

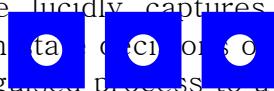
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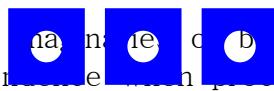
Coloniality of Infrastructure: Eurafrican Legacies

In a letter to President Nasser from 1963, architect Hassan Fathy raises the issue of self-colonization as a critical continuation of former colonial power structures. He lucidly captures the hegemony of western-imported ideals of architectural and building technologies as it manifests in the construction of other housing in rural Egypt. For Fathy “colonialism lives on, having transformed itself from an overt, undisguised process to a stealthy, self-colonization,” quoting the French-Tunisian sociologist Gaston Bouthoul, “Today, a new fact has changed things completely: the spirit of self-colonization has become widespread and has extended to the mass of the population.”*



Limits of Imitation: Post-colonial hang-over in Everyday Lives of African Cities

While few would doubt the devastating impact of violent colonial pasts or their present-day indignant dependencies, self-colonization remains evasive and subtle in how it shapes individual subjectivities and spaces of everyday life in African cities. This paper traces patterns and continuities of self-colonization within the administrative, engineering and design practices around Cairo and Accra, with urban interventions and new town developments actually exhibiting a persistent willingness to transform/modernize the rapidly growing metropoles along western principles and models of democracy, economy and culture.



The research underscores manifestations of parallel urbanities of belonging and dwelling that seek to resist self-coloniality. The paper argues that unlike post-independence, the main processes of self-colonization were carried out by national leaders seeking to impose imitations of the West and combat inertia or fanaticism; today with the neoliberal bent, self-colonization is spreading to subjects, “who are now eager to reject their old way of life and change the color of their skins.”*

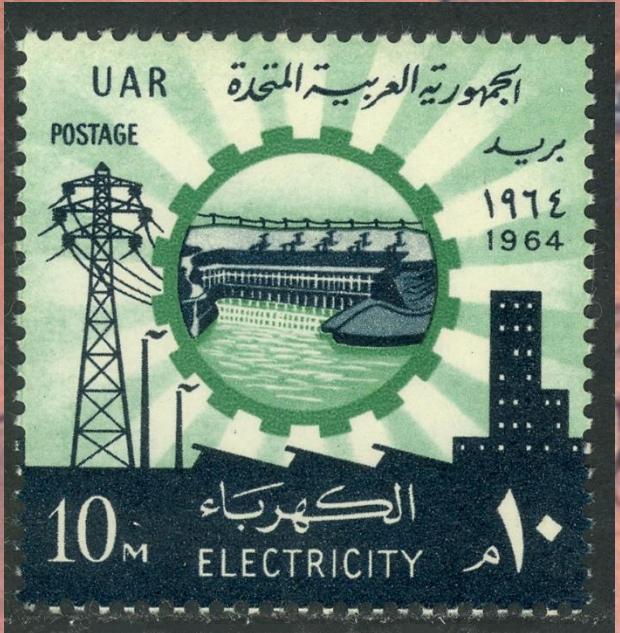
Yet, the dialectic of colonization and its sinister twin self-colonization is not final; it generates insurgent modes of existence and spaces through processes that give nuanced meanings to a “Eurafrica” that might not be dead yet.

*Letter to President Gamal Abdel Nasser on Rural Housing from 1963, in Salma Samar Damluji and Viola Bertini [2018] Hassan Fathy: Earth & Utopia. Laurence King Publisher, London. P. 174 ff.

