

ARCHITECTURAL SPACE AND GREIMASSIAN SEMIOTICS

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Abstract. *Semiotics as a discipline has gained a recognition in many spheres. A.J. Greimas semiotic theory has proven to be suitable for analysing architectural works. Obviously, there is a need of theory regarding architectural space to be collected and compiled to lend a helping hand for a researcher. The article demonstrates how to undertake a close semiotic analysis of the architectural space. Semiotic ‘tools’ help to articulate the form of the expression of the architectural work with the form of the content to make a corresponding reading of the signifying object possible. The article gives a general overview of the semiotics of architecture and space and some of the issues that surface in it. Moreover, it clarifies how signification comes in architecture, spells this out in more detail and confronts us with discursive syntax and semantics.*

Keywords: *semiotics of architecture, Paris School of Semiotics, the form of expression, the form of the content.*

Introduction

Architectural objects do not communicate on their own but function. Dealing with architectural works, it is difficult to talk about the act of communication. Accordingly, semiotics confronts the questions: is it possible to relate functionality with communication? There is a possibility to perceive functions easier and in a different way in analysing architecture from the semiotic point of view. Semiotics is not just a science of signs or sign systems, but it deals with all cultural phenomena as a sign system, identifying culture as communication, which expression - architecture - is a relevant object of analysis.

A. J. Greimas and the so-called Paris School metalanguage is rather complicated as most of the terms are borrowed from linguistics with a given specific meaning. Moreover, there are neologisms created. The semiotics of architecture, as developed by the Paris School, sees an architectural work first of all as a single autonomous object and is concerned with its specific manifestation.

According to A. J. Greimas, a complete isomorphism between the content and expression planes in linguistic texts only occurs in the most perfect poem.¹ In architecture as in poetry, the perfect match of expression and content i.e. the perfect analysis of the object, remains an ideal after which one should strive.

The aim of this article is to offer the metalanguage from the standpoint of Greimassian semiotics that can help to understand the architecture. So we deal with semiotic theory 'adopted' to architectural space and give a general overview of it.

1. Semiotics of Space and Semiotics of Architecture

The semiotics of architecture may be conceived as semiotics of space or spatial semiotics. Space is regarded as utterance (fr. *énoncé*), which is constructed and modified by a human subject, that perceives the space not only visually, but also using all the senses.² According to A. J. Greimas, space starts from the extensiveness³, which refers to space as a continuous and undifferentiated dimension of reality. On the contrary, when we consider extensiveness as a human construct, i.e. place, it is characterized as discontinuous and differentiated. As such it is introduced by the things which occupy it and create discontinuities into it. Dividing extensiveness into places, such as road, land, city, buildings, etc., a certain impoverishment of extensiveness is gained, but a

1 Greimas, A. J. *Essais de semiotique poetique*. Paris: Larousse, 1972.

2 Greimas, A. J.; Courtès, J. *Semiotics and Language. An Analytical Dictionary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 305.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

purposive signification is achieved.⁴ Construction of extensiveness as a series of places requires the construction of semiotic object when space is its signifier. Now signifier is for to embody something more than space, it is more about human being, a signified of all the languages.⁵

Space is a broad term. We come across city, building, forest, map, a piece of art; the term space can also be used metaphorically, philosophically, psychologically or from a geometrical point of view. Space is also socio-cultural phenomenon, involving the theme of place. So architectural object is not just created with the help of measurement, but it is a result of socio-cultural processes. Consequently, people arrange their space reflecting differences in social and cultural life.

Architecture is a specific kind of spacial semiotics. In a narrower sense it is referring to buildings and how its meaning gains the form and appeals to our senses. The building combines two processes. The first whereby the building comes into existence and the second whereby the meaning of the building changes after daily use. The subject cannot be left out of the semiotics of architecture. Just as in spacial semiotics, so in architectural semiotics a subject (designer, builder, user, etc.) produces the meaning.⁶ For this reason, architectural semiotics is never just related to the building as it comes from the hands of the builders, as those who use it can redefine it and change its original meaning.

