Yael Padan

Modelscapes of Nationalism

Collective Memories and Future Visions

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To Haim, Avigayil, Itamar and Adam

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Preface

This book is about the relationship between miniature architectural models and the exterior reality to which they refer. It sets out to explore how this relationship enables us to envision a full-sized environment in our imagination. In particular, it is about architectural models that are on display to the public. I visited many such models in order to examine how representations of space and place can be symbolic containers of collective hopes and dreams, as well as fears and anxieties. Such representations of collective landscapes are termed in this book *modelscapes*.

As an architect and academic interested in questions of Israeli culture and identity, I explore in this book three modelscapes. These very different sites are interesting because they deal in different ways with the Israeli socio-political reality. Spatially, they represent different aspects of the contested physical space, which is the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They offer ways to understand and manage a chaotic and complex reality, by inviting the visitors to participate in the model reality with their bodies. Ideologically, they represent political and cultural narratives of collective memory and identity. Furthermore, I show in this book how interpretations of their meaning are affected by the political and cultural changing context, and thus have evolved and transformed over time.

In the process of analyzing modelscapes and their meanings I was helped and guided by some wonderful and generous people who shared with me their knowledge and thoughts. The first version of this book was my dissertation, and my first thanks are to my teachers Professor Lev Grinberg of Ben Gurion University and Professor Wendy Pullan of the University of Cambridge, for their endless support, time, thought and care. They have encouraged me to undertake this long and interesting process, and provided guidance and inspiration throughout the years of this research.

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Introduction: Narratives into Objects, Objects into Narratives

My grandfather, who was a construction worker, began to build wooden models when he retired. First he chose sites from his personal history that he wished to remember. Later he built models of monuments from postcards that he found interesting. As a child I was fascinated by these models, especially when he placed colourful lamps that lit them from within. Perhaps the memory of these models was one of the reasons I chose to study architecture, and later to write about models.

What is the importance of architectural models? They are found in many cultures, alongside other forms of representation such as texts and images. Albert Smith argues that architectural models have served throughout history as 'machines for imagining' (Albert Smith, xxii), or thinking mechanisms, which participate in defining a culture's universe. He further suggests that models are capable of mediating between perceived chaos and human designs, enabling humans to measure and test their various concepts of the invisible (Albert Smith, xxi).

This book focuses on architectural models which are on display to the public and consequently have some collective aspects. Models of this kind are fairly common, often found in museums, town halls, landscape and theme parks. I argue that such public architectural models are distinct modes of representation within wider cultural contexts. As discussed by Albert Smith, they are machines for imagining the invisible. This invisible is not merely architectural concepts regarding the shape of future buildings; instead, the public nature of such architectural models suggests that the invisible which they deal with is about outlining collective issues. They serve to define 'a culture's cosmos' (Albert Smith vii), and more specifically a particular shared vision of a group's identity.

Some contemporary public architectural models are places of heritage, some of entertainment, while others are intended to instruct and educate. Some models aim to combine these notions by offering an experience of 'edutainment'. A recurring feature in many models is a claim to authority by representing some kind of authenticity regarding the external world. The visitors to such models are introduced to a certain 'reality' which is laid out in front of them, inviting interest and participation in their contents. Scale relations between the human body and the model often create a feeling of empowerment of the visitor over the miniature model.

However, this claim to authority through authenticity, together with some degree of empowerment and of participation, raises the question whether these seemingly playful and educational structures are 'machines for thinking' or whether they are manipulative tools in the hands of their creators.

How do such models work? How do they achieve a sense of authenticity, empowerment and participation? How do they manoeuvre between the symbolic and the concrete? How do they represent the invisible using visible objects? Why are tangible models still relevant in the age of computerized simulation? In other words, in what ways is the visual and bodily experience translated into narrative?