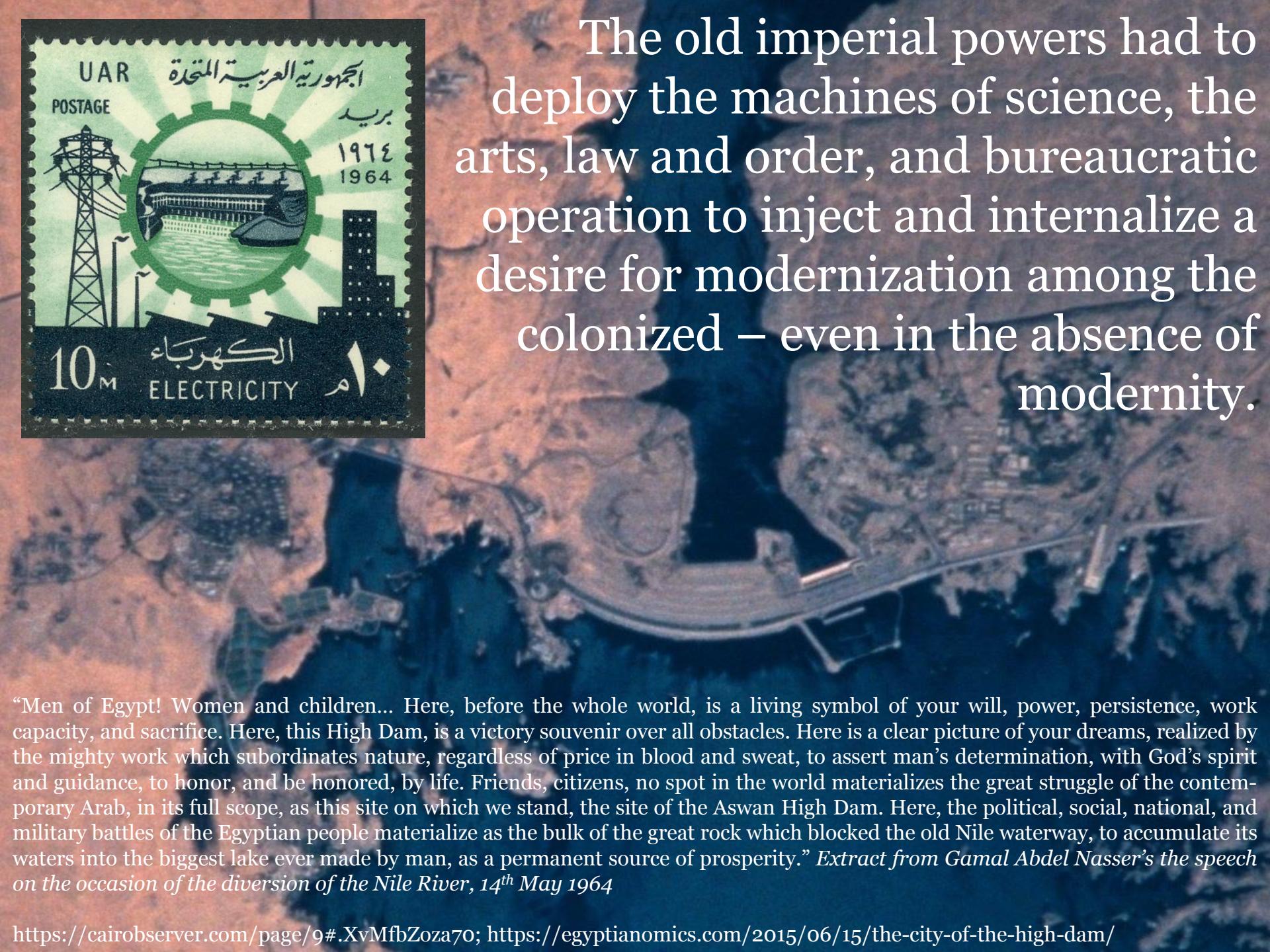


“Colonialism transformed itself from an overt, undisguised process to stealthy self-colonization”

Hassan Fathy at his studio in Darb el-Labbana, Cairo



The old imperial powers had to deploy the machines of science, the arts, law and order, and bureaucratic operation to inject and internalize a desire for modernization among the colonized – even in the absence of modernity.



