

Institute of Advanced Studies
University of São Paulo
Rua Praça do Relógio, 109, Bloco K,
5º andar, C.P. 72.012, CEP 05508-970,
São Paulo, SP, Brazil
Attn.: Intercontinental Academia

Dear UBIAS Members,

Trained through my Master's degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the value of both transnational and interdisciplinary research and with the support of my PhD advisor, Dr. Fabiola López-Durán, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to apply for a position within Intercontinental Academia through IEA-USP. My dissertation unearths and interrogates the intersection of Cold War agrologistics--the means by which human populations attempt to control nature toward the ends of life and productivity enhancement--and the rural silo, grain mill, slaughterhouse and aqueduct architectures which were deeply complicit in the exponential rise of biopolitical commodification throughout Latin America during the 1950s to the 1970s.¹ Throughout this period a marked Taylorization of time, escalating and bifurcating the slow time of evolution, was operative within and necessary to the so-called success of each agro-industrial architectural development. Drawing on fields as diverse as biology, animal husbandry, urban planning, engineering, economics, philosophy and political science, my work would greatly benefit from and, I believe, add to a rich discussion of time across many contexts.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the work of modernism's visible and invisible practitioners surged in an attempt to systematically unhinge man from the constraints of nature. Rebelling against the slow time of evolution, just as seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers rebelled against church and state during the first Enlightenment, these modern architects, engineers, city planners, politicians, physicians and educators created strategies, economies and infrastructure to manage every aspect of the living, from insect to human populations. Under a new configuration of what Michel Foucault calls biopolitics--wherein the basic biological features of the human become objects of political strategy--taking root at the intersections of nutritional science, commodity management, capital markets development, humanitarian efforts and Cold War politics, a proliferation of grain storage facilities, commodity processing mills, aqueducts, vast fields and transportation facilities were built by populations throughout Latin America who were themselves cultivated, culled and pruned for increased productivity. Through a combination of efforts led by then new international bureaucracies, such as the International Monetary Fund, and North American USAID offices, funding for agricultural development was made available to a range of large and small agricultural entities.

¹ Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology*, Forthcoming from Duke University Press, 2015.

The first of these so-called aid mechanisms, the Food for Peace Act or PL 480, drafted in 1954, allowed foreign countries to purchase and offload American commodity surplus in order to help stabilize North American commodities markets. Re-branded as life saving food, saleable staples and political leverage, all in one, the sale of vast quantities of North American surplus at rock bottom rates created new international agricultural markets throughout Latin America - often at the direct expense of food security within the receiving nation. From the sudden United States funded proliferation of aqueducts and sugar mills in places such as the Dominican Republic to the building of silos and processing mills for rice in Peru and the development of a world leading beef industry in Argentina, agro-industrial architecture emerged as the most effective way by which the raw, kinetic energy of living organisms was furrowed, fattened and transformed into saleable commodities. While the spotlight is often ceded to the icons of urban architectural modernism, Cold War development in the Third World advanced due to countless unnamed architects and engineers who incorporated the essentials of Taylorization, aimed at efficiency through discrete divisions of labor and the scientific analysis of each task within a given processing chain, into each agro-industrial design.

Analysing the influence of US aid in the development of Cold War rural architecture and agricultural development in select countries throughout Latin America toward the production of a selective genealogy, I am drawing upon a vast philosophical infrastructure which directly engages the UBIAS' time theme. An abbreviated genealogy of these works would include: Martin Heidegger's 1953 essay, "The Question Concerning Technology" wherein he famously posits that perhaps humans are a standing reserve that fuels, rather than controls, technology.² This essay, often read as a luddite response to technological development, outlines the first steps of a reorientation of time from that of man's making to something embedded within relations between objects in action beyond human correlations.

Taking these often missed temporal postulations further, incorporating Heidegger's own theories of *das man*, (i.e., man in an untethered and originarily plural form) Michel Foucault describes a world where man is born into *dispositifs* that precede and shape him, rather than the other way around. Pinpointing the rise of neoliberalism, the coalescing of governmentality via interest and the drive for an increasingly slim and frugal government in his 1978-79 lectures at the College de France, Foucault writes the history of the human-cum-standing reserve that is biopolitics, beholden to an escalating time frame of Taylorization.

In tandem, a more recent line of thought has opened new methodological terrain for my investigations. Following at least twenty years of academic work by post-structuralists describing the wholly constructed nature of the objective world, in the last decade climate change may have been the first of the signals that the material world exists beyond correlationism.³ Through the work of companion

² Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", *Basic Writings*. Harper, 2008.

³ Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*. Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2010.

species and cyborgs via Donna Haraway, animals and *animots* through Derrida, hosts of other agents as understood by Bruno Latour have come into philosophical sightlines as actors, not simply passive bodies for the play of human constructions. Cary Wolfe's formulations through the concept of posthumanism opened crucial inquiries beyond gender and race to consider species divides of the type that I am working to make visible in a retracing of Latin American agrological architecture and biopolitics in the Cold War period.

Working to situate myself as a transnational scholar, seeking out learning environments filled with international students and faculty, I am confident that participation in the UBIAS research program will be an important step for furthering my own research, exposure and participation in both interdisciplinary and transnational studies. After completing my S.M.Arch.S at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, (MIT) in 2005 where I was awarded the S.M.Arch.S Prize for outstanding research, I continued my graduate studies at the European Graduate School (EGS) in Switzerland, working with Avital Ronell toward a dissertation on the philosophical concept of *Mitsein* as conceived by Martin Heidegger and troubled by Jacques Derrida. Student teaching for Slavoj Žižek turned my head toward questions of sustainability and nature. My current research as a Phd student at Rice University in the Department of Art History focuses on the industrialization of food-based commodities and concurrent trans-national development practices in modern Latin America, focusing on their symbiotic relationship to architectural practices. Awarded two research travel grants over the past two years, I have spent time in Argentina, Chile and the Dominican Republic working on archival research and in conversation with architects and architectural historians in each country. I have had work published in Europe and the United States with a forthcoming publication from Brazil and would be delighted at this unparalleled opportunity to work across continents with other members of International Academia on the theme of time.

To this end, I would like to thank you for your time considering my application. I look forward to your response.

Best wishes,

Nikki Moore, S.M.Arch.S