Construction of the building includes various narrative programs that can change during the serving time of the building. The final phase of the completion of the building is a result of various programs and anti-programs involving the phases of manipulation, competence, realization and sanction. A good illustration could be the French supermarket that was designed using semiotic analysis.⁷ Some shoppers expected to get in and out of the supermarket quickly, while others thought of the supermarket as a place where they could meet. Accordingly, careful semiotic analysis made it possible to design such a building that both expectations could be met.

Historic buildings can have a clash of programs and anti-programs and their semantic values, as each subject having influence on the building wants to fulfill its goals. Naturally, alongside the social, economical, political factors come into play functional and aesthetic considerations.

Semiotic approach offers an insight into the works of architecture as works of art. Moreover, works of architecture are productions of the architect and other participants in a combination with new and old technologies. It means that the artistic production of architecture is no longer the exclusive work of architects alone. Aistė Andriušytė points that the position of architecture in art is a very important theoretical question. Considering that the primary task of architecture is to produce or form a useful space,

4 Greimas, A. J. Pour une semiotique topologique, Semiotique de l'espace. Architecture, urbanisme, sortir de l'impasse. In: Greimas, A. J. *Semiotique et sciences sociales*. Paris: Seuil, 1976, p. 129.

5 Greimas, A. J. Pour une semiotique topologique, Semiotique de l'espace. Architecture, urbanisme, sortir de l'impasse. In: Greimas, A. J. *Semiotique et sciences sociales*. Paris: Seuil, 1976, p. 129.

6 Renier, A. *Espace, representation et semiotique de l'architecture. Espace et Representation*. Paris: Editions de La Villette, 1982, p. 11.

7 Floch, J.-M. *Semiotics, Marketing and Communication*. Presses Universitaires de France, 1988, p. 138–164.

the question arises how to make a hierarchy of usefulness. In any case, architecture is a mediator and its artistic value is not self-contained. It is a result of project idea, building process and use, that reveals itself in plastic forms. In this regard the nature of architecture is syncretic, when various spacial organizations border but not merge, as it is in sculpture, painting and theatre.⁸

Consequently, here we come to the plane of the expression and the question what is more important according to the semiotic approach: the form of the expression or the form of the content.

2. The Form of the Expression and the Form of the Content

Referring to the dimensions of the signifier (expression) and the signified (content) of Ferdinand de Saussure, we acknowledge that the form/substance of the expression in architecture is constructed and identified as a material architectural object or 'tectonics'.⁹ The form/substance of the content refers to the semantic and syntactic structures that form the sign-object and the meaning communicated by it. Moreover, architecture is a semi-symbolic system. It has some correspondence between the form of the expression and the form of the content, but the correspondence lays not between individual elements of both, but between categories - related patterns of the elements in the form of the content and certain related elements in the signifying form. Just as with texts, the form of the content in architecture is not attainable without the form of the expression. So the latter serves as a pointer to the content. In fact, semiotic analysis is usually conducted using both planes at a time, rather than by giving one priority over the other, but for the sake of comprehensiveness one should begin with the form of the expression.

Just as in painting and sculpture, one deals with a plastic dimension in the semiotics of space and of architecture. The plastic dimension consists of the materiality of the form of the expression which makes a space or a building a constructed space. The plastic categories cover chromatic (related to colors and shades of light) and eidetic categories (related to the shape of the different units). A.J. Greimas wonders whether the most elementary level of architectural signification may not be constituted by the phemic opposition 'curved' vs. 'straight'.¹⁰

The other set of categories, topological, refer to the arrangement of the plastic configurations, covering the categories of position (vertical vs. horizontal, high vs. low, above vs. below, right vs. left, central vs. peripheral, etc.) and of orientation (vertical vs. horizontal, upwards vs. downwards, linear vs. circular, forwards vs. backwards and so forth).

