town of Banff still does not meet the standards of comparable international destinations (Patterson: 1988). Banff even became an example of what to avoid in a mountain environment. Plans have been made in Waterton Provincial Park so "that the park [would] avoid heavy commercialism that create glitzy places

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like Banff Avenue"(Patterson: 1988). The town of Banff is the Banff National Park's major weakness, so that competitors like Waterton National Park, which do not have the locational advantage, try to divert visitors away from Banff. Such precedents reinforce the negative image that is slowly affecting the town of Banff.

The town of Banff stands to suffer from the discrepancy between this image and the visitors' expectations of what that image should be. Visitors naturally expect design standards in the urban environment to match the standards set by the National Park and the Banff Springs Hotel. Unfortunately, valuable images for tourism are progressively taken over by images of commercialism. Even "boom-bust" images of urban blight have been possible, such as the 1989 press portrayal of a businessman "loading his unsold goods and leaving his entrepreneurial dream an empty shell with brown paper covering the windows"(Martin: 1989).

The confusion of images is an acute problem and the town of Banff has already had to face its consequences. Commercial development has taken advantage of the lack of a proper direction, a defined identity, and an explicit image, to impose any type of commercial image in the heart of the town. The reputation of Banff has even attracted the interest of a Ripley's "Believe it or not" museum. The latter evoked a volley of protest from the local residents, and a definite consensus about what the image of Banff is not. "No way we are going to allow this [Ripley] development - we'd end up like Coney Island ... we are a park and people come here to appreciate the wilderness," was the recorded reaction of Brian Woodward, acting Park Superintendent (Woodward: 1989).

Tourism in Banff is based on ideal location and promotional characteristics but it is starting to centre around a highly priced tourist product of questionable quality. There has been a confusion of images in Banff between its mandate to the National Park and its relationship to the tourist industry. The National Park and tourism are two related growth poles for the town. The National Park is responsible for an agrarian type of activities based on a relationship with the natural environment. Tourism is an industry which uses the same environment as a resource for the development of products and services. However, they suggest growth in two different directions: the National Park provides the town with the underlying system of values of an agrarian archetype which calls for a rural environment to develop, in order to house the infrastructure needed to carry out its mandate of protection and management of the wild environment; the tourist industry, on the other hand, provides a resource archetype which has its own special need for a well-developed urban environment to host urban visitors to the National Park. In the end, both are necessary. The challenge of the town of Banff, just as it is for most mountain towns rising to the

challenge of tourism, is to integrate both a rural image of the townsite that expresses its special relationship with the natural environment, and an urban image which establishes a relationship with tourism.

Ted Hart, curator of the Whyte Museum, has described this struggle with the confusion between urban and rural images, saying: "You can't be half Canmore and half Whistler"(Koch: 1989). The reference to Canmore and Whistler is a reference to an agrarian archetype - Canmore - and a resource archetype - Whistler - of Western Canadian mountain towns. The message is that Banff should be Banff, and that it should integrate resource and agrarian archetypes through both its rural and urban images in a manner that is unique to Banff's history, its heritage and its spirit.

THE NEED FOR NEW DESIGN SOLUTIONS

In 1989, almost two-thirds of the Banff residents voted in favour of incorporation. The referendum was in direct response to the problems that Banff was experiencing as a result of its growth. Until then, the town of Banff was under the direct jurisdiction of the National Park. As the town grew, so did administrative burdens and ethical headaches. National Park officials had to make urban planning decisions which they felt were beyond the mandate and the philosophy of the National Park administrative framework. Residents also felt that the revenues raised by the Federal Government through local rents and fees did not adequately cover the needs of the town (Koch: 1989). The state of the overall infrastructure was deteriorating rapidly and the only tool at their disposal was the regulation of commercial developments.

The aim of this case study is to examine design solutions to the problem that Banff has been experiencing with its identity, now that the town has the motivation to tackle the issue of images. The study does not intend to manufacture identity and character. These should arise naturally out of the existing sense of place and the community, so that the townsite can be made legible without resorting to artificiality, in the manner suggested in the previous analysis of images in mountain places. It is a matter of analysing the elements which in a place create images and identifying inappropriate elements which confound meaning. Before the environment can be made legible, it must be deciphered so that its real meaning can be understood.
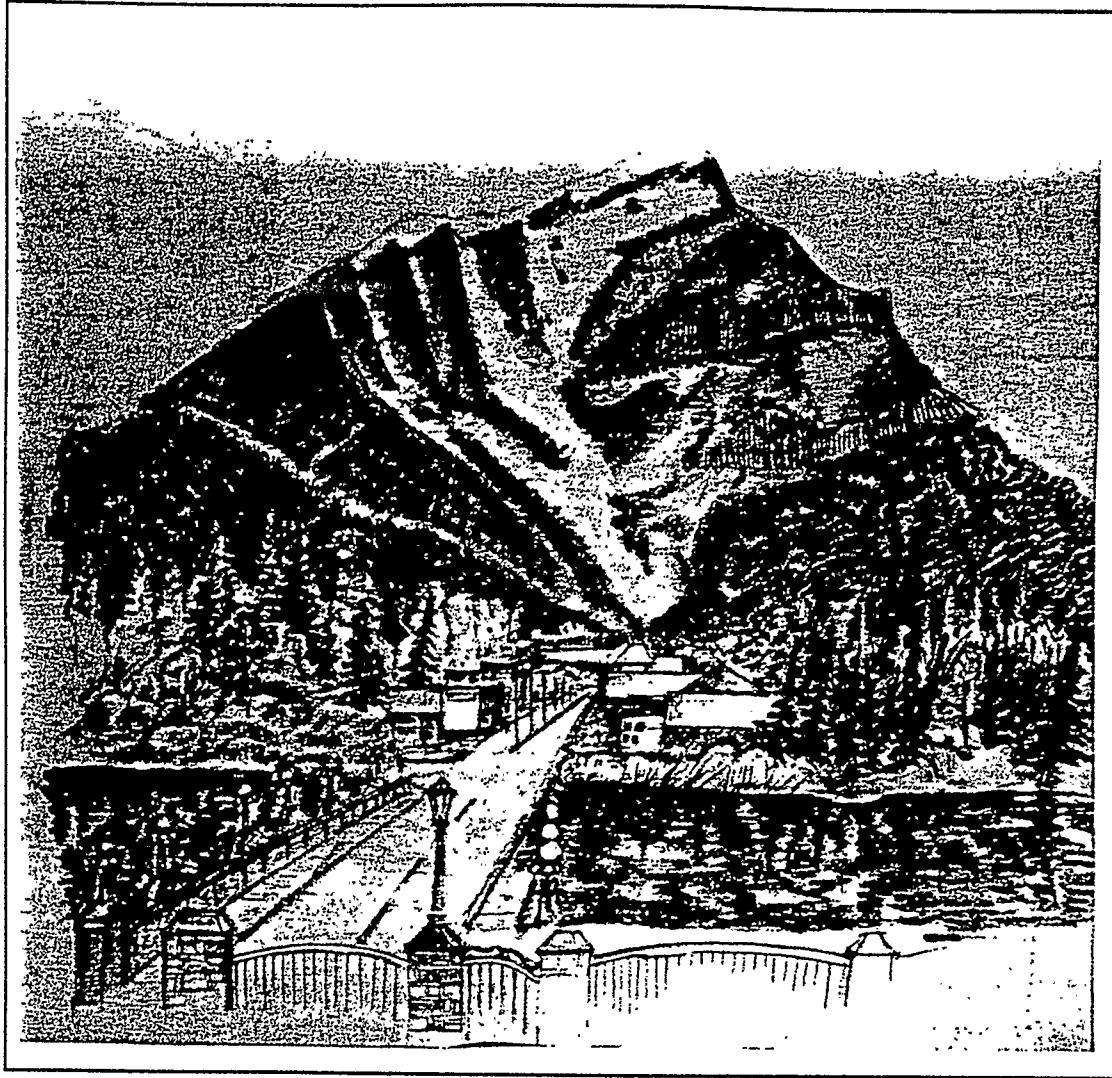
Figure 4.1: The Image of Banff as a Mountain Town

Cascade gives Banff an identity as a mountain town. The inaccessible mass of Cascade Mountain and the mountain wilderness that spreads around it define and contain the site within which the town grew.

MEANING AND VALUES

Banff is a meeting point of many contrasting worlds: geologically, the Prairies meet the Mountains; geographically, Atlantic North America meets Pacific North America; and ideologically, the frontier's entrepreneurial spirit meets the National Park's conservationists' ideals. The town of Banff and the Banff National.Park have evolved side by side and have been the on-going theatre of a soul-searching between the changing notions of "recreation" and "preservation." Accordingly, the town shifted its design between opportunistic and idealistic notions of the use of urban space.

The polarization between the rural and urban environments of a tourist town in the mountains has been expressed in Banff, through these twin notions of "recreation" and "preservation"; these,.in the terminology previously developed, are a "resource" exploitative motivation giving rise to the rural environment, and an "agrarian" symbiotic interdependent motivation giving rise to the urban environment. The rural environment arises from the intended relationship with the natural environment; this is the governing spirit of the National Park, and the mandate of the town as a support centre to the National Park, being a base for activities that take place in the Park, such as guiding, outfitting, etc. The urban environment, on the other hand, expresses the mandate of the town as a service centre to the tourist industry, a mandate which the town acquired from the beginning with the Banff Springs Hotel and the Cave and Basin, and which it carried onward with the increase in tourism, and is evidenced by shopping convenience, hostelry, and a variety of stores.