“Men of Egypt! Women and children... Here, before the whole world, is a living symbol of your will, power, persistence, work capacity, and sacrifice. Here, this High Dam, is a victory souvenir over all obstacles. Here is a clear picture of your dreams, realized by the mighty work which subordinates nature, regardless of price in blood and sweat, to assert man’s determination, with God’s spirit and guidance, to honor, and be honored, by life. Friends, citizens, no spot in the world materializes the great struggle of the contemporary Arab, in its full scope, as this site on which we stand, the site of the Aswan High Dam. Here, the political, social, national, and military battles of the Egyptian people materialize as the bulk of the great rock which blocked the old Nile waterway, to accumulate its waters into the biggest lake ever made by man, as a permanent source of prosperity.” *Extract from Gamal Abdel Nasser’s the speech on the occasion of the diversion of the Nile River, 14th May 1964*



Colonialism is the practice of violent domination, oppression that is by definition systemic and institutional abuse of power, aggressive greed and brute force.

Military Formation

Superfícies do IMPÉRIO COLONIAL PORTUGUÊS
comparadas com as dos principais países da Europa

Portugal (Cont.)	89.106 Km ²
Açores	2.392 »
Madeira	870 »
Cabo Verde	3.930 »
Guiné	36.126 »
S. Tomé e Príncipe	971 »
Angola	1.255.755 »
Mozambique	756.112 »
Estado da Índia	3.806 »
Macau	14 »
Timor	18.989 »
Total	2.168.077 Km ²

Portugal não é um país pequeno | Portugal is Not A Small Country.
Henrique Galvão, Album comemorativo da Primeira Exposição Colonial
Portuguesa, 1934 Porto, Edição da Litografia Nacional. Ministério das Colónial.
<https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:3293851>

Omnipotent Bureaucracy



The Trial (Anthony Perkins in Orson Welles screen adaption of Franz Kafka's nightmare of the same name, 1962)

Monochromatic Enumerator



Brazil (Jonathan Pryce in Terry Gilliam's arresting dystopia, 1985)

Although this may seem a continuation of colonial hangover, five trends characterize the current phase of self-coloniality:

- ❖ The gradual retrenchment of civic bureaucracy and its replacement with a military bureaucracy and basic services
- ❖ The increasing role of the military establishment in infrastructure and housing
- ❖ The growing importance of international institutions' recognition for regime legitimacy
- ❖ The increasing role of real estate services, construction and building sectors in the gross domestic product
- ❖ The urban expansion of entire neighborhoods / districts with self-built housing and parts of the required soft infrastructure (insurgent subjectivities)