8 Andriušytė, A. *Architektūros psichologinės vertės teorinės prielaidos*. Daktaro disertacija. Humanitariniai mokslai, menotyra. Vilnius: Technika, 1999, p. 19.

9 Levy, A. *Sémiotique de l'espace: architecture classique sacrée*. Paris: EHESS, 1979. The term 'tectonics' was coined by A. Levy (1979, 1983) in regard to phonetics. Although A. J. Greimas in dealing with architecture uses the term phoneme (Greimas/Courtes: 1979, p. 233).

10 Greimas, A. J. *Sémiotique et sciences sociales*. Paris: Seuil, 1976, p. 147–151.

3. Discursive Structures

In analyzing the form of the content, one should follow the sequence of the levels of the generative trajectory. So, the analysis of discursive level is to be performed in order the discourse gets the form, when three axis are examined: actor, time, place.¹¹

Firstly, dealing with the actor in architectural discourse, there should be made a distinction between the ‘I’ of the architect or builder and ‘I’ of the patron or client. Of course, there are various third-persons, that are known as the actors of the utterance, as opposed to ‘I’ and ‘you’ - actors of the enunciation. Actually, it is comparatively rare for buildings to carry the signature of the builder/architect, more often the patron’s name is inscribed. It is a question whether ‘I’ disengagements can occur in architectural discourse just as they do in literary discourse. It is more like engagements in which the enunciator projects himself into the utterance in the third-person.

It is seldom observed, as it was noted, that the name of the builder or architect to be written in stone, but their names may be used in speaking about a building. For example, certain Gothic revival churches are referred to in England as ‘Pugin churches’. Besides, for example, in early Christian iconography the patrons of the mosaic or fresco immortalized themselves by having their portrait incorporated into the artwork.¹²

It is important not to overlook the ‘receiver’ as a subject of the enunciation. In this case, there could be such examples as ‘children’s playground’, ‘public park’, etc. So a person or persons to whom the object is dedicated may also be seen as a receiver. Moreover, streets, parks, buildings are often named after prominent individuals, or are remembered in the form of statues or other memorials. In architecture there are some components that reflect the enunciation: the manner of building, technique, that points to the time, etc. So, one can ask what the marks of the enunciation in the building are?

Here the question of aspectualization of the actor occur. The actant-observer, who observes the actor’s relation with the space, foreseeing the quality of the functions of the actor, is very important. The actor may act freely, or may be confronted with some obstacles; can behave in one way, the other actor can act quite differently. Elisabeth Stroker speaks about the space of action. This space is related with the lived body, that acts in the space. Articulation of the space depends on place, which usefulness is related to the lived body. The author points that the subject (the lived body) has its own place in the space of action. However, this place is gained differently. The place to objects is ascribed, but subjects can find the place themselves. All the places in the space of action are individual and are equivalent to their usefulness.¹³

11 Giroud, J. C.; Panier, L. *Semiotika. Diskurso analizės teorija*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1991, nr. 1, p. 137.

12 Lukken, G.; Searle, M. *Semiotics and Church Architecture*. Kampen, Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1993, p. 30.

13 Stroker, E. *Investigations in Philosophy of Space*. Ohio University Press, 1985, p. 52.

Time in discursive syntax is also an important question. The enunciator in the ‘now’ of the act of enunciating projects time outside himself as ‘not-now’ of the utterance. In architecture an example could be an inscription with the date or the year. This information represents a temporal disengagement of the utterance. On the contrary, a temporal disengagement of the enunciation could be if the inscription read ‘Now...’ or ‘On this day...’¹⁴

Place is another of the poles which enter into the construction or organization of the discursive syntax. The Paris School talks about three kinds of spacial disengagement of the utterance, namely: spacial localization, spacial programming and spacial aspectualization.¹⁵

Spacial localization depends on the selected topical space. Surrounding areas are called heterotopic spaces. Thus, such a separation is quite relative, because it depends on where the subject is. Within the topical space a further distinction into the utopic space (where a particular performance takes place, for example, a restaurant when people are dining) and paratopic space (where the competence is acquired for the performance undertaken in the utopic space, for example, the supermarket where food is brought and the kitchen where it is prepared and finally the restaurant) can be made.