Imageability and Identity in the Town of Banff

The identity of the town of Banff emerged from a succession of intentions in the development of the National Park. At its root is the complex and changing relationship between the man-made and the natural environment, from use to preservation and idealized depiction of that environment. The town of Banff has provided images for all of these levels of relationships - a blend of pragmatic necessities, human aspirations, and romantic ideals. The town is a combination of utilitarian grid layout, picturesque log buildings and modern condominiums, historical landmarks and grandiose architecture. Despite the obvious eclecticism, these images are urban resolutions to the fact that Banff is meant to be a special place of man in a special place of nature.

It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between the town and the Park: the town itself is the tangible image of National Park policies. The intentions and the philosophy behind the National Park are apparent through the design of the town. Changes in attitudes and policies are more immediately felt in the urban context - in as much as it affects the urban fabric and social activities - than in the Park itself where the changes take years to be manifest.

There is an inherent duality in the Park concept, which P. Oberlander describes as follows:

> Canada's National Parks were set aside originally to attain a twin objective:
> 1. Provide vast outdoor for the pleasure and enjoyment of the nation. This anticipated clearly the recreational space needs of an active and industrializing society.
> 2. Preserve for ever unique ecological environments together with unique scenery and geographic features.
> These objectives reflected the expected dramatic change in the landscape as the western frontier was being pushed back and the original rural landscape transformed by urbanization. (Oberlander: 1970, 294)

This duality is inherent in the identity of the town of Banff, through an approach to Park management that translates as the not always compatible objectives of preservation and recreation. In a monograph written by M. Nelischer and D. Leighton in 1978, the authors related the history of these objectives in Banff National Park to a succession of images that depict the philosophies and intentions behind successive developments. M. Nelischer and D. Leighton suggested that these images have succeeded one another as follows:

- Early aboriginal image
- Frontier image
- Spa image
- Conservation image
- Recreation image
- Preservation image.

These images can be used to identify intentions and philosophies behind urban developments in the town of Banff, and to help make Banff's unique and composite identity understandable. Early aboriginal and frontier images have not greatly influenced the town, while the rest of these images can be regrouped under three categories - historical images, recreation and conservation images. The "resource" archetype emerged from Banff's historical images to create "recreation " images, while the "traditional agrarian" archetype has created the "conservation" images and a rural quality in parts of the townsite. The historical development of images in Banff has essentially been a constant attempt to distinguish between the two constituent archetypes of the tourist mountain town, resource and agrarian, re-interpreted locally using the meanings and values suggested by recreation and conservation.
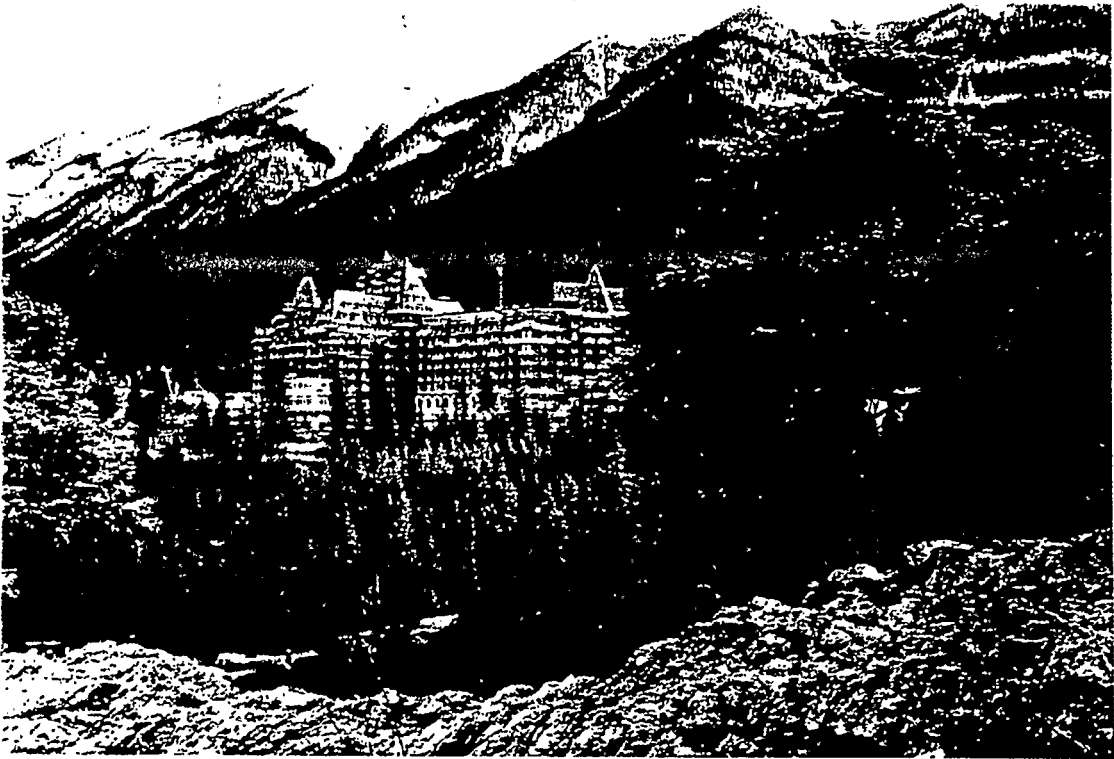
Figure 4.2: The Banff Springs Hotel

This is the image that made Banff famous around the world. The renovated Chateau style of the CPR gives a somewhat different image from the image of the town itself. Partly due to its relationship to the site, and partly due to the historical values that were associated with the Canadian wilderness, the legacy of the CPR is still one of timeless romance with nature. The heritage of the town is more pragmatically centered around resource industries, from coal-mining, transportation, the wilderness and tourism.

Historical Images

The original Banff reserve was intended by both the government and the CPR to be a profitable investment. The image was that of a revenue-generating European-type "spa." The Banff Hot Springs reserve created in 1887 had public enjoyment as its mandate. In this scheme, coal-mining and lumbering operations were deemed compatible with a Park environment.

The image that followed was an image dominated by the democratic and romantic ideals behind the Park mandate. In 1911 a road linking Calgary and Banff, along with the growing urbanization of Canada, made the town and the Park of Banff
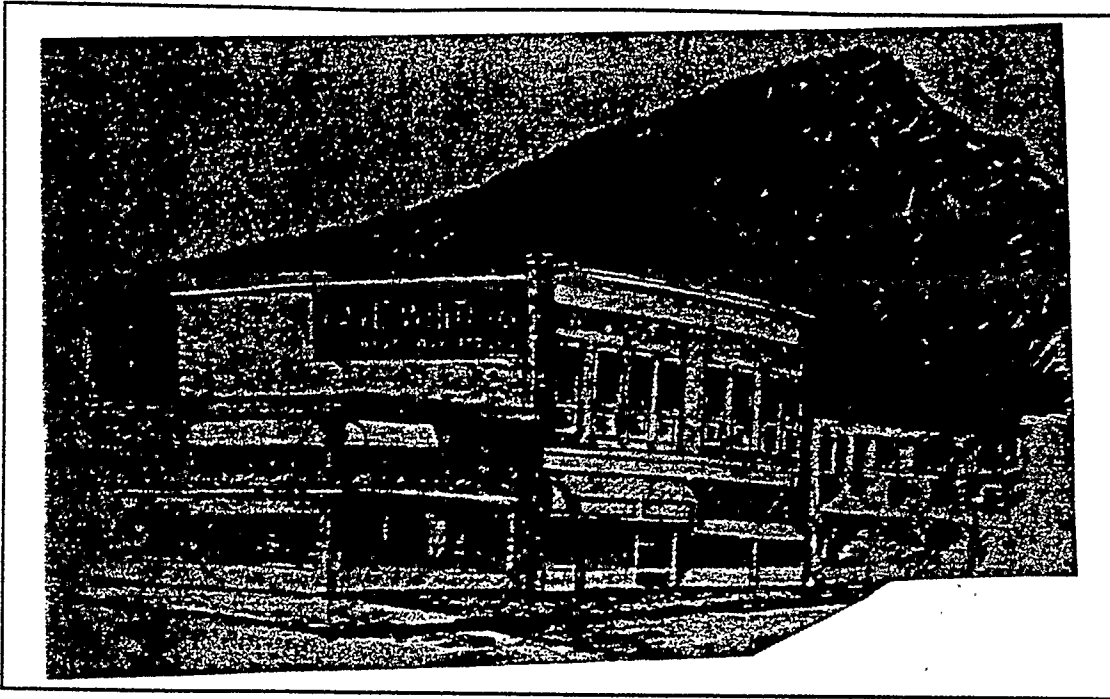
Figure 4.3: The Image of Banff as a Resource "Railway" Town

The original resource mining town adapted quickly to the needs of the new industry. It has long maintained the familiar image of the Western Railway town that it was, as witnessed in this brick warehouse. However acceptable for mountain conditions, and despite the historical authenticity of this style, the image has not matched the traditional alpine architecture that has been associated with modern-day resorts and the values behind the recreation images.

accessible to all classes of the population. In a spirit of democracy, the "conservationist" movement saw parks as a source of natural and spiritual values for mankind, but the line was ill-defined between preservation and recreation. Two schools of thought prevailed: a "romantic" notion of conservation stressed the spiritual value of the natural environment, whereas the "utilitarian" notion of conservation focused on recreational uses of the natural environment.