The main topic which is addressed in this book is the three-layered relationship between (a) the tangible artefacts, the model-objects that form public architectural models, (b) the external source objects which they represent, and (c) the meaning produced by the encounter between this type of representation and the visitor. This does not suggest a necessarily chronological process whereby the model precedes the source object and representation precedes meaning. Rather, these three elements condition each other in different ways in response to changing cultural contexts.

I begin by examining the format of the model as a means of representation, which differs from other representational forms. The general study of models is followed by a focus on the specific format of architectural models, and in particular on the type of public architectural models, and the relations of representational likeness with their external existing or imaginary source objects, as well as the differences between them.

Following this, I examine how meaning is produced by the interface of the visitors and the models. I explore the scale relations and the bodily experience of movement between, inside or around architectural models, as well as the sequence in which the model is revealed. I aim to reveal how public architectural models function and how they address the visitors. This may also explain the relevance of such physical models in the age of computer simulations.

Studying the models discussed here requires an interdisciplinary scope of knowledge. They are mainly representations of architecture, but they have some qualities of two-dimensional representations as well as some textual qualities, and thus they do not fit entirely under any of these fields. In addition, these models can only be fully appreciated in the context of the local social, historical, cultural, and political circumstances of their production.

What are Models?

The term 'model' comes from the Latin word *modulus* which means 'small measure' or small-scale, and was used in the writing of Vitruvius (Manchanda, 11). Furthermore, in ancient Greek thought 'measure' referred to proportions or *analogos*, which suggests that a model is an analogy of something else.[1] During the Renaissance the word shifted to *modellus*, which meant 'form'. The English term carries the additional connotation of 'mold' (Healy, 19). Philosopher Nelson Goodman suggests a definition of the term 'model' which points to the ambiguity and vagueness of its current use:

> A model is something to be admired or emulated, a pattern, a case in point, a type, a prototype, a specimen, a mock-up, a mathematical description – almost anything from a naked blonde to a quadratic equation – and may bear to what it models almost any relation of symbolization. (Goodman, 171)

A more precise definition is offered by Max Black, a philosopher of language, science and art. He describes models as three dimensional, more or less true to scale, representations of an existing or imagined material object (Black, 219). The models I refer to correspond to this definition. Ruling out some of Goodman's wider and more ambiguous explanation, they seem to be neither exemplars or samples, nor mathematical or scientific descriptions. Black's definition can be of further use, since he suggests thinking of models as *scale models*, although not necessarily miniature. He suggests that they are 'likenesses of material objects, systems or processes, whether real or imaginary, that preserve relative proportions' (Black, 220). I find his account useful as a starting point for developing an understanding of the qualities of models.

The definitions mentioned so far suggest that models recall their source objects by means of some kind of representational likeness and relative proportions. However, models also seem to exist as separate objects, detached from their exterior referents. Their sense of detachment and autonomy comes from the exteriority of models to the objects they represent. This is particularly clear in the case of models which precede their objects, such as models made in the process of designing future or imagined buildings. Such models carry meaning even in cases when their reference objects are

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1   See Oxford Dictionaries Online, http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/analogy?q=analogy, accessed 2 February 2013.

never built. Furthermore, models can be interpreted differently from their source objects, additionally stressing their independent nature.

Morgan and Morrison refer to this quality of models and modelling as used in natural and social sciences:

> It is precisely because models are partially independent of both theories and the world that they have this autonomous component and so can be used as instruments of exploration in both domains [...]. Models typically represent either some aspect of the world, or some aspect of our theories about the world, or both at once. Hence the model's representative power allows it to function not just instrumentally, but to teach us something about the thing it represents. (Morrison and Morgan, 10-11)

In order for us to understand what a model teaches us about the thing it represents, we must be familiar with the conventions of representation, the 'correct' ways of 'reading' the model. How is the specific genre of public architectural models intended to be 'read' by the visitor? Such models are not mere sites of heritage, leisure, entertainment or memory, but rather they provide specific tools for constructing experiences which frame certain narratives and outline their internal logic. The public architectural model represents a particular manner of looking at the world, as well as of controlling it. Furthermore, I argue that this manner is both an outcome and a reflection of modern modes of perception. These will be examined in Chapter 1 which focuses on the emergence of public architectural models, as well as on the qualities that characterize them and the habits and conventions which frame their 'correct' understanding.