Spacial programming can be illustrated with the example of the supermarket and kitchen (paratopic) in relation with the dining room, and, for example, the park where people are resting is paratopic in relation with the main program of sightseeing.

Spacial aspectualization is related to the actant-observer, that can foresee the connection of the space and the freely moving subject. The observer ‘looks’ at the location of objects from the vantage point; or the location could be assessed in terms of the accessibility to the different senses (seeing, touching, smelling, hearing). In aspectualization, an observer has to offer a vantage point representing the average person. There should be a hypothetical subject. Regarding the subject the relation between the objects in space is perceived as ‘close’ or ‘far’, ‘easy acceptable’ or ‘unacceptable’, ‘visually acceptable’ or ‘visually unacceptable’.¹⁶ As far as the pragmatic dimension of spacial aspectualization concerns, the observer assessing the distance between two points can register the program from one point to another in terms of inchoativity (setting out), durativity (progress along the way) and terminativity (arriving). According to Gerrard Lukken, aspectualization is also important when one looks at the entrances. This example points to the aspect of inchoativity and terminativity. Moreover, there is the aspect of incompleteness, when the building is not finished or half ruined. Francois Bastide remarks that in differentiating between places in terms of the total sensorium (sight, touch, sound, smell) the visual is usually dominant.¹⁷ Although, in Greimas work ‘*Apie netobulumą*’ (De l’imperfection), he speaks of visuality as the most superficial of all the senses. Taste and smell, according to him, create a more intense level of conjunction between subject and object.¹⁸ The distance between the points can be

14 Lukken, G.; Searle, M., *supra* note 12, p. 31.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 32–33.

16 *Ibid.*

17 Lukken, G.; Searle, M., *supra* note 12, p. 32–33.

18 Greimas, A. J. *De l’imperfection*. Perigueux, P. Fanlac, 1987, p. 71–78.

figuratively expressed by the borders or walls, that separate the spaces. Besides, spacial aspectualization allows to divide the objects into easily accessible or not accessible, or those that could be reached only for some time.

A very important role in discursive semantic plays figurativization and thematization. Figurativization is connected to the figurative function of an utterance. It has to do with the organization or form of the content of the utterance insofar as the organization is related to the world. Thematization is of different nature. It is also related to the organization or form of the content of the utterance, but it is connected to the intentionality or language of approach which the utterance adopts towards the world of which it speaks. Buildings and other constructed spaces have lots of elements, that point to the world that we know.¹⁹ The utterances are constructed in a well known way to us, because we have a discursive memory. The architectural utterance may call to mind such configurations as those, for example, of a skyscraper, etc. In the interior there could be some micro-narratives, i.e. rooms. Finally, there is a matter of style: modern, gothic, baroque, etc.²⁰

Thematization has to answer such questions: what thematic value or values do these figures have in a particular discourse, how do these figures reflect the world, what are the thematic trajectories? For example, a courtyard: does it thematize privacy, inaccessibility, and hiddenness vs. openness to the public, accessibility, and visibility? Searching for thematic values and figures, one must not leave out the spacial arrangement and the way people act to occupy the space. Space is a syncretic object. For example, the sign on the building also adds some colors to the syncretism, as it can signify the thematic value of cosiness and informality.

4. The Surface Level and the Deep Level

The next step of semiotic analysis concerns the surface level, which also as the discursive level has syntactic and semantic components.

Syntactic components of the surface level are explained by the conjunction (the subject and object are in one space at a time) and disjunction (the subject and object are in different spaces at a time). So, there appears an opposition between something that is inside and outside or between the subject and object.