The Recreation Image

These initial images have been redefined by a radical transformation of the social, economic and technological conditions world-wide that set the stage for mass tourism. An increase in wealth, leisure time and use of the automobile, as well as the paving of the Calgary-Banff highway, have caused a cycle of growth in the town of Banff. The recreation and the preservation images that followed are fundamental to the issues that are regularly debated in Banff about allowable uses.

The need for spiritual recreation has been replaced by a need for diversion. Tourism may be regarded as escapism from the boredom of daily life. Technology has been responsible for this unexpected phenomenon by reducing working hours and the need for physical labour in the workplace. The challenge for a Park is that recreational activities for diversion are not easily compatible with preservation. The town's image evolved, as a result, to convey the image of a fun-filled environment, a site for short-term gratification, often artificial and always in contradiction with the values of the National Park. The life-style that was necessary to conduct National Park activities defined a "back" region in the town of Banff, whereas tourism took
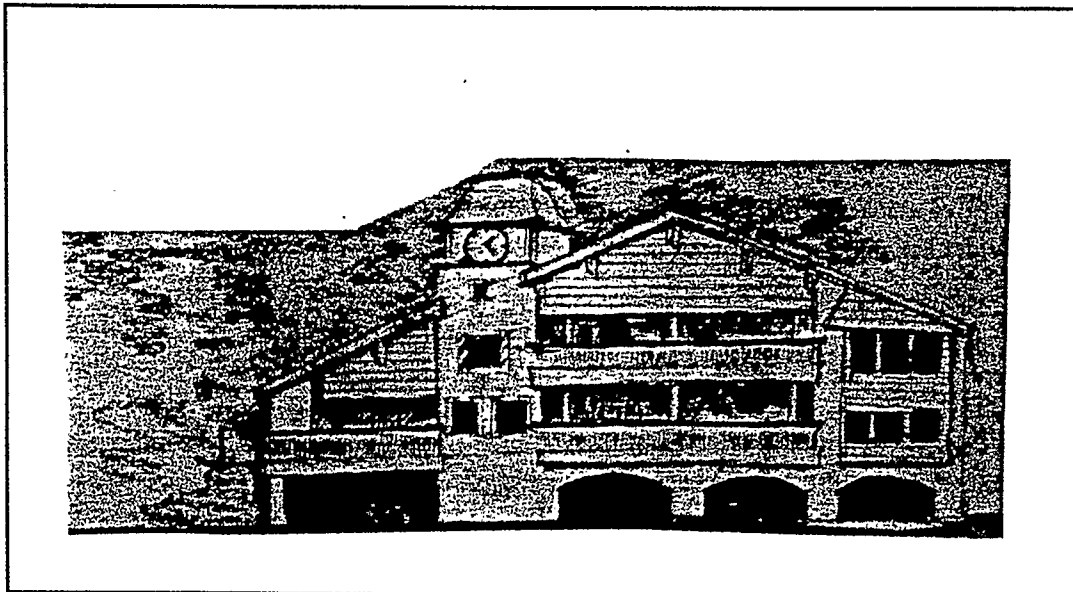
Figure 4.4: An Imported Tyrolian Image

Designs like that of the Clock Tower have appeared in Banff to satisfy the perceived needs of visitors for alpine images. The values behind the recreation images have been a source of artificial images which only serve to increase the confusion between agrarian and resource archetypes.

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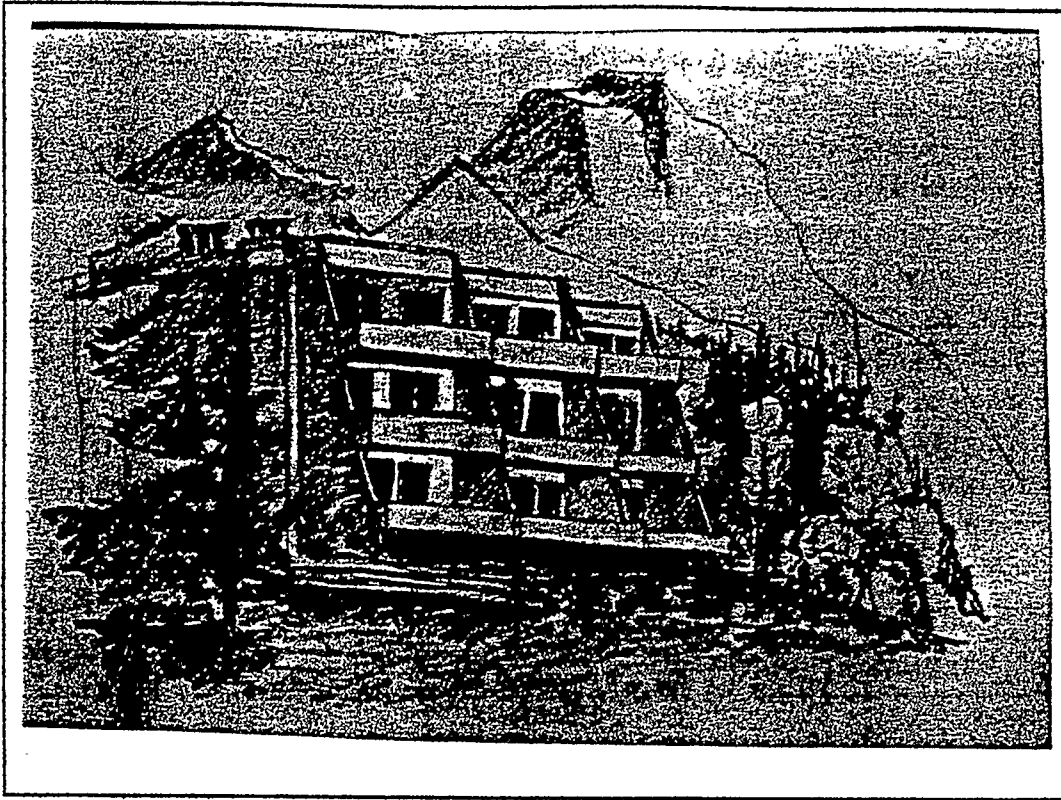
Figure 4.5: Suburban images for a Recreation environment

This style of architecture has been used indiscriminately in Banff in the 1970's for use by visitors and locals alike. It confuses the system of values in Banff even further, by giving images of a vacationing village.

place in a "front" region, according to Erving Goffman's model discussed previously. The two regions did not benefit from the sophistication of an urban environment that would provide a graduated transition between the two regions, in terms of Dean McCannell's model of "staged authenticity." Instead, the town started to develop its image independently from the Park's ideals. However, it failed to remove the back region, or to establish a proper transition between front and back regions. This has led to a sense of artificiality of the townsite caused by the ambiguity between the role of the town as both a center for Park functions and tourist activities.

The recreation image was marked by an increase in commercial uses of urban spaces: food outlets, hotels, shopping convenience and souvenir boutiques. The town started to turn inward, and provided a complete touristic alternative to the Park itself. With the increase in visitor traffic, this paradoxically served some of the Park's objectives by keeping the bulk of casual visitors to the limited and self-contained site of the town.

The Preservation Image

Contrary to the recreation approach which develops images in the town independently from the Park, the preservation approach draws from the Park's images. In reaction to the recreation image, the preservation image reflects a sensitivity to the environment. The preservation image is a combination between romantic notions of the wilderness and a scientific view of nature.

The implication for the townsite is almost totally opposite to the recreation image. In the most extreme of these views, the town has no place in the wilderness, to the extent that no further growth should be allowed. However, the usual notion is that the town of Banff should not stand in the way of ecological processes, and that it should totally integrate itself in the bio-ecological environment. An example of the image of preservation in the town of Banff is its River Park system, with interpretive nature paths in the heart of the city.

The preservation approach suggests interventions similar to the symbiotic relationship between built and natural environments found in agrarian towns. It is therefore a valuable approach to develop a rural pattern of development. It is all the more valuable as it can build on existing rural precedents of settlements which have occured in Banff to meet the needs of local residents. A proper integration of these rural patterns of development with the interventions of the tourist industry could only serve to resolve the confusion of images that has arisen from the conflict between initial agrarian and resource archetypes through competing notions of preservation and recreation.
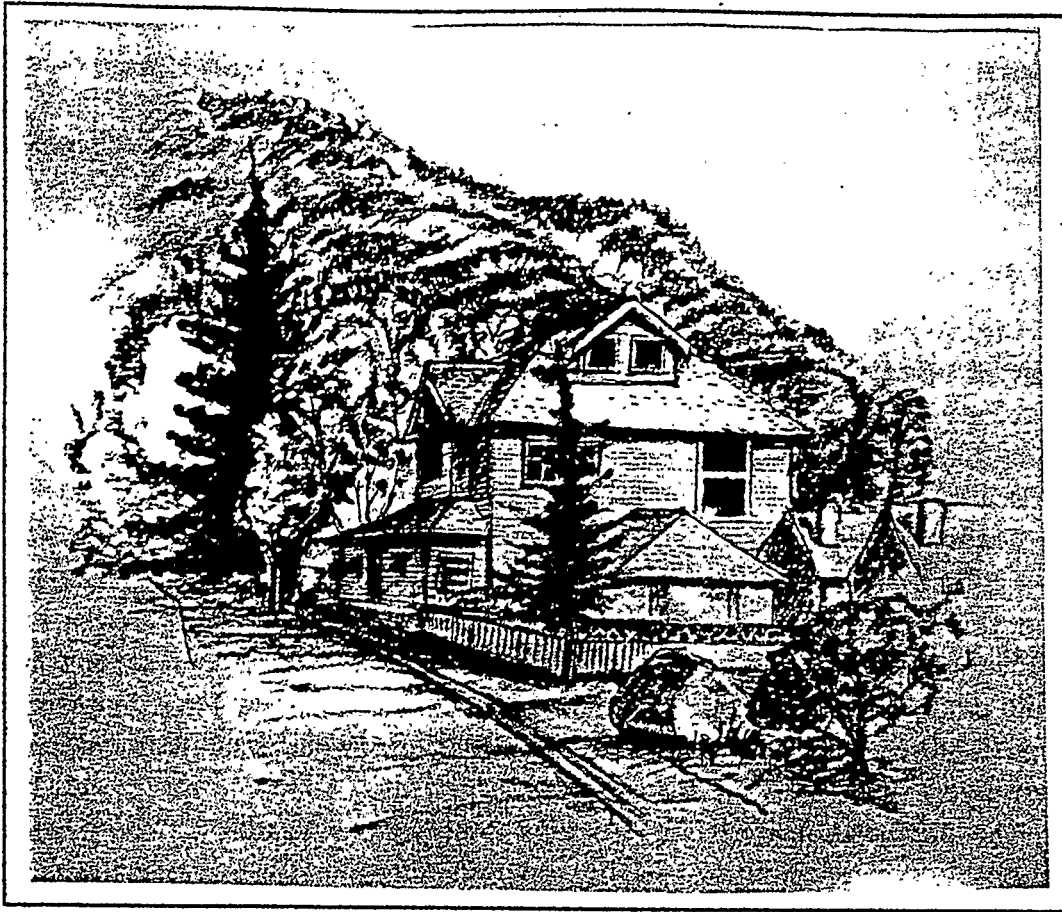
Figure 4.6: The rural image of a mountain town

