

Transportation, Transformation, Contrast and Cross-culture

Hello,

I am Shih Hsuan Li. I came from Long-tan, a countryside located in Taoyuan. I had started to commute when I was in senior high school. I had to get up 5:30 in the morning, catch up on the first bus to Taipei, and transfer to Taipei Metro. If nothing unexpected happens, I could reach my first class in time at 8:00. It was my first experience taking public transportation every day. For modern people, commuting is common in daily life. Public transportation such as MRT and buses enable people to move, to live, to explore the city. I notice that moving forward is one of human activities from the very start. To my opinion, it is a matter of surviving necessity. If there is a best concept describing "commute", I probably would say that is "difference and repeat." It was proposed by a philosophy, Gilles Louis René Deleuze, who was known as a postmodernist. In an instinctive prospect, those who commutes everyday repeat their steadfast daily routine. Nevertheless, their life are still slightly different. I am appealed to urban and social immigration. I wish I could be able to differentiate presentment from real, especially those were created from cultural variation. As we know, the word "architecture" is translated from the west. It brought not only the act itself but also the culture of the context. Through the translation, the idea can be different compared to the origin one. It's an example for cultural exchange and shock. Tracing back to the time when Taiwan first built the railway, new ways of transportation and unprecedented vocation had subvert people's conception of the time. Brand new conception is introduced by new words came from foreign language. Thus, translator and administer is responds for establishing systems which can well transform languages. "The task of translator" written by Walter Benjamin has mentioned that translation itself is comprehending the thread of thought of the foreign language, and trying to trace a word that potentially convey the original meaning in the text. I think there is something in common between Walter Benjamin and Gilles Louis René Deleuze's idea, "difference and repeat". Finding differences in similarities, or musing upon a same thing in a different way both are approaches to learn more about cultural exchange. Two approaches mentioned above have subtle relationship just like that between original work and translation. They rely on each other, however, they have their own place in literary value. Since I major in Architecture Design, I come to see the city in a new point of view. I spend more time in surveying city development and renaissance, in other words, tracing back and looking forward. With regard to the origin of city renovation and development, the British is just the very type in my mind. If I have the chance to visit London, I hope I can composed my investigations in this aspect that focus on repeats and differences.

The first railway system went through to several counties all over the England. The cities developed by the rails, and formed every kind of scenery. It's once said that "We need intimate knowledge of the past because we need something to set against the present. The resulting contrast reminds us that basic assumptions have been quite different in different periods and shows us that much which seems fixed is only temporary fashion." That's the reason why I aimed at the British, the original place of industrialization in the past. Transportation had a big advancement thanks to industrialization. It is also one of the concept we value a city. London is with no doubt a modern city. It has a very convenient transportation, and it is also one of the oldest cities in the same time. Buildings passed on and on, dirty roads, polluted earth under the gas station, it is not the only case for London but for most of the cities in England. However, London had showed us a successful case of city renovation in 2014 Olympic. Not like other Olympic cities, bankrupt after Olympic, London enforce city renovation in a genius and intelligent way. They cleaned the polluted earth and sold out the useless streetlamps and chairs before Olympic. They disassembled all the grounds and rebuilt the space into parks after Olympic.

People commute to St. Paul, a financial city in London. There are thirty-four thousand people work here each day. However, there are only eight thousand local residents who actually lived here. You can see the difference between weekdays and weekends. This is a common situation that applies to other cities. I think it's an interesting phenomenon that I would like to check it out by myself.

People's activities and transportation integrate and interact each other, witnessing city development and aging. I will focus on the railroad station and the surroundings. If I have a chance to go, I hope I can have a clue to apply to further design in city renovation. I surely will visit Queen-Elizabeth-Olympic Park and other Olympic fields in renovated cities. For example, Covent Garden, monk's field in middle age, was a vital vegetable wholesale market in London. Inigo Jones, Architect in 17th century, had constructed the square with colonnades, the market in the central and the chapel in the east. They converted the market place into shopping mall in 1974, full of history but modern. Conversion includes several key points: the market, the square, the church, and pedestrian zone. The transition from an old town to a new city may be a scenic spot where people love to come, easy to come. Transportation and the connection between pedestrian zones will be a good issue to study. I would like to observe the formation of "square". Either in Western or Eastern culture, square is a place where people assemble. Furthermore, square formed markets, or became a places of religious worship. Pedestrian zone is an important element for campus, and it is also a part of architecture design. For instance, The Goudge city block makes AA School of Architecture, the British museum and Wellcome Collection related to each other. How did they plan and construct connection between campus, museums, libraries and squares? Transportation is one of the keys. In a larger scale, how regions and regions connect with each other? The answer to it may need more investigation and successful examples. I, for instance, commuted from Long-tan to Taipei, one stop to another stop. It seems that stops have separate areas between stops. Those empty spaces are exclude from transportation. Why and how could it happen? Maybe there's something to do with the singular of the transportation. I would like to learn more about this and figure out some explanation. How transportation lead to city prosperity? How they develop their own characteristic? I am eager to learn more examples.

Another subject I like to discuss is the renaissance after a decline. For example, Carnaby Street was of literary excellence in 1960. It degenerated awhile and transformed to be boutiques for new designers, very unique. It is a good model for local development both commercial and cultural. It reminds me that Taipei has a similar case. Chifeng St, which was famous for forging iron, has joined clothe stores and distinguishing cuisines now. I want to do a comparison study if I have more data.

In London, the immigrants lived in Notting Hill Gate were most from the Mediterranean. You could find Portugal groceries or North African cuisines on the streets. At first, the rich built houses here in 19th century. A number of middle class had appealed by the ideal price and comfortable environment. In 20th century, maid room is no more necessary. It start to rent to others. After World War I , many cheap dormitories had built. Soon it became a slum area, was viewed impoverished and backward. It did not change until 1970 when public housing was built. Gradually it had more and more cottages after 1980.

City has multiple features based on historical process. As for Taipei, you can see a number of American and Japanese visitors and shops in Tianmu and Zhongshan N. Rd. Taiwan was garrisoned by US Army for a period of time and used to be a colony of Japan. Historical memory and commercial activities has once combined. Now we have new residents that married or worked here. I am looking forward to see what's going to happen next.

My living city—Taipei, the same as London, city renovation and transportation still the issue. Upon observing other city's phenomenon, comparing those characteristics with Taipei is my ambition. I am expecting to learn different cultural point of view so as to re-evaluate the city I lived. We have the mission to construct and reinforce our houses after many catastrophic earthquakes (921 is the most horrible one).Regional development, district planning and MRT construction is still proceeding. Reference from London, I hope Taipei could be another successful renovation case. I wish this trip to London can broaden my vision, let me come up with some ingenious ideas. Making effort to fathom the spirit of translator might help me to think in an architectural way. It may be a valuable approach to answers. During almost three-year study in architecture design, I have been deeply involved in observing places, designing, organizing and constructing by means of both individual work and teamwork. Being passionate in architecture, I'm eager for this opportunity.

Transportation, Transformation, Contrast and Cross-culture