The surface level of space and buildings was analysed by Manar Hammad. He points out, that those who construct the building give some syntactic roles to it. If the space is divided with the help of some roles, then there appear topical spaces that have their own syntactic roles and participate in various narrative programs as all other actants (sender, receiver, subject, object, and observer) do.²¹ We can therefore speak of the immanent organization of space, when space is a means of communication and brings about signification, independently of the actors that enter that space.²² For example,

19 Lukken, G.; Searle, M., *supra* note 12, p. 37–38.

20 *Ibid.*

21 Hammad, M. Actes Semiotiques, Definition syntaxique du topos. *Le Bulletin*. 1979, 7: 30–32; 10: 25–27.

22 Hammad, M. Nouveaux Actes Semiotiques 1. *La privatisation de l'espace*. 1989, 4, 5.

some space segments may have the role of sender. This role is dedicated to the topoi by the collective sender. An architect can decide that a topical space in the town can have a manipulative role. Moreover, the sender may be a road or town sign, pedestrian crossings, billboards, roads themselves, the front door, the garage, the living room, etc. So, senders manipulate the receivers and, of course, human actants - for example, barriers permit the driver to pass, but on certain conditions.

M.Hammad points to the fact that topoi can have the role of modal object. This is the case when modal values or competencies are associated with a place. So, topoi can be associated with competencies attributed to the actants who occupy those different places. The topoi manipulate and give certain performative modalities: of having-to, being-able-to, wanting-to or knowing-how-to-do. For example: a university that determine the modal competencies of having-to, wanting-to, being-able-to and knowing-how-to-teach (the topos of the lecturer) and having-to, wanting-to, being-able-to, knowing-how-study (the topos of the students). So, as it was mentioned, conjunction with a particular topoi give modal competencies.

Competencies are differentiated by the boundaries, that can be imaginary ('private' vs. 'public' place) or having physical form. Boundaries point to the differentiated topoi that are associated with different competencies. So roles and competencies are topologically marked. Topoi can be an object of value. For example: home of a subject is an object of value where the subject gets what he/she wants - privacy and safety.²³

According to G. Lukken, in considering the roles of topoi as senders, objects of value, and modal objects, three topical configurations are significant: the polemical, the contractual, the polemical-contractual or contractual-polemical. In each case, the relations exist between the topoi on the level of the expression form corresponding to the relations between the topoi at the level of the content form is important.²⁴

Polemical topical configuration (Figure 1) or structure occurs when each actant is located in a topos confronting the other. In this situation the respective topoi has a manipulative role, concerning the actants that are in these topoi. So, there appears a modally asymmetrical or polemical relationship. The topoi function as bearers of modal values (competencies), sometimes functioning as objects of value. G. Lukken gives an example, when workers live in the houses (1) differentiated from the houses of the employers (2). Other examples: a football field - a program and anti-program that find spacial expression; a lecturer standing before the audience. This is how in Figure 1 it is illustrated (no room for overlap between topos 1 and topos 2):

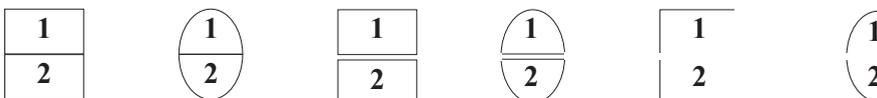


Figure 1. Polemical topical configuration

23 Hammad, M., *supra* note 22, p. 72–77.

24 Lukken, G.; Searle, M., *supra* note 12, p. 48–51.

Contractual topical configuration (Figure 2) has a ring or square with an empty space at the centre. This configuration appears after joining into a contractual modal relationship with each other; or this configuration can also be as a value-object invested with contractual modal competence. This configuration is found in all cultures:

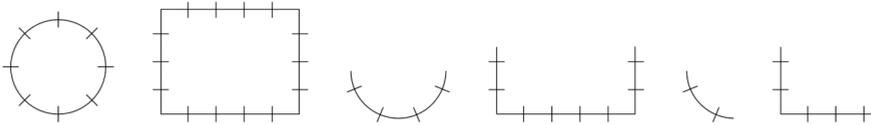


Figure 2. Contractual topical configuration

Polemical-contractual or contractual-polemical topical configuration (Figure 3):