Traditional homes in the town of Banff provide rural images that are still a part of the mountain town. The preservation of the special character of Banff as a small town in the mountains of Western Canada is just as important as the preservation of traditional images of a Railway town. The style is traditional ballon-frame architecture, and it can be found in most towns in Alberta. Distinctive features of the style include overhanging roofs, small ratio of window to wall (creating a feeling of security), several minor masses grouped with major masses - suggesting an organic growth by accretion.

Future Directions

Issues of imageability in the town of Banff hopefully will evolve as a sensitive combination of the recreation and the preservation images. The overall image of Banff as a town lies somewhere in between the two. Both the preservation and the recreation approach offer positive solutions for integrating the town of Banff as a part of the Park itself. In the recreation approach, urbanization creates its own self-contained environment, while the preservation approach focuses on the relationship between both environments.

M. Nelischer and D. Leighton suggested in 1978 that future directions lay in a park being "a sort of 'world prototype' which will demonstrate and experiment with new ways that man and nature can live in harmony" (Nelischer & Leighton: 1978, 14). The acuteness of new environmental concerns today gives credibility to that vision. World-wide, there is a growing awareness that the present model of urbanization threatens the ecological balance of the planet. The new vision of preservation must focus on issues of urbanization so that an acceptable alternative - a sustainable way of living - can be implemented. The town of Banff should naturally evolve to become a prototype that would carry out this mandate. Because of its special relationship with the natural environment, its historical legacy, and its unique international reputation, Banff is in a position to provide a new image for tourist mountain towns to follow.

This means that the resource and agrarian archetypes that were once implicitly integrated as what is now seen as historical images, are going to have to be integrated again. The resource and the agrarian archetypes have been separated by the opposing philosophies of recreation and conservation. In order for them to be re-integrated as part of a unified image of the town of Banff, the need for both a rural and an urban environment has to be understood, and the transition between the two must be carefully designed so as to produce a meaningful sense of place. It is important therefore to understand where these philosophies have been transcribed as rural and urban environments into the form of the town, and how these philosophies can co-exist within the same space, so that wild, rural and urban environments can be juxtaposed without being confused.

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

URBAN AND RURAL IMAGES IN THE TOWN OF BANFF

The intent of this Chapter is to illustrate how the model described in Chapter 3 can be applied to identify images of the rural and urban environments in Banff. Depending on the implied or the desirable relationship between the natural elements and the built form, these images can be used to categorize other images which have been confused by the overlap of the resource archetype with tourism.

The model presented in Chapter 3 borrows methods of visual analysis from Ian Nairn and Gordon Cullen. Ian Nairn's method is one of visual categorization of the landscapes, what he calls "a visual ABC." Gordon Cullen's method is one which describes the visual experience of the urban landscape as a progression through place and content.

A method of visual categorization of the landscape is useful to identify appropriate elements in different parts of the town. Three of Ian Nairn's categories presented in Chapter 3 are applicable to the case of Banff: urban, rural and wild. The urban category is tied to the needs of tourism, and will build on a resource archetype of a mountain community. The rural category which arises from the local historical developments builds on a local agrarian archetype. The wilderness is also included as a category in Banff because of its overwhelming and essential presence surrounding the townsite, and because of its historical connotations in the development of images that have been communicated in conjunction with the National Park.

Because of the role of tourism, an urban environment is needed in the townsite. Visitors need a fairly sophisticated set of urban services which has led to the development of an urban core. This urban environment is characterized by recognizable clues which combine to produce *urban images* in the town of Banff. These can be characterized as organized, formal, contained, and consistent in scale. Ian Nairn especially differentiates an urban environment in that it is "enclosed." Unlike other environments, it has developed to shelter social activities from the natural environment.

In terms of Gordon Cullen's approach to visual progression, urban images appear to be articulated in the urban fabric. Gordon Cullen calls this type of progression a sense of "Here and There." It is a sense of one's position in the urban space, and the sense of change as one progresses through the urban core. This is due in large part to the strong presence of the mountains which define the site and provide natural directions in the town.

In contrast to the urban core, the rural environment is a part of town that is responsible for images based on a sense of content. Gordon Cullen calls this a relationship of "This and That." It is still organized, but has become informal, and instead of being contained, it is grouped in clusters of man-made and natural elements. Ian Nairn differentiates this environment in that it gives a sense of "continuity" between the natural and the man-made. Because it is a part of town that has developed to serve the needs of the local residents, the rural environment acts as a transition between the urban core and the surrounding wilderness. It has been developed in conjunction with a local life-style that has made equal use of the local resources and of imports made available by the tourist industry.

The wilderness is the third category with which to differentiate images in the town of Banff. The wilderness is unorganized and informal; it is infinite, and varied and highly contrasting in scale. The wilderness has been unchanged by the presence of man. It is a "That," in and around Banff, of two possible types: the inaccessible summits, which give direction to the formal environment of the urban core, and the vegetated ecosystems which determine the informal environment where the rural space expands to provide a transition with the urban core. The mountain wilderness is a three-dimensional system of reference for the townsite, which, because of its overwhelming presence, defines the site and is responsible for a strong sense of place.

SITE AND SENSE OF PLACE
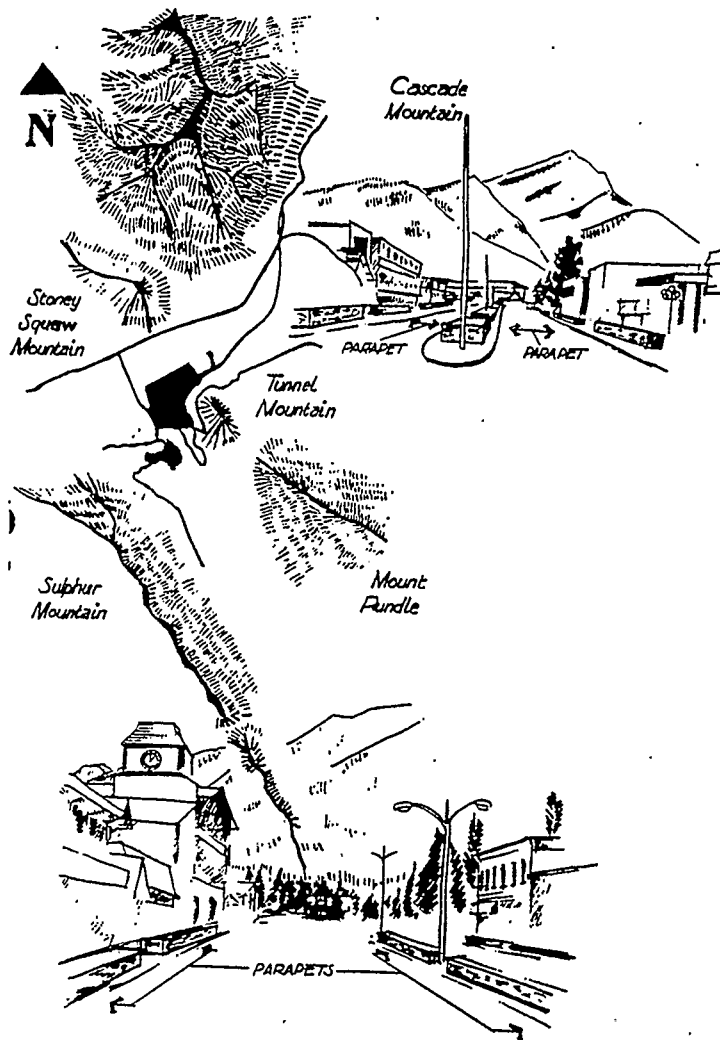
Formality & Informality

The natural setting of the town of Banff provides two lines of visual relationships. From North to South, it is a Formal line that links Cascade Mountain and Sulphur Mountain. Both mountains are imposing, and look absolutely inaccessible. Cascade is an immovable mass; Sulphur Mountain is a solemn barrier. Both must be skirted: it even seems as if they had forced the town plan around their flanks.