A clear definition of the type of models which are analysed in this book has been neglected in the literature so far. I use the term 'public architectural model' to refer to a representation of an environment which is often composed of numerous individual models, and is displayed to the public. The individual architectural model has been studied extensively, both theoretically and as an architectural tool.[2] Some attention has also been devoted to the analysis of public models directed at non-professional audiences.[3] Francoise Choay has written a seminal book on architecture and urban theory which analyses the phenomena of utopian models. Her

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2   See for example, Healy (2008); Moon (2005); Morris (2006); Albert Smith (2004); Patteeuw, Topalovic, Vervoort (2011).
3   See for example, Larry Abramson (2006a, 2006b); Berger (2008); Crinson (1996); Efrat and Scharf (2003); Greenhalgh (1988); Celik (1992).

critical stance towards the format of the model reveals its powerful quali-
ties which have enabled it to influence both the readers of utopian texts
as well as contemporary professionals and policy makers in the field of
urbanism. Choay's analysis of utopian models is central for understanding
the persuasive power of physical models, such as those which are presented
in the following chapters.

In addition to these works, many public architectural models have been
studied individually.[4] While several of these studies include a wider theoreti-
cal or historical background, none of them encompasses an analysis of the
genre as a particular and distinct social and cultural phenomenon. In this
book I focus on this genre of models and analyse the historical and cultural
context of its emergence as well as its distinct qualities which differentiate
it from other types of representation.

Modelscapes

Public architectural models are clusters of individual models grouped
together in an intentionally planned way. For the sake of clarity, I propose
a special term to identify these clusters and to differentiate them from other
types of models: *modelscapes*. I have chosen to use this term for several
reasons. First, like other terms such as 'landscapes' or 'cityscapes', it suggests
a multiplicity of objects which together form a certain scenery or panorama
that cannot be offered by an individual model. Thus the basic feature of a
modelscape is the arrangement of models and the spaces between them.

Second, I refer to the attachment of the suffix -scape, as it is used in other
theoretic contexts. Appadurai has developed a theory of '-scapes', attaching
the suffix to socio-political phenomena such as ethnoscapes, technoscapes,
financecapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes. He suggests that the suffix
indicates that 'these are not objectively given relations' (Appadurai, 33). On
the contrary, they are constructed dimensions of social reality which are
'inflected by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different
sorts of actors' (Appadurai, 33). Following Appadurai's use of '-scapes', Soja
suggests that in relation to urban space, 'appending -scape seems to evoke
a visual and panoramic sensitivity' (Soja, xv).

Similarly, Chaudhuri relates to the term 'landscape' as an effort to attach
meaning to an array of objects. 'Like the many other terms with which

4   See for example Amit (2009); Cohen Hattab & Kerber (2004); D'Amato, Di Tanna and Liberati
(2008); Dethier (1990); Feige (2008); Momchedjikova (2002); Sartorio (1993); Wharton (2006).

it shares the suffix -scape [...] the term landscape suggests a systematicity and a coherence that often prove elusive in applications' (Chaudhuri, 12). I use the term 'modelscape' to describe 'landscapes' or 'cityscapes' of models. However, the difference between 'modelscapes' and 'landscapes' or 'cityscapes' is that 'modelscapes' are deliberate creations of individuals and institutions. Hence the term 'modelscapes' indeed embodies a basic coherence that other '-scapes' lack.