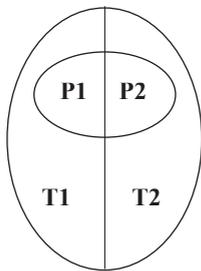


Figure 3. Polemical-contractual or contractual-polemical topical configuration

There (Figure 3) are two different topoi, each with its own pole or point of orientation are juxtaposed, but with an empty space in the middle. According to G. Lukken, a classic example of this arrangement is the space prepared for Japanese tea ceremony, in which the guest’s topos (T1) has its own pole consisting of a piece of calligraphy or a flower (P1), while the host’s topos (T2) has the fire as its pole (P2).

The Polemical-contractual type of configuration can be visualized as a circle with the pole functioning as its centre (Figure 4) (for example, a seminar meeting where the place is reserved for a professor to sit):

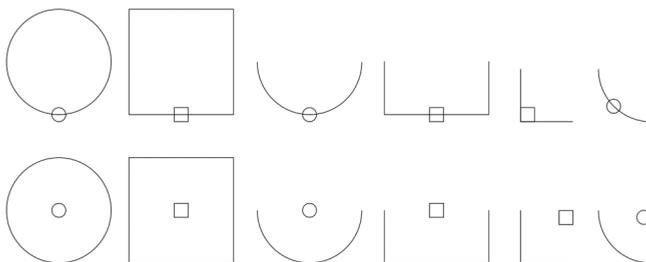


Figure 4. Polemical-contractual configuration

The constructed space helps people to communicate. People relationship, relationship between things and people is ruled not only with the help of language or behavior. Obviously, the space helps to communicate. The constructed space helps the people to characterize themselves and forms the relations between people as contractual, polemical, polemical-contractual or contractual-polemical. From the point of view of semiotics, architecture can manipulate and control interpersonal relations. Architecture plays the role of a delegated subject, that is integrated into the interaction between two actants, that occupy the space and keep to modal relations.

According to G.Lukken, actantial roles can be defined as hierarchically organized programs, when senders and subjects can be analyzed in regard to the sequence of manipulation: a) the main sender of the building - architect, client, etc; b) the topical configuration of the building - a first delegated sender c) specific topical configuration, that is introduced by the people using the building - a second-level delegated sender. For relations with the elements, such a sequence of delegations could appear: a) the client, architect, builder, etc. - the original senders b) the way the building configures the light (for example, windows) - a first delegated sender c) a blind introduced by the occupant - a second delegated sender d) additional lightning - a third delegated sender.²⁵

The Semantic component - looking at the semantic dimension of the surface level, there should be identified the semantic values (classemes) that are in the spacial value object. An example could be a building that is bought for own purposes - for living there, or a building for other purposes. Modal values are associated with the topoi. So, conjunction with the topos as an object of value is for gaining modal semantic values, associated with the particular topos (for example, a queen sits on the throne to show the leadership). When the subject is in conjunction with the topos, the topos can be looked at as a subject of value. Besides, the thrones can be not of the same value, although they express the same modal competencies, their semantic values differ, depending on the way they are exposed in the topos. In this way, the throne can bear the values of closed, high, exclusive vs. open, low, inclusive.

Finally, there arises a question of the deep level, as we deal with the final elementary structure governing the signification of a particular discourse. This structure can be laid out on the semiotic square. Semantic components belong to the virtual values. The classemes can be set out on the four corners. So, the semiotic square points to the operations, that transform the elements of meaning.

Conclusions

The article is intended to demonstrate how with the help of semiotic ‘tools’ the form of the expression of the architectural work can be articulated with the form of the content to make a corresponding reading of the signifying object possible.

1. Undertaking a close semiotic analysis of the architectural space one may find out how the exterior or interior presents itself to be read by those who encounter it.

25 Lukken, G.; Searle, M., *supra* note 12, p. 52.

2. Semiotics of Space and Semiotics of Architecture helps to get a general overview of the semiotics of architecture and space and some of the issues that surface in it.