From East to West, it is an Informal line that links Stoney Squaw Mountain (Mount Norquay) and Tunnel Mountain. These are two low lying hills covered in vegetation. These hills are less a destination than another world to enter. They invite good-spirited strolling, pine-cone picking, or just smelling the air in search of a suitable vantage point from which to gaze aloft at the town.

Finally, Mount Rundle serves as a pivotal element between the two sets of relationships, almost contrasting and announcing them. It has two visible faces: one forebodingly rising to contrast with the informality of Tunnel Mountain; the other, inviting, which faces and contrasts with Sulphur Mountain.

THE CONFUSION OF IMAGES IN BANFF

Visual series from one environment are present in the other. The study of these visual series shows in detail where the confusion between images takes place. Because the transition from front to back region is ill-defined, rural images are to be found in the urban environment and vice versa. In the urban environment, institutional activities such as worship, banking and shopping services are immediately juxtaposed with souvenir shops and tourist businesses. In the rural environment, it is urban elements, such as vehicles and vacant space used for parking, a chaos of aerial wires and garbage disposal, which spill out; as a result, the urban environment has imposed a linearity to the system of back alleys which contradicts a more natural free-form pedestrian network.

Consequently, there is little distinction in Banff between urban and rural environments. A serial analysis shows how the visual material is thus combined, the grid layout suggesting "Here and There" relationships contradicted by a content that establishes an ambiguous "This and That" set of relationships.

Change of level

This image of the rural environment in the heart of downtown is properly integrated by a change of level which maintains the spatial relationships characteristic of the urban environment. Moreover, the sense of place does not just come from enclosure, but is also defined by the content of the space: stone and foliage give an informal sense of place significant of a rural space.

In this case, rural and urban images are properly integrated, since they both maintain their integrity with a boundary on the outside, and continuity from within.

Serial Vision

The rural and urban series can be recognized amidst the confusion of their images.

The notion of serial vision suggests that the three-dimensional experience of urban space is quite different from the two-dimensional impression one gets from a map. The sketches show the confusion between urban and rural images. When seen in plan, their path seems highly unnatural, yet this is how the eye must move to make sense of the rural and the urban environments in the same space.

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BOW

River
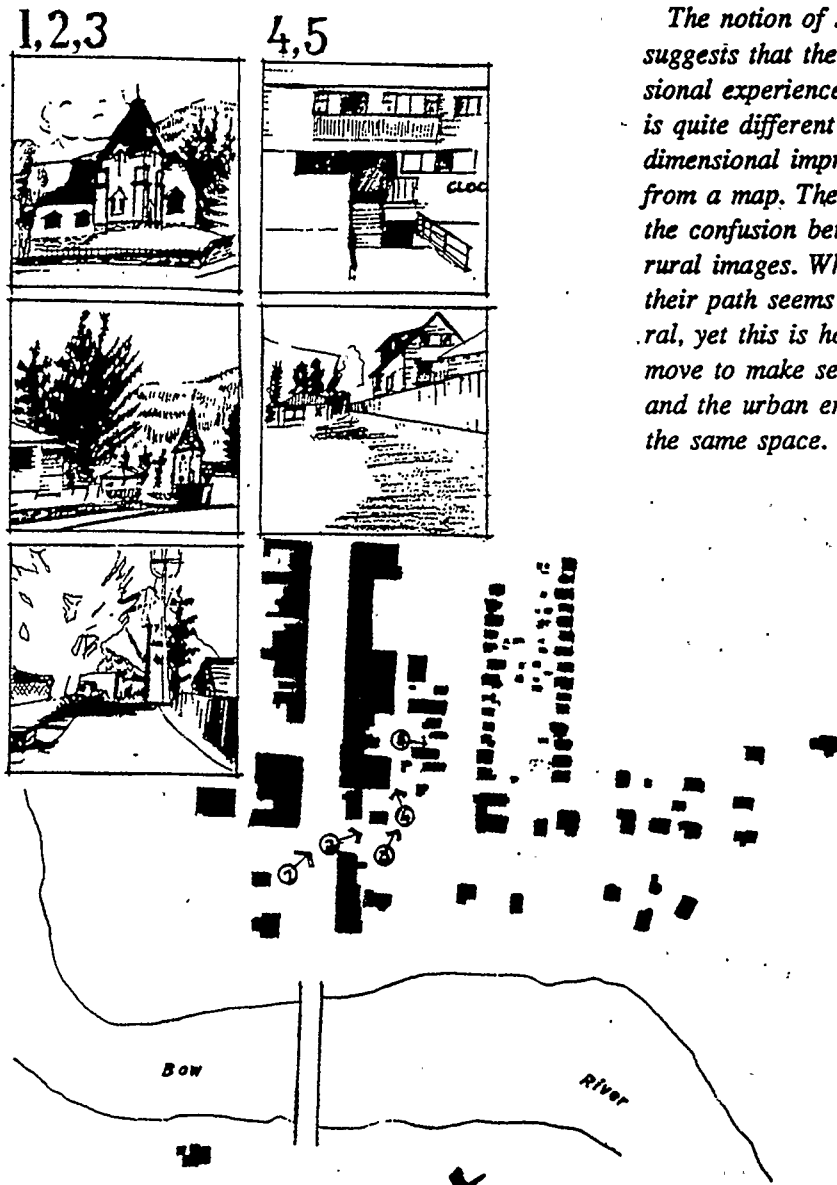
Confusion

If it were not for the parking lot, this view would be fairly typical of a rural environment on the edge of the mountain wilderness. The hill, the mountain face and the trees form a pleasant composition balanced around the church steeple, but the parking lot is a world for motorists, intrinsically at odds with the rest of the setting. Not only does it pre-empt progress for the pedestrian, but it confuses the meaning of the image because it is turned inward, towards the activities of the urban environment.

Truncation

The up-sloping floor of the back-alley in the foreground cuts out the middle-ground, so that in this case, Cascade Mountain is suddenly juxtaposed with the back-alley. The truncation creates an urban spatial relationship unsuitable for a rural element. Although it does serve to mask the unattractive jumble on the down-sloping side, it brings the "Here" and the "There" together on the same plane.

"This and That" can no longer be an escape from the "Here and There," since it is now confused with it.

THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The following is a prototype for the urban environment. The overall image is a function of the visual series, instead of a few isolated pictures in which individual buildings may change, or reappear in other places. It is the manner in which these images interrelate serially that provides an impression that is typically characteristic of the urban space in Banff.

The following images are that of Banff Avenue and of lateral streets. The environment which is thus depicted is a front region. It is the most obvious front region to visitors and residents alike. Here, the story that is woven into the images based on the visual nature of the place is significant of the visual story that is implied by a serial vision of the space.

1 -

The presence of an inaccessible mountain wilderness gives the town its identity as a mountain town.

Enclosure is the hallmark of the urban environment. When Sulphur Mountain suddenly blocks the view, one instinctively turns around, only to immediately realize that the rear is blocked too by Cascade Mountain.

2-

This is the first element of significance when entering the town. The steeple acts as a visual pivot point - announcing a choice - between the East-West and the North-South relationships. The church symbolizes these relationships in its built form: the steeple announces a new territory alongside the nave, East-West, of informal relationships and rural space; it also restates the North-South formal relationships of urban space and Main Street in front of its facade.

3 -
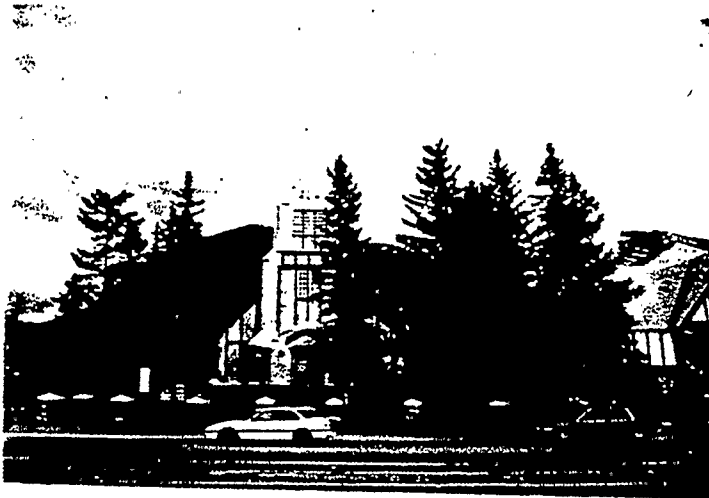
This is a strong presence of the grid from Banff Avenue. It is at right angle to the Avenue, but immediately announces the vegetated wilderness that spreads all around. The more the rural environment is allowed to merge with the wilderness and take over the grid as it leaves Banff Avenue, the stronger the feeling of contrast between the urban and the rural space, and the more the presence of the grid becomes a significant element.

4-

A return to formality is almost immediately announced and abruptly revealed with a 90° turn of the grid .

Yet, one is immediately reminded of a "There" outside of town, with Mountain Rundle, which acts as a pivot point between formal and informal relationships. Continuously, though, the rural environment is immediately present, announced by the "This and That," of vegetation and foliage.

5 -

And thus the urban drama unfolds in the town of Banff, as a movement between the urban and the wild, with the rural space as a transition. In this image, the grid is overwhelming. The empty street needs more contrast from the rural space, so that the "Here and There" that it establishes with distant Sulphur Mountain can be experienced together with the "This and That" of the nearby wilderness.

