

TEXTUAL READINGS OF ARCHITECTURE: ORIENTING SEMIOSPHERE

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ABSTRACT

TEXTUAL READINGS OF ARCHITECTURE: ORIENTING SEMIOSPHERE

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Architectural discourse has been affected by the paradigmatic shift in linguistics that has been cultivated since 1960s. The so-called “linguistic paradigm” in architecture has been playing a significant role in the constitution of architectural discourse and motivating architects to realize new strategies for the production of architectural form, not to say style. This thesis is an inquiry into the disciplinary formation of architecture with its relation to culture at large, where architecture is located in-between internal and external determinants. The thesis proposes how the term “text” has been “transcoded” into architecture and how architecture is defined textual in reference to its sociocultural background. Developed around the concept of “semiosphere” introduced and defined by Yuri M. Lotman, the thesis proposes to read architecture as a textual framework.

Keywords: Language, Text, Autonomy, Architectural theory, Semiosphere.

ÖZ

MİMARLIĞIN METİNSEL OKUMALARI: ANLAMMEKAN'I KONUMLANDIRMAK

Eşingen, Günce

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Mimarlık, 1960'lerden itibaren dilbiliminde gelişen, dili zaman içerisinde geçirdiği tarihsel değişimlerle tanımlayan dizisel kaymadan etkilenmiştir. “Dilbilimsel paradigma” olarak adlandırılan bu kayma mimari söylemin yapılanmasında önemli rol oynarken mimari biçimin üretimine dair yeni izlemler gerçekleştirmeyi de tetiklemiştir. Bu tez, mimarlığın kendi içsel ve dışsal belirleyicileri arasındaki durumunu tanımlayarak mimarlığın kültür ile ilişkisi üzerinden kendi disipliner oluşumunu sorgulamaktadır. “Metin” teriminin mimarlık içerisinde nasıl “yeniden kodlandığını” ve mimarlığın kendi sosyokültürel arka planına kaynakla nasıl metinsel olarak sıfatlandırıldığını sunmaktadır. Çalışma, Yuri M. Lotman tarafından ileri sürülen ve tanımlanan “anlammekan” kavramı üzerinden gelişerek, mimarlığın kendisinin bir metinsel çerçeve olarak okunmasını önermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Dil, Metin, Otonomi, Mimarlık Teorisi, Anlammekan.

To *Universe of the mind*,

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In an object-world, 'architecture' stands through its stasis, it exists via its tangible materiality structured adherence to the site. Architecture requires a corporeal presence, a body which Frampton calls an "ontological form" manifested by the tactile dimension. Architecture with capital "A" is manifested by the quality of concreteness, culminates in tectonic formation. The physicality can be outlined as a final goal following a formalistic progression consisting of varied modes of representation;¹ can be listed as drawings, models and/ or texts. Those are specified as a set of projections; substitutes of the resulting work, which is indicated as "the repository of a complete idea of a building."² However, architecture in a unified sense is referred to that idea which governs more than the process and the product; and it is performed as a distinctive mode of production implemented to diverse spheres. Architecture itself actively constitutes a form of knowledge extending its disciplinary boundaries to go beyond the built work;³ it functions as a communicative mechanism which stimulates interaction between its constituents. Following the account of Patrik Schumacher in respect to the inquiry on the complexities of architecture;

¹ Representation as a term is used in its most conventional meaning.

² Alberto Pérez- Gómez and Louise Pelletier, "Architectural Representation beyond Perspectivism," *Perspecta*, 1992, Vol.27, p.26.

³ What the study refers to "built work" is the good architecture distinguished from mere building.

“The term architecture is usually assumed to denote either a certain class of artefacts – the class of all (fine) buildings- or an academic domain of knowledge concerned with this class of artefacts or, finally, a professional activity directed towards the production of such artefacts. However, architecture as a system of communications is neither a mere collection of artefacts, nor a mere form of knowledge, nor merely a particular professional practice. Rather it encompasses all three categories: artefacts, knowledge and practices – all understood as communications that connect to each other in an ongoing recursive network.”⁴

The network that encompasses all the categories of architecture as stated can be referred as a total theoretical sphere to define architecture; “architecture as a system of communications.” The understanding of architecture as an unifying system can extend its operational capacities through a search for the “metaphysically complete”⁵ architecture, which can be read as the same system that makes the communication possible between its categories; artefacts, knowledge and practices. As Tschumi indicates:

“Does architecture produces copies or models? If it cannot imitate an order, can it constitute one, whether it be the world or society? Must architecture create its own model, if it has no created model? Positive answers inevitably imply some archetype. But as this archetype cannot exist outside architecture, architecture must produce one itself. It thus becomes some sort of an essence that precedes existence. So that architect is once again “the person who

⁴ Patrik Schumacher, The Autopoiesis of Architecture: A New Framework for Architecture, Wiley, 2011, Vol. I., p.1.

⁵ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction: /Twisting the Separatrix/”, Architecture | Theory | since 1968, 1998, Massachusetts: MIT Press, p.708.

conceives the form of the building without manipulating materials himself.” He conceives the *pyramid*, this ultimate model of reason. Architecture becomes *a cosa mentale* and the forms conceived by the architect ensure the domination of the idea over matter.”⁶

Architecture has diverse modes of production considering its multi-layered nature. “Communication in architecture depends on the sequential development from schematic representation, as in signification in language, to allegorical, the placing of the schematic representation in a narrative, and then to symbolic, the reading of architecture as concept divorced from physical presence.”⁷ While the term “architecture” refers to an artefact, the knowledge or the practice, these three categories can only be read together as the products of a “*cosa mentale*,” if architecture is regarded as a concept. The transformation of the definition of “architecture” from term to concept is only possible as long as the built work is involved in the production of meaning. “Architecture derives its meaning from the circumstances of its creation; and this implies that what is external to architecture- what can broadly be called its set of functions- is of vital importance.”⁸ The emphasis Colquhoun places on the context of architecture challenges architecture to negotiate between its own categories and its external functions. Therefore, reading of architecture as a concept associates the capacity of architecture to intervene between vast ranges of its constituents. Then, architecture becomes a communicative medium, which undertakes the burden of the production of meaning. However, architecture does not denote “the” meaning specific to “the” architecture belonging to a particular

⁶ Bernard Tschumi, “Architectural Paradox,” Architecture and Disjunction, MIT Press, 1996, p.38.

⁷ John Hendrix, “Architecture as the Psyche of a Culture,” Cultural Role of Architecture, edited by Paul Emmons, John Hendrix and Jane Lomholt, Oxon: Routledge, 2012, p.209.

⁸ Alan Colquhoun, “Postmodernism and Structuralisms,” Modernity and the Classical Tradition, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989, p.254.

type or style, but meanings amplified via its constructive characters designated such as social, cultural and historical.

While these statements call for the paradigmatic shift of literary theory and cultural studies of the 1960s, the study of meaning; semiotics has become a major approach to understand complex systems taking part in communication. “A revival of interest in meaning and symbolism in architecture,”⁹ is paralleled with this shift and the architectural discourse is nourished considerably from linguistics and semiotics regarding the broad range of former studies in the extent of the analogy between language and architecture.

The dissertation of Prof. Dr. Ayşen Savaş titled “Between Document and Monument: Architectural Artifact in an Age of Specialized Institutions,” 1994, covers “integration of architectural culture into a larger cultural system”¹⁰ and the thesis and the courses and projects generated from that can be thought as an early introduction of semiology into the intellectual setting of Turkey. Thereafter, questioning architecture through