VISIONING MALAYSIAN LANDSCAPE

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CONTENTS

Editor’s Preface ........................................................................................................... ii
List of Tables .................................................................................................................. v
List of Figures ................................................................................................................ vi
Abbreviations ................................................................................................................ vii

CHAPTER 1:  SPECULATIVE EXPLORATION ON PLANTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PLACE NAMES OF TRADITIONAL MALAY SETTLEMENTS  1
Ismawi Zen

CHAPTER 2:  SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES OF HISTORIC SETTLEMENTS IN MALAYSIA  29
Nor Zalina Harun

CHAPTER 3:  MACROPHYTES AS PHYTOINDICATOR FOR EUTROPHICATION  40
Rashidi Othman

CHAPTER 4:  URBAN DRAINAGE: A LESSON FROM PUTRAJAYA  46
Izawati Tukiman

CHAPTER 5:  BEHAVIOUR OBSERVATION AS A STRATEGY TO UNDERSTAND GREENSPACE  58
Mazlina Mansor

CHAPTER 6:  BUSKING AND THE LANDSCAPE OF URBAN PLAZA  68
Jamilah Othman

CHAPTER 7:  LAPTOP AND THE DISCOVERY OF KNOWLEDGE IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE STUDIO  80
Jamilah Othman

CHAPTER 8:  THEORIES OF ACTOR NETWORK THEORY (ANT) IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  86
Mohd Ramzi Mohd Hussain

CHAPTER 9:  UNDERSTANDING THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF MALAYSIAN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  97
Nurhayati Abdul Malek

CHAPTER 10:  AN URBAN LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT MODEL FOR URBAN PLANNING SYSTEMS IN MALAYSIA  105
Ismawi Zen
AN URBAN LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT MODEL FOR URBAN PLANNING SYSTEMS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia inherits its planning system from the British, its former colonial masters. The system served the mother country well but proved to have fallen short in a country with different socio-cultural mix and clime. The research proposed a more inclusive system that takes into account the multi-racial as well the core culture of the country and the environmental characters in place that have been shaped by eons of human interactions with nature. Thus the system is parametric in nature so that the right mix and balance are achieved as the urban environment evolves.

Keywords: planning system, parametric model, urban environment

INTRODUCTION

"We need, today, an understanding of natural process and its expression and, even more, an understanding of the morphology of man-nature, which, less deterministic, still has its own morphology, the expression of man-nature as a process”.

IAN McHARG (1966) [1]

Referencing Gutkind (1952), Laurie (1975) detailed four stages in man’s changing attitude toward his environment over the known period of civilization [2]. The first stage being the I-Thou tradition that is characterized by fear of the unpredictable force of nature. The next stage is when man becomes more confident in himself and works with nature; understanding its process and his limitations to manipulate it, thus the I-Thou relationship still persists. These first two stages seem to be a state of equilibrium between nature and man. With the growing confidence resulting from the advancement of technologies, man sees nature as a frontier to be conquered and in many instances, subjugated. Laurie described the next stage, which he called I-It relationship as symbolized by automobile-oriented, spreading urban region with hinterland of felled forests, worked-out mineral deposits, and polluted rivers. This is the relationship that was reviled by McHarg so vividly in the earlier parts of his classic: Design With Nature. Perhaps McHarg was one of those pioneers that Gutkind prophesised as signalling man’s