6 -
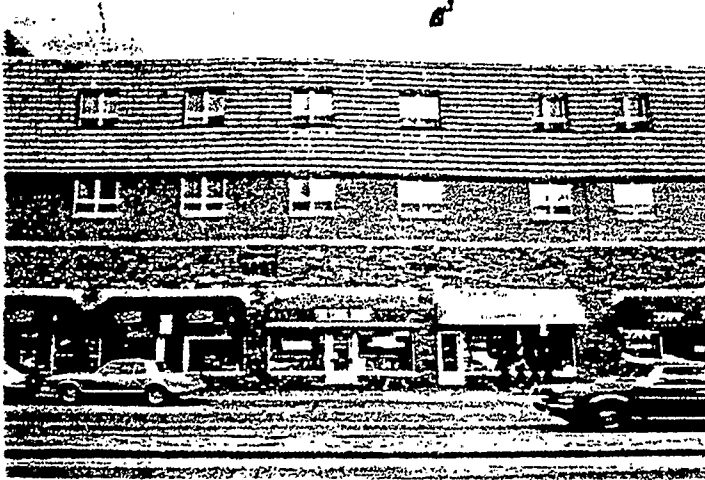
In this example on Banff Avenue, the image is weakened by a confusion between the "Here and There" and the "This and That," which are allowed to coexist at the same level.

*This is an urban scene. Besides being enclosed, the urban image is characterized by such clues as the use of standardized elements, the rigid geometry and alignments. The sense of unity is given by the spatial relationship of enclosure. It is experienced as a feeling of "Here" as opposed to a "There" on the other side of the street.*

Activities on the street create a "This and That" typical of an urban environment; it is noisy, purposeless and agitated. The two clash, however, because the street activity is placed in direct relationship with the building.

The solution presented below (although it creates snow removal problems) is an example of how a new level of hierarchy can be added. The activity of the street is now contained; also, the new elements provide continuity between the building and the streetscape. At once, the activity of the street is no longer a "This" or a "That;" it becomes a "There," possession in motion of a contained space, which dynamically emphasizes the urban character of the street.
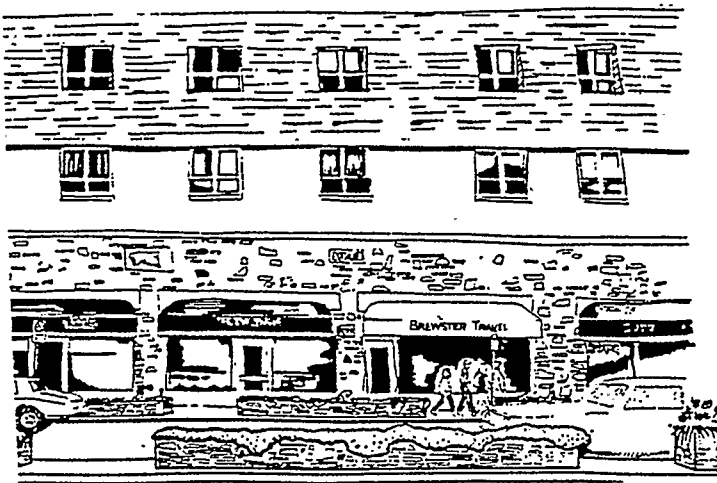
7 -

The jumble of street signs and lighting fixtures clash with the surroundings. The "This and That" of the urban environment in this example has no significance to the relationship from urban to rural to wild. It is confusing and disorienting, and it provides no sense of a transition between the built environment and the line of summits that stand guard on the horizon.

8 -
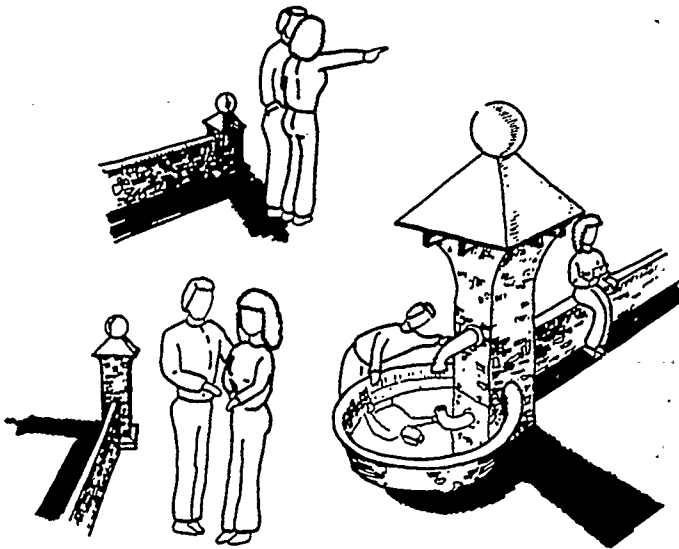
The structures shown here could be introduced in the back-alleys, even in conjunction with the existing aerial elements. This is the proper type of "This and That" that could tie together elements in the front and the back regions. It provides a sense of purpose, hierarchy, progression, and a continuity of shapes. This would suggest the existence of a transition in the urban fabric, and emphasize the relationship between urban, rural and wild environments.

THE TRANSITION FROM URBAN TO RURAL

Despite the confusion between urban and rural images, there are zones of transition where the two environments come together in a highly integrated manner. It would be desirable that these nodes should be more frequent. The sense of place that is the result of the integration between rural and urban environments is best expressed in the manner churches function to provide front and back regions as part of the same architectural element.

These churches have a dual function. Their exteriors belong to the urban environment. They are important landmarks for the urban environment, significant icons of culture, and most of all, unmistakable evidence of a back region.

Their interiors, however, belong to the rural environment. They are used mainly by the local residents for worship, and are one of the strongest symbols of community. One of them even has stained glass windows with depictions of rural mountain scenes, bighorn sheep and skiing.

1 -

This steeple is what Gordon Cullen calls "a vertical symbol of congregation." It is a point of focus in the scenery, and it is an important landmark that marks the edge between the worlds of "Here and There" and "This and That" of rural and urban spaces. It is a part of the rural lifestyle and an agrarian archetype, but its location ties it into the urban scene also.

2 -

The Church steeple is a focal point that works at two levels. For the visitors, it is a two-dimensional icon; for the residents, it is a three-dimensional beacon, and a reminder of lifestyle.

The manner in which it is perceived is highly dependent on the meaning that the church has for visitors and residents. For the visitors, it is a reminder of local architecture; for the residents, it is a reminder of local culture.

3 -

The same is true for house #110. Both church and house stand guard, creating a gateway to the world of "This and That." For local residents, they announce the informal world of the rural environment. For the visitors, they are incident elements that belong to the same precinctual formal "Hereness." The residents perceive the rural environment by its content, whereas it is manifest to the visitors as a series of spatial relationships in the urban space.

4 -

Wood cladding, clean white trim, and a hint of a retaining wall, this is enough to keep the entrance way private, to suggest a change of level, and to direct the on-looker to the alley, subtle behavioural clues carried out in the straightforward manner of a rural lifestyle trying to respond to increasingly urban intrusions.

5 -

Another town opens up unassumingly beside the formal town. It is a rural world, and all the clues are to found in the interaction between space and the built form.

The neat and clean white picket fence harmonizes with the deep texture of the coniferous foliage, while the wall does not even act as a barrier; instead, it is a plastic form that interplays with the succession of light and shadow, and procures a sense of depth and well-being at the human scale.

This is half-way between a back-alley and a hiking path: a true pedestrian lane.

6 -

These two buildings enter into a dialogue with the pedestrian in motion. They define a space that provides a highly meaningful sense of place, because this small space incorporates both the urban and the rural.

The two images show the fluid diversity of the built form for the visitor and the resident alike. On one side, the sidewall of the church, and on the other side, the rear elevation of the house, give images of a back region familiar to the locals in Banff. At the same time, the diversity of the elements naturally define a significant node in the urban fabric, which acts to define the transition between urban and rural spaces.

THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Finally, the following is a prototype for rural space in the town of Banff. It is a back alley that connects the centre of town with the hills on the east side of town. There is a number of clues that makes this space rural: the absence of sidewalks, the larger lot size which permits the mountain landscape to intrude, and the vegetation, mainly natural - not cultivated - which dominates over the built form.

The space is a back region, a space which the residents would never think of interest to the visiting tourist. Once again it is the visual series that is important, not possible icons for memory. The unfolding of this back alley contains all the constituent elements of the rural space in Banff. The key is not to try to list these elements, but to recognize such spaces in Banff and pattern future developments holistically and accordingly after them.

1 -
The informality and the freedom of indecision are the hallmark of the rural environment and of a back region. Space is not defined with boundaries, such as curbs or surfaces, but with the continuity of content between man-made and natural elements. Content in the rural environment is not delineated as it is in the urban space; instead, it is integrated.

2 -

In this view, the overall one-point perspective is flattened, through closure at the end and juxtaposition, so that no real difference between a "Here and a There" is discernible. Instead the difference between the rural environment and the distant wilderness is perceived as a change in "This and That." The rural environment thus integrates the man-made and natural elements in a manner that produces this type of image.

THE TRANSITION FROM RURAL TO WILD

The rural environment is defined by a sense of continuity. The transition with the wild is therefore going to be gradual. There will not be, as was the case with the transition from urban to rural, a need for special nodes where images of the two spaces are integrated. Images of the wilderness are already integrated as part of the rural images. The transition is marked instead by an increase of the presence of natural elements which start to predominate over the built form, until the built form finally disappears.