Based on these definitions I argue that a modelscape is a spatial arrangement of meaningful objects which is intended to be visited by the public and creates a panoramic sensitivity. This sensitivity is not limited to the visual but rather relates also to a corporal experience. The meaning of the individual models within the modelscape is determined by their particular grouping, which constructs relationships between them and relates them to the visitor. These relations reflect a social and cultural context.

Modelscapes display a particular combination of features that characterize other forms of representation. One of them is a concept of place, evident in the use of geography and topography, which relates the modelscape to the format of the map. Another is a concept of time, evident in the choice to represent a certain historic moment. The concept of time, together with aspects of collection, classification and display of objects, relates the modelscape to the museum. In addition, many modelscapes contain a didactic element, which is also central to the concept of the museum. According to Annis, the museum is

> A place for things taken out of their natural context to be stored, reclassified and exhibited. When objects become exhibits, they necessarily take on new meanings: they are transformed [...]. The object-symbols twist in meaning between two worlds, the world of their origin and the world of significance created by display. (Annis, 21)

These qualities of the museum are relevant to modelscapes, since they too display objects away from their context, creating new meaning by their (re)arrangement and classification, and attempting to educate the visiting public. Another feature of modelscapes is the creation of a bodily experience, relating them to the landscape park as well as the theme park. Theme parks often display existing or typical spaces and buildings that represent a given subject, and rearrange them in a new context according to a structured logic.

In the light of these features I argue that the modelscape is a hybrid, containing some qualities of the map (the concept of a place), some qualities

of the museum (concepts of time, classification, organization, display and education) and some qualities of the landscape park (a bodily experience), or theme park (aspects of spatial organization and of entertainment). These are schematic definitions (for example, the map has some elements of classification, while the museum offers a structured experience), and in different modelscapes some of these components are more dominant than others.

Case Studies

In order to understand how modelscapes are used and how they are designed to achieve an impact on their visitors, in the following chapters I analyse several case studies from Israel. The reason for this decision is that unlike many countries, in Israel national identity is a relatively recent formation which is not taken for granted. It is constantly discussed and contested, and therefore its construction and legitimation are important national objectives. Thus considerable cultural efforts have been and continue to be invested in creating the Israeli collective narrative. Modelscapes are part of these cultural efforts and reflect both the importance of constructing collective identity in Israel and some of the ways in which this is achieved.

The three cases of modelscapes are all significant for understanding Israeli national identity. They were planned and built during key periods in Israeli history, and thus their contents reflect the social and political circumstances of their time. In addition, they are representations of crucial points in the national history, which play a role in the formation of contemporary Israeli culture, national identity and collective memory. Over the years they have undergone transformations which reflect changing political, social and cultural contexts.

In Chapter 3 I examine the Second Temple Model of Jerusalem, also known as the Holyland Model (fig. 1). While miniature modelscapes for tourists can be found in many cities, this modelscape does not represent the city of its day. Rather it refers to the past, showing Jerusalem in the year 66 AD, during the Second Temple period which represents national glory and cultural independence. The Second Temple Model is both a representation of heritage as well as a heritage site in its own right. It is therefore a utopian representation of a shared past, which also plays a role in constructing contemporary national identity and collective memory.

It was built in 1962-1966, a period when the entire archaeological site which it reconstructs was under Jordanian rule, and thus inaccessible to Israeli visitors. The Second Temple Model served as a substitute for these

Figure 1   The Second Temple Model, general view

Photograph by Y. Padan

sites, one of its objectives being to educate and remind the public of them. It served to cultivate national feelings towards these places, and to represent contemporary Jerusalem and its inhabitants as continuations of the ancient Israelites and their city. Following the 1967 war and the unification of Jerusalem, the Second Temple Model nevertheless retained its national and cultural importance because, paradoxically, it is easier to envisage ancient Jerusalem in the modelscape than in the actual ruins of the city.