3. The Form of the Expression and the Form of the Content clarifies how signification comes about in architecture and spells this out in more detail. In The Form of the Expression we deal with topological and plastic categories. In The Form of the Content we are confronted with discursive syntax and semantics.

4. The Surface Level looks at the various topoi and the Deep Level can give a constitutional model of the semantic micro-universe of the building and help to identify the axiological values.

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ARCHITEKTŪRINĖ ERDVĖ IR GREIMO SEMIOTIKA

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Santrauka. Galima teigti, jog architektūros semiotika yra viena iš erdvės semiotikos šakų. Architektūroje reikšmė įgauna formą ir apeliuoja į mūsų jausliškumą. Pastatas apima du procesus: pastato statybą ir jo reikšmės kitimą eksploatuojant. Kaip ir erdvės semiotiko-

je, architektūros semiotikoje subjektas dalyvauja kuriant reikšmę, įprasmina pastatą. Visi subjektai (kuriems priskiriamas dizainerio, statytojo vaidmuo, ar tie, kuriuos vadinsime vartotojais) atlieka esminį vaidmenį įprasminant pastatą. Pradinę reikšmę pastatas įgauna dalyvaujant statytojui, o visas kitas reikšmes tuomet, kai keičiama bet kuri, kad ir pati menkiausia, pastato detalė. Dar kitą reikšmę pastatas įgauna atsiradus suvokėjui – subjektui, kuris įvertina statytojo ir vartotojo „atrastas“ pastato reikšmes. Todėl architektūros semiotika yra susijusi ne tik su statybininko sukurtu pastatu, bet ir su pastato vartotojais, kurie laikytini pastato bendraautoriais bei suvokėjais.

Architektūra yra semiotinė simbolinė sistema. Joje išraiškos forma turi panašumų su turinio forma. Tai yra ne individualių formos ir turinio elementų, o kategorijų panašumai. Pradėti analizuoti architektūrą, kaip ir bet kokią kitą diskursą, rašytiniai šaltiniai siūlo nuo turinio formos, tačiau negalima nesutikti, jog turinio forma yra neišsivaizduojama be išraiškos formos. Išraiškos forma yra nuoroda į turinį. Tuomet reikia apimti abi plotmes – išraiškos ir turinio, visgi pradedant nuo išraiškos formos.

Išanalizuoti architektūrinę erdvę ir atsakyti į klausimą – ką ir koku būdu architektūros objektai „komunikuoja“, nėra paprasta. Reikia paminėti, jog komunikacinis aspektas architektūroje nėra ryškus ar ypač pastebimas, vyrauja funkcinis aspektas. Architektūros objektai nekomunikuoja patys savaime, t. y. sukurti ne komunikuoti, o funkcionuoti. Niekas neabejoja tuo, jog stogo funkcija – uždengti, durų – įeiti ar išeiti. Atsižvelgiant į tokius pavyzdžius, būtų sudėtinga kalbėti apie komunikacijos aktą, kai akivaizdžiai matoma, jog atitinkamas objektas atlieka tam tikrą funkciją. Analizuojant architektūrą semiotiniu būdu, t. y. vadovaujantis A. J. Greimo (Paryžiaus mokyklos) semiotine teorija, įmanomas aiškesnis šių funkcijų suvokimas bei kitokio funkcionalumo atradimas. Semiotika – tai mokslas, tiriantis visus kultūrinius fenomenus kaip ženklų sistemą, iškeliant hipotezę, jog visi kultūriniai fenomenai yra ženklų sistema, arba kultūra – tai komunikacija, kurios reiškinytis – architektūra yra vertas dėmesio analizės objektas. Semiotiniais „įrankiais“ įmanoma funkcionalumą priartinti prie komunikacijos. Taip pat siekiama parodyti, jog pasitelkiant semiotiką galima išsiaiškinti, ar architektūros objekto išraiškos forma atitinka turinio formą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: architektūros semiotika, Paryžiaus semiotikos mokykla, turinio forma, išraiškos forma.

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