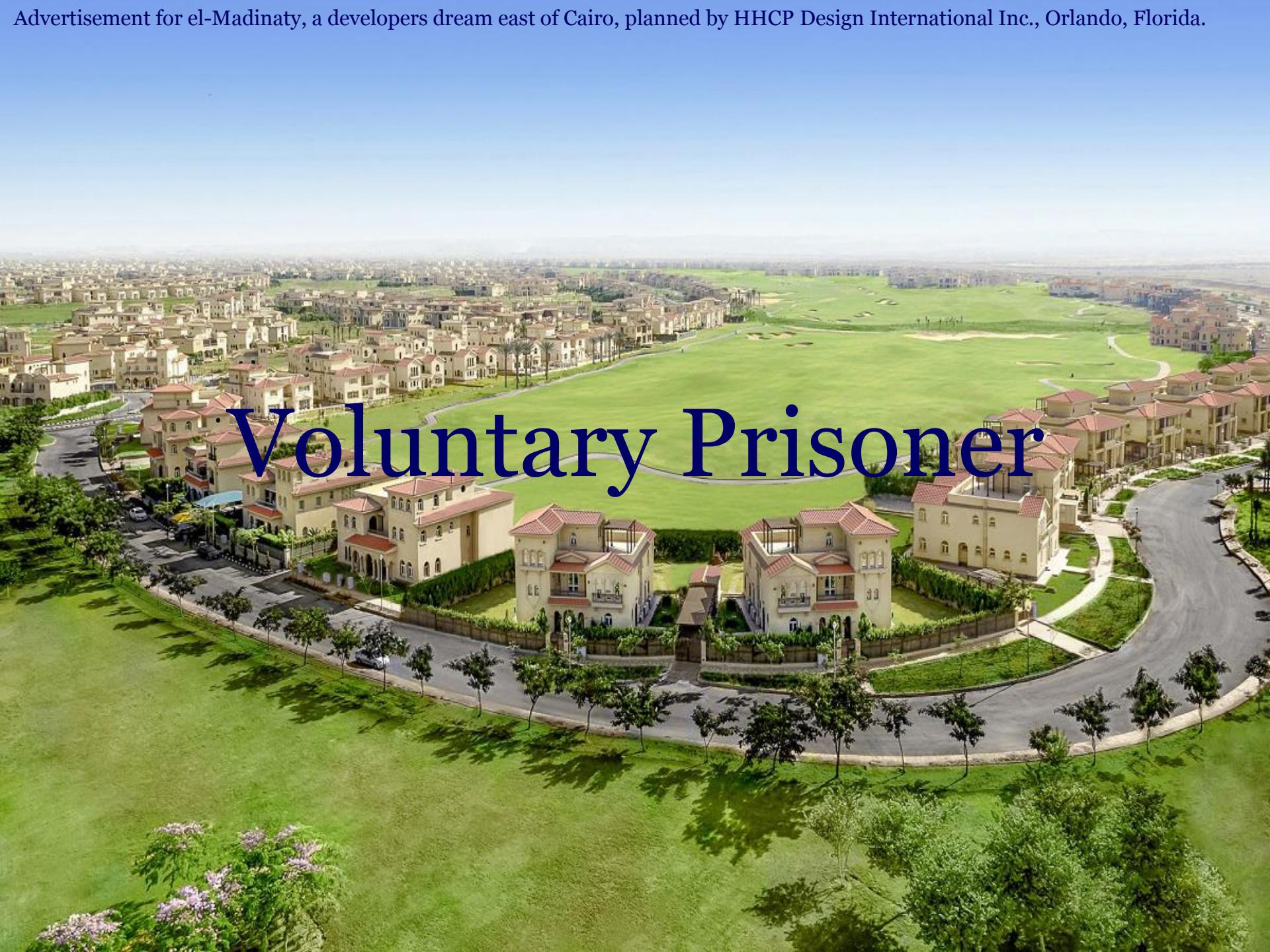
Insurgent Citizenship

Beautification of Midan Tahrir, turning the square into an open-air museum, actually erasing the role and memory of a place.