In 2006 the Second Temple Model was moved to the Israel Museum where it was placed next to archaeological finds of the period. This move further enhanced its position as a historically accurate representation, based on the museum's professional reputation. The new location also visibly connected the Second Temple Model with nearby symbols of the state such as the Parliament and the adjacent government buildings. This modelscape thus partakes in the construction of the modern narrative of national identity, based on a collective myth of origin using representations of ancient heritage sites.

The second modelscape analysed in Chapter 4 is Mini Israel, a theme park containing contemporary miniature models of various places in Israel. It was designed as a recreational tourist site and opened in 2002 (fig. 2). The park does not reproduce the physical layout of the country's

Figure 2   Mini Israel theme park, general view

Photograph by Y. Padan

geography, but rather depicts Israel in the shape of a Star of David. As a family-oriented leisure site, the choice of places represented in this modelscape (as well as those that were excluded) and their arrangement in relation to each other is designed to incorporate all visitors while hiding some difficult aspects of Israeli social and political reality such as the borders, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the relationships between centre and periphery. Thus Mini Israel provides the visitors with an idealized version of contemporary Israel, which is the basis for an idealized national narrative.

In reaction to the Mini Israel Theme park, a counter-exhibition of miniature models, also called 'Mini Israel', was initiated and curated in 2006 by artist Larry Abramson at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem (fig. 3). He invited forty-five artists to display works whose common feature was the use of the format of the model. The artists presented their views of reality in Israel. Many of these models dealt critically with political and social issues. Larry Abramson's counter-exhibition introduced questions of self and collective identity, and created an opportunity for dialogue between the viewers and the alternative miniature models of 'Mini Israel'.

Chapter 5 analyses the Valley of the Communities in Jerusalem, a memorial to the Jewish communities destroyed in the Holocaust, designed by

Figure 3   **"Mini Israel": 70 Models, 45 artists, One Space (exhibition by Larry Abramson), 2006, installation view, Israel Museum, Jerusalem**

Photo: Theolonius Marx

landscape architects Lipa Yahalom – Dan Zur (fig. 4). The Valley of the Communities is located at Yad Vashem – the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority. It is part of the national project of creating a historical site which is removed in space and time from the sites where the actual events of the Holocaust had occurred. The Valley of the Communities is designed as a labyrinthine shape dug into the ground and open to the sky, with walls of rock about six meters high carrying the names of every Jewish community. Its plan roughly resembles a miniature map of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as several countries in North Africa that were occupied by the Axis powers.

Because it literally transfers the map of Europe and North Africa to the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem, the Valley symbolically reconstructs the entire geographic setting of the Holocaust in a local context. Thus the destroyed communities are incorporated both in space and in time. Spatially they are inserted into the national territory, and temporally they are integrated into the contemporary national reality. This site was built as a memorial, and although it represents exterior places using scale, it is

Figure 4   The Valley of the Communities, by Lipa Yahalom – Dan Zur, Landscape Architects

Source: Collection of L. Yahalom-D. Zur, Judaica Division of Harvard College Library

not referred to as a model. In Chapter 4 I will discuss how and why it can be defined as a modelscape.

In analysing these case studies, I distinguish between the creators of models that make decisions concerning the contents they aim to communicate, and the visitors who experience the models and relate to them as an audience. I focus mainly on the aspect of the production of modelscapes, rather than on their reception, in order to find out why the initiators and

makers decide to use the format of a modelscape, and how they determine the contents, the physical shape and the interior rules that govern their modelscapes.

As noted by Annis, visitors do not always absorb the contents of museum exhibitions in the ways that the curators expect. He suggests that the plans and intentions of curators, designers and marketing experts might be creatively altered by the imagination and expectations of the visitors (Annis, 19). These observations are appropriate for the visitors of modelscapes as well. In this book, however, I do not focus on the visitor reactions and perceptions of modelscapes. Although I have observed visitors and their reactions in the three modelscapes and one exhibition analysed, surveys of visitor feedbacks or interviews have not been conducted. These require further research which is beyond the scope of this book. Consequently, in the following chapters I set a framework for exploring how the qualities and features of modelscapes reflect the intentions of their makers, as well as the social and cultural context for experiencing them, rather than presenting an ethnographic document.