Furthermore, the linearity imposed by the grid layout also disappears. It is a natural occurence for two reasons: first, the transition to the wild happens at the edge of town, where the built-form has been recently added; second, the edge with the mountain wilderness is marked by an increase of the slope gradient. Because the lines of transportation have to conform to the natural contours of the topography, the grid becomes impractical.

1 -

In the back region, it is sometimes difficult to tell private and public spaces apart. The image of ownership disappears the further one goes to the edge of town.

The sense of continuity as a basis of unity is manifest in the manner in which the built form is going to be entirely replaced by natural elements.

2 -

When the space opens up the interaction between natural elements and the man-made is still maintained, but the natural environment is now starting to predominate.

The strength of this image is created by deflection. Usually deflection is created by a form at an angle, but in this case, it is not the building that is at an angle, it is the path that jogs.

It thus opens the view to juxtapose the foreground and the background, interposing the last of the rural built-form in the middle-ground.

3 -
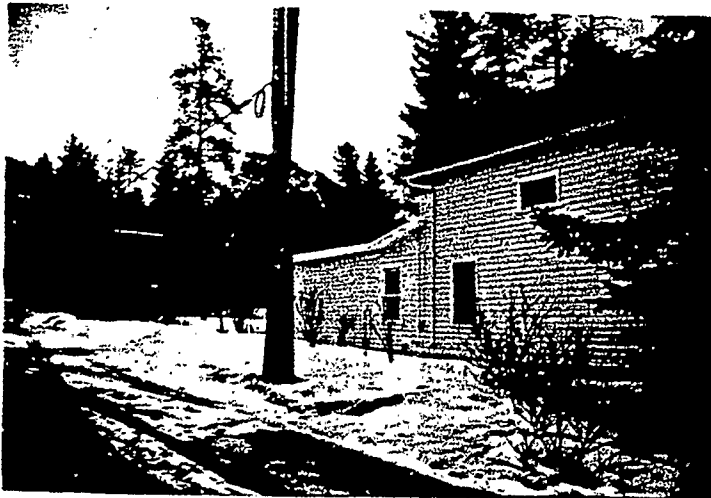
The path opens up in a myriad of opportunities - paths and non-paths, in and out of town, to and from the forest. The white picket fence of the next image is going to bring the series to its conclusion.
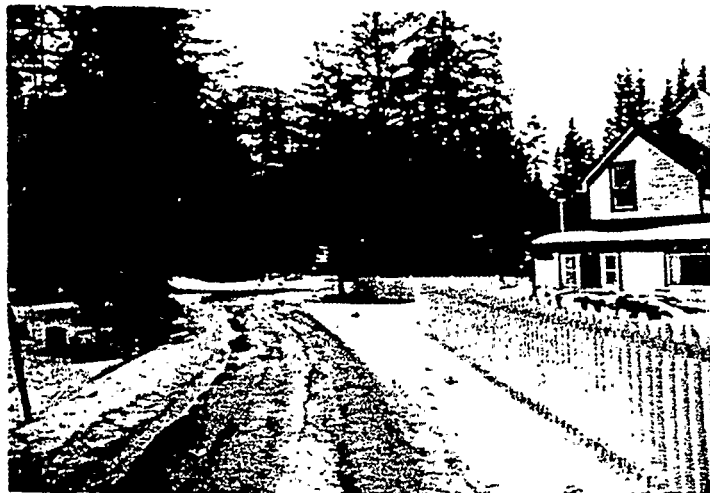
RECOMMENDATIONS

There are three possible alternatives for resolving the confusion of images between the rural and the urban environments in the town of Banff: total segregation of the two environments, semi-integration, or full integration.

The following scenarios may apply to other cases in the mountains, but they have been specifically developed for the situation in Banff. They arise from the special position of the local residents in the community, and for the development of long term stability.

Each alternative suggests different directions for community identity - resort, mountain tourist town, or mountain municipality - and different strategies in a staged approach between front and back regions. These imply different images of Banff as a tourist town in the mountains, and a different relationship between Place and Community as a basis for authenticity.

ALTERNATIVES

Segregation

A segregation strategy would give Banff the identity of a *mountain resort*. As a resort, the town becomes primarily a place for visitors. Their experience of the place does not include the interaction of the local community with the environment. The presence of the local community is entirely predicated on the industry of tourism. This means that the urban and the rural environments are kept separate. Any manifestation of local lifestyle is carefully maintained in a back region that is not openly accessible from the front region.

There is a Front and a Back region, and virtually no intermediary stages. Stages IV and V of the back region do not exist: no presence of visitors in the back region is expected. And if stages II and III exist in the front region, they are generally artificial, making reference to a back region that either is not the local back region - borrowing for example from European or historical precedents - or at best the "abstract" back region of conservationist principles.

Semi-Integration

Semi-integration means that a portion of the local community is an object of tourism. The place experienced by the local residents becomes one of the important components of tourism. At the same time, there is a back region that is in itself closed to tourism, and a source of local meaning about the mountain environment. Banff in this scenario is a *mountain tourist town*. Its primary function is to operate as a

town worth the experience of tourism. The relationship between the rural and the urban environment is in itself an important part of the tourist experience, because it is a guarantee of local authenticity.

There are four stages of "staged authenticity." There is a front and a back region and a zone of interface between the front and the back region - one stage from front to back, another from back to front.

Full Integration

In a scenario of full integration, the town of Banff is a *mountain town*. Tourism is felt to be an important growth pole, yet the town is open to other industries. The sense of place is developed by the totality of the human experience, be it the visitors' or the local residents'.

The six stages of Staged Authenticity are present. The life-styles of the local community and that of the visitors interpenetrate at all the stages between the manifestations of one region in the other. The urban environment is used by the local residents just as much as the rural environment is open to the visiting population.

IMAGES

Images will be different in each scenario and will reflect the different evolution of the relationship between the recreation and the conservation ethic.

In a resort scenario, the town of Banff will be perceived separately from the Park, as a place for visitors. Because of the high priority given to recreation, very little responsibility towards the mandate of the Park will be felt by the users of the townsite. The image of the town of Banff will be closer to that of the Banff Springs Hotel, and will probably evolve to fit historic and symbolic images with little bearing on requirements beyond the regulations imposed by Parks Canada.

In a mountain tourist town scenario, the town will experience a feeling of duality. In the urban environment, recreation ethics will predominate. However, the recreation ethic will be subordinated to the conservation ethic manifest in the rural environment. The image will be one primarily of responsibility and education, yet of tolerance for recreation ethics. The primary value will be the preservation of values and meaning that arise from the local cultural and ecological environment. As a result, the town will be perceived as a place for the education of visitors, whose needs and lack of familiarity with preservation will be handled by the urban environment.

Finally, a mountain town scenario will emphasize preservation ethics. The responsibility for the town to fit in the local environment will be perceived to be the aim of both the rural and the urban environment. The difference between the

Figure 5.1: Relationship to site
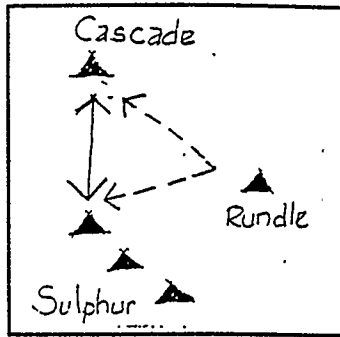

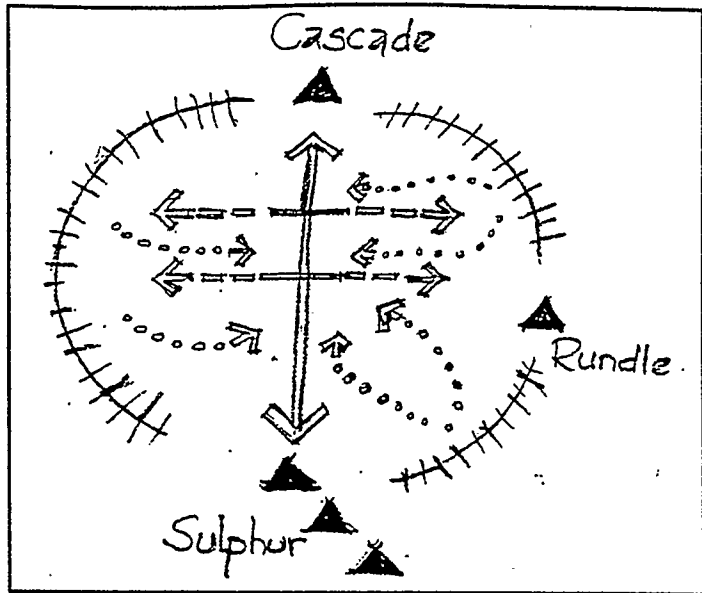**Figure 5.2: The Grid**

Figure 5.3: Sense of Place

Figure 5.4: Integration of Rural and Urban Spaces

The confusion of images from the overlap between agrarian and resource archetypes in the town of Banff can be addressed by integration of all the elements of the site together as distinct Rural and Urban spaces in the townsite.
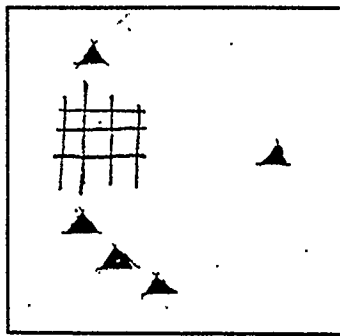
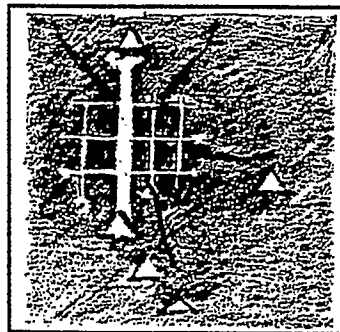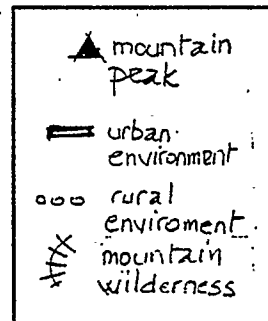two will simply be the degree of intimacy that is possible between individual needs and the wilderness. Individual needs of visitors will of course be initially removed from the wilderness and therefore housed in the urban environment, whereas the life-style of the local residents will be more easily integrated with the requirements of preservation of the surrounding wilderness.