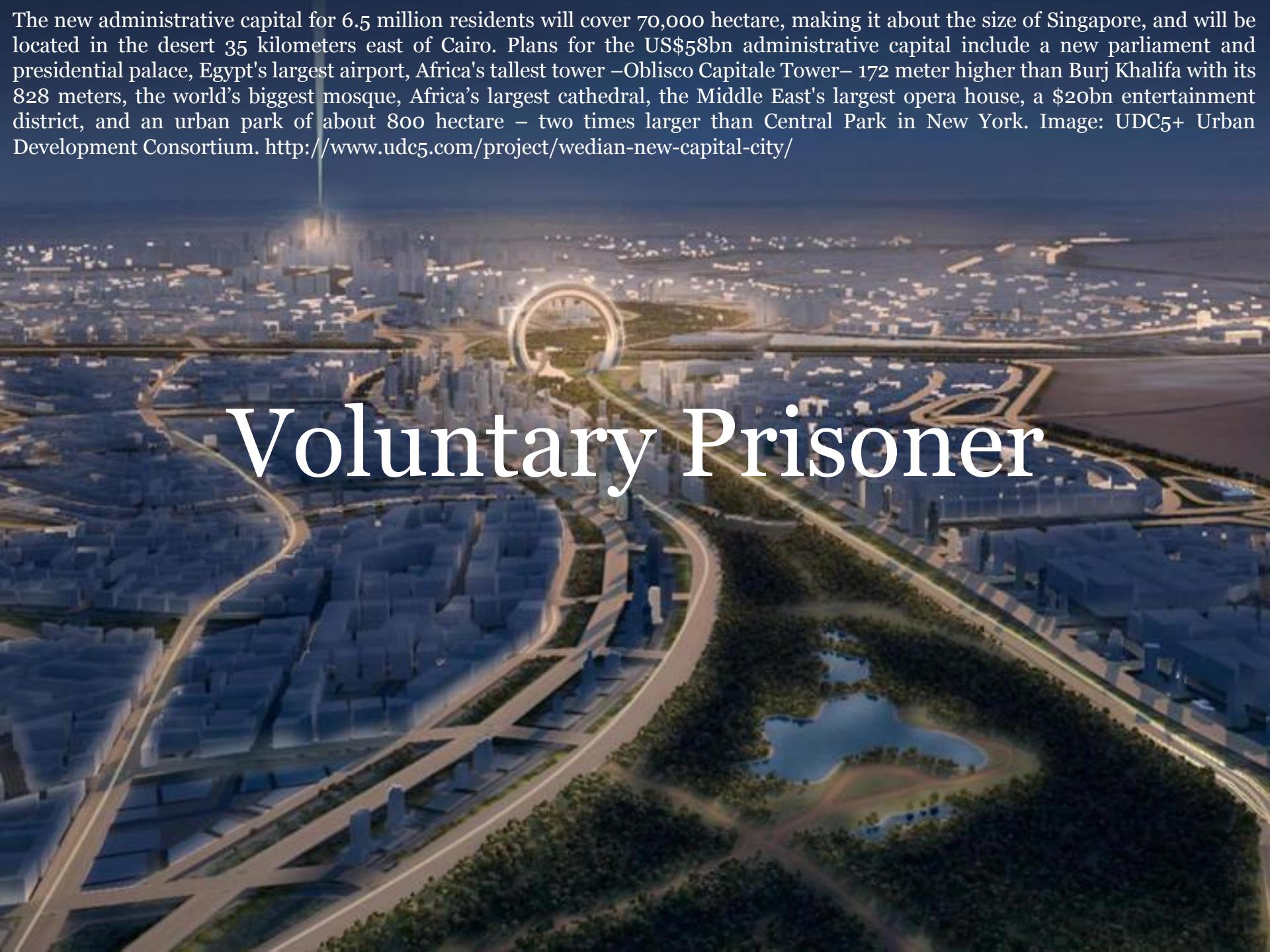
Voluntary Prisoner

Advertisement for el-Madinaty, a developers dream east of Cairo, planned by HHCP Design International Inc., Orlando, Florida.