I focus instead on other aspects of the modelscapes, asking what is being produced at each one. Is the model a commodity? What is being sold? I argue that because of their hybrid nature, modelscapes offer their visitors a composite experience. They are not commodities in the straightforward sense, although some modelscapes require entrance fees. They do not aspire to shape knowledge in the same way as a museum, nor to display exact cartographic information, as in a map, or to merely provide an entertaining activity, as would a visit to a theme park. Nevertheless, as suggested above, some aspects of each of these can be found in the hybrid experience of a modelscape.

I therefore argue that the 'product' of the modelscape is the story which it tells using its particular qualities: a narrative. In the following chapters I show that these narratives are about collective issues such as identity, nationality and history. These abstract topics are given material shape in modelscapes, and 'marketed' to the visitors as 'authentic reproductions' of 'reality'. Furthermore, I show that modelscapes display certain flexibility in the narratives that they promote, so that they can be adapted to different 'target populations'. Thus the planners of modelscapes have different audiences in mind, and tour guides, for example, adjust the narrative to fit their customers. In this book I explore how the hybrid experience of a modelscape is constructed, how the narrative is designed, and how meaning is communicated.

In all three sites I examined the social and political context of their design, the physical context of their location, and their history since they

were opened to the public. However, a different methodological focus was placed in each case, in accordance with the characteristics and framing of each site. Different sets of expectations arise from the different frames in which these modelscapes operate. The Second Temple Model is mainly didactic, Mini Israel is mainly a site of entertainment and leisure, and the Valley of the Communities is mainly a memorial.

The Second Temple Model is an educational model and therefore I investigated the didactical intentions of its creators, and the way its meaning has evolved through the years. I analysed its design process, which gave it credibility, and its history. Since it was opened to the public in 1966, this modelscape has undergone significant changes, and therefore has a history as a heritage site in its own right. It started out as a representation of historical sites that were under Jordanian rule and therefore inaccessible to Israeli visitors. Soon the political context in which it was viewed changed, as Israel conquered the sites represented in the model in 1967. In 2006 this modelscape was relocated from a privately-owned hotel to the Israel Museum, changing its status to a national exhibit. I used interviews and historical documents in order to research the intentions of its creators. Interviews with the model's owners reveal the decisions behind its relocation, and interviews with the museum staff show the changed impact of the model in its new location.

The Mini Israel theme park is a site of entertainment and leisure. As such, its analysis focuses on the ways in which the entrepreneurs identified the visitors' expectations, and how they responded to them. In the decade between this modelscape's inception and its realization, the political climate in Israel has changed significantly, affecting the design both financially and conceptually. I interviewed the people involved in its design, management and marketing through the years, in order to investigate how the shifts in target population from tourists to local visitors affected the contents and policies of the park.

The Valley of the Communities is a memorial site built in the context of Yad Vashem. In its analysis I focused on the design process, which reveals that this memorial can be considered as a modelscape because a key element in its design is its layout as a miniature map of Europe. I studied the impact of this site by participating in the Linking Path March, an annual commemoration ritual in which Secondary school children are taken on a symbolic journey beginning in the Valley of the Communities, winding through Yad Vashem and ending on the national commemoration site of Mount Herzl. In this march the physical aspects of the sites complement the educational objectives of teaching about Israeli national identity and collective memory.

The different methodological decisions have enabled me to explore the differences, but also the similarities between the modelscapes, and the points in which they overlap. They all reflect the Israeli national narrative at certain points in time, as well as changes within this narrative. They are planned and intentional representations of collective identity. The variety which these modelscapes provide allows for generalization by showing different aspects of Israeli nationality. I suggest that the analysis of these different sites can provide tools for analysing other modelscapes in different national, social and political contexts.