COMMUNITY, PLACE AND AUTHENTICITY

The sense of authenticity and the sense of place that arise from the community will also be experienced differently in each scenario.

In a resort scenario, authenticity in Banff will be felt through the historical significance of the town. Place will be experienced through a sense of time, as an environment of permanence and continuity with past values and meaning. These values and this meaning will be seen to transcend the existing community, for the sake of an idealized and historical image of the residents of Banff, to the point that local entrepreneurs and staff may not even be considered acceptable representatives of the local community.

In a mountain tourist town scenario, authenticity in the town of Banff will be gauged on its similarity with other mountain places of the world. The town of Banff will be expected to translate global concerns about tourism and mountain places in the local community, and express these in local terms.

In a mountain town scenario, authenticity and sense of place will naturally arise from the evidence that the spirit of the town of Banff, although an object of tourism, is nonetheless independent from tourism. Place and authenticity will be perceived as manifestations of the unique experience of the local environment, past and present.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

Semi-Integration

It is here recommended that the town of Banff should follow a policy of semi-integration. In keeping with the present situation and its immediate objectives, this is the most feasible scenario for the town of Banff, and one for which existing images can be most readily adapted. The report of the Canadian Parks Service about the new draft plan says the town "will be managed primarily as a balanced community rather than a destination resort."

The vote of 1989 expressed the residents' need to see the growth of local community catch up with that of tourism. Ted Hart said that

> **quality of life in the mountain community of 7,000 is destined to take precedence over the tourism-driven commercial development of its past. (Koch: 1989)**

The tourism industry will be the focus of economic activity for a long time. In the long term, however, residents intend the town of Banff to fall into the scenario of a mountain town. The draft plan sets a town boundary, and emphasizes affordable housing, cultural and social issues, "rather than a preoccupation with economic growth and expansion." Eventually, the local life-style will evolve into a local culture, but until such time, Banff will be a tourist town in the mountains.

Conclusion

It was the purpose of this Master's Degree Project to study the relationship between place and images in the mountains. In particular, the study focused on the confusion between place and images which exists in mountain towns as a result of tourism being superimposed on historical archetypes. Historically, human settlements in the mountains have been motivated either by agrarian activities or by resource exploitation. Agrarian communities lived in close relationship with the natural environment. From the mountains, they drew their livelihood and their culture. In resource communities, it is the local industry which became the basis for the cultural environment. Resource communities separated themselves from the mountains, using them simply for the extraction of raw materials necessary to the industry.

The characteristics specific to these mountain communities combined to produce recognizable types of urban developments in the mountains. Agrarian communities thus share a common *agrarian archetype*. All images of agrarian communities in the mountains build upon this archetype. Similarly, a *resource archetype* is formed which allows the communication of images of a resource environment in the mountains. Because each archetype is based on a different set of values, each suggests a different meaning for the mountain town in its relationship with the environment.

With the development of tourism, mountain towns have developed new images in their urban environment. As an industry, tourism depends on the mountain environment as a resource for outside consumption. Tourism creates a cultural environment strictly predicated on the industry of tourism, and purposefully dissociated from the surrounding environment for non-acclimatized visitors. In these, a resource archetype prevails. Tourism is also an activity of visitation of places. This aspect of tourism requires that the cultural setting be tied to the natural environment.

Therefore, images of the new mountain towns must also build around an agrarian archetype. Thus, by drawing indiscriminately from agrarian and resource archetypes of mountain communities, new mountain towns have produced confused images.

Existing theories of environmental design were introduced which could be applicable to this situation, and from these, a model of analysis and design for tourist towns in the mountains was developed. Erving Goffman's concept of front and back regions was first presented, and it was shown how Dean McCannell adapted this initial theory of environmental psychology to a method of analysis of the physical environments in a tourist town. Dean McCannell proposed a theory of "staged authenticity" between front and back regions, whereby a gradual transition was established between various parts of a tourist town based on the allocation of their use between the respective activities of visitors and local residents.

Dean McCannell's model was then used in conjunction with Ian Nairn's categorization of environments to make it specific to mountain towns, and with Gordon Cullen's method of Serial Vision as an approach to implementation. Ian Nairn proposed that environments should be categorized as metropolitan, urban, arcadian, rural and wild, and treated accordingly. Consequently, Dean McCannell's notion of "staged authenticity" was then reinterpreted, in a mountain town, as a transition between urban, rural and wild environments. The urban environment exists primarily for the use of visitors, while the rural environment naturally develops from a local use of the mountain setting. It was finally suggested that the transition from urban to rural and to wild could be analyzed using Gordon Cullen's method of Serial Vision. In this method, the various images in a mountain environment are viewed as part of a set in a series which control the experience of visitors and local residents according to their respective systems of values.

This work approached the issue of a sense of place from the point of view of experiences. It attempted to relate the personal experience of place, based on feelings and values, to the physical environment of observable facts available through the senses. This approach comes from the fact that the communication of an experience of place leads, by the strength of its images, to another experience of place.

The communication of experiences and the relationship between place and images are fundamental to the industry of tourism. The study used commercial photographs taken for the promotion of mountain places to show how the notions of place and authenticity are transcribed into images. It was also shown how the confusion between place and images was apparent in the images used to promote the place because of the necessary placelessness in mountain tourist towns. Thus, commercial advertising is put in a paradoxical position. It must flaunt the merit of

the destination resort in the mountains as a unique place of nature. As well, it must emphasize the resort's ability to provide the comfort of a neutral experience, at par with any other resort. Where the ambivalent needs of tourism are not properly integrated through the urban environment, the commercial images are weakened and become themselves confusing.

It was found that the confusion would not be resolved by a simplification of the images. This only serves to weaken the sense of place. Instead, the complexity of images should be integrated in successive design interventions. Instead of universal images, images that build on local values and meaning should be sought, and integrated through a "serial vision" of the urban environment.

The model is applicable to projects that are motivated by the needs of a local community. These would be "grass-root" projects which aim at developing local values in an incremental approach. The model would be less suitable to master-planned schemes for developers' purposes based on universal values, where the objective is to cater passively to the needs of the consumers.

The model is therefore applicable in the case of Banff, because of the high level of confusion of images. It is applicable, however, in as much as it reflects the needs of the local community to integrate a conflict in values between the notions of conservation and preservation. It is less applicable to a situation in which Banff is presented primarily as a tourist town and a resort, instead of a mountain town, and depending on the impacts that future developments are intended to have on the local community.

The overall phenomenological approach is still well suited to a mountain environment. Because the mountain wilderness has remained unaltered by urbanization, it does not have meaning in and of itself. It is instead a source of meaning. Its images, unlike images of man-made places, always become a reference point.

The study took the approach that the confusion of images is a problem to be resolved. It could be argued instead that the confusion of place and images is a by-product of the new socio-economics necessary for urbanization in a mountain environment. It can then be interpreted as a normal process that is a source of new values and therefore new images, from the merging of previous values and images that will eventually become obsolete.

Nonetheless, the model is simply intended to be a tool for design. It is a means to utilize personal experiences for design decisions. Personal experiences cannot be avoided in the design process, and the present study is an attempt to manage them within the overall design objectives. The technique is not scientific. Its aim is not to produce greater accuracy, but to help achieve greater personal responsibility in design interventions.

Conclusion

In the case of Banff, it is recommended that a semi-integration scenario should be pursued. This study recommended that a certain measure of integration should be attained, while maintaining a proper distinction between front and back regions. It was suggested that the town of Banff should pursue its identity as a *mountain tourist town*, distinct from a *resort* , or from a *mountain town*. To that end it was suggested that front and back regions be integrated by the means of respective zones of interface. Further to this study, an implementation strategy should be undertaken. This would include an analysis of the urban space in terms of front and back regions, and in terms of urban, rural and wild environments. It should conclude with recommendations for design, and possible guidelines to support developments.

The work presented here can be the source of further studies. A study of the meaning, the values and the images suggested by mountain places in history, and how these are expressed through the arts and the sciences could be undertaken from the present analysis. Worthy of interest is the relationship between culture, archetypes, images and the physical design of mountain places. A study of the relationship between the confusion of images and the juxtaposition of archetypes, especially with a comparison between the images of the Commercial Mall and the Mountain as they appear in the design of modern mountain resorts, would also be a possible topic. And finally, the present work could be used to explore how the new culture that could emerge from new societal concerns could be responsible for new images, and how such concerns as environmental protection and sustainable development could influence the physical design of future urban environments in mountain places.

In a world where the wilderness is shrinking, the challenge of design is no longer to inhabit barren worlds. The role of the designers is to carefully temper interventions with understanding, and to seek a dialogue between themselves and their environment. Mountain places are cultural places. Their images have come to symbolize hopes and freedom, but also mankind's new ability to trespass onto forbidden territory.

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