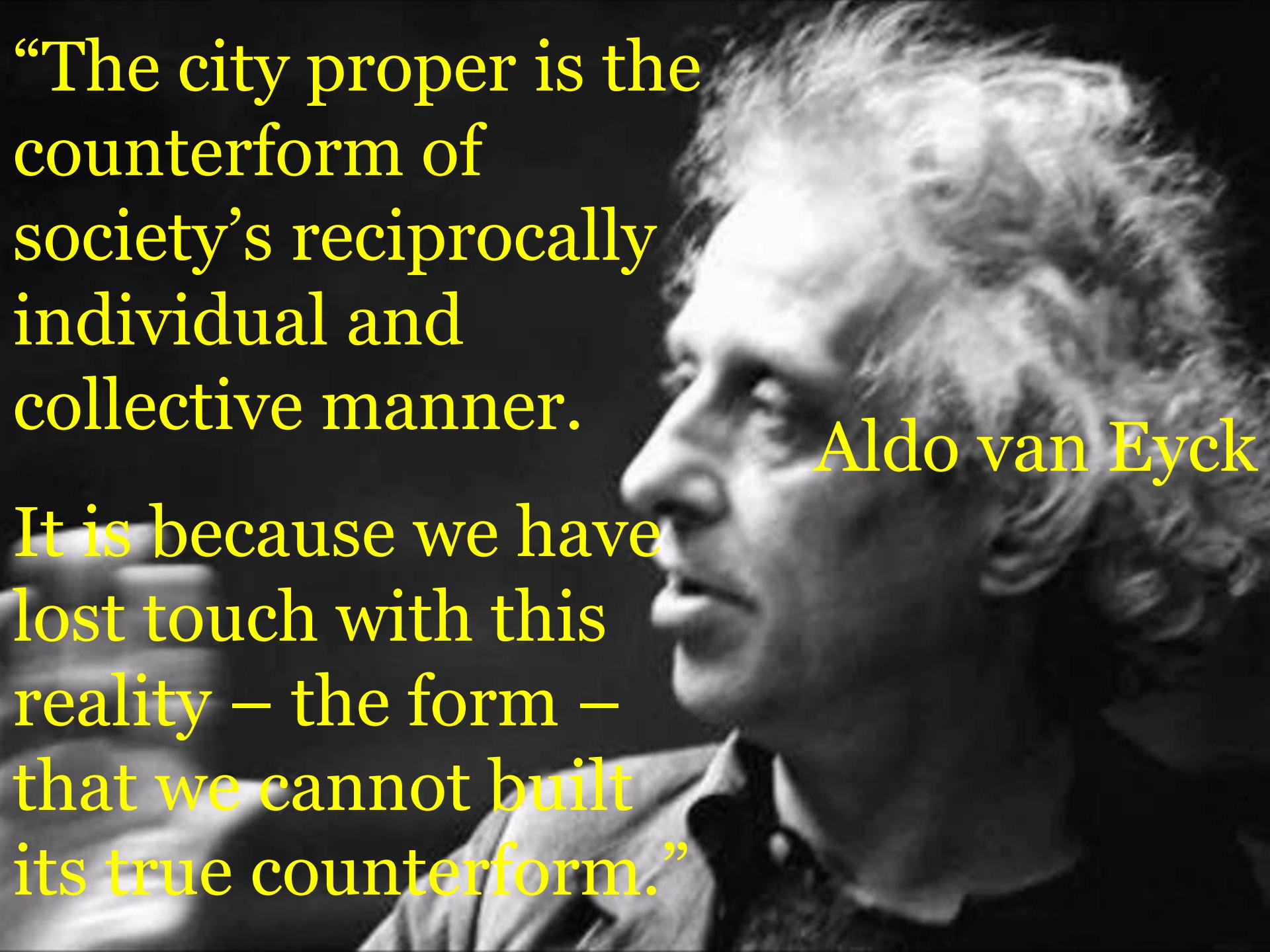
Voluntary Prisoner

The new administrative capital for 6.5 million residents will cover 70,000 hectare, making it about the size of Singapore, and will be located in the desert 35 kilometers east of Cairo. Plans for the US\$58bn administrative capital include a new parliament and presidential palace, Egypt's largest airport, Africa's tallest tower –Oblisco Capitale Tower– 172 meter higher than Burj Khalifa with its 828 meters, the world's biggest mosque, Africa's largest cathedral, the Middle East's largest opera house, a \$20bn entertainment district, and an urban park of about 800 hectare – two times larger than Central Park in New York. Image: UDC5+ Urban Development Consortium. <http://www.udc5.com/project/wedian-new-capital-city/>



Voluntary Prisoner

“The city proper is the counterform of society’s reciprocally individual and collective manner.

A black and white profile photograph of Aldo van Eyck, showing the left side of his face. He has dark, wavy hair and is wearing a light-colored shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

Aldo van Eyck

It is because we have lost touch with this reality – the form – that we cannot built its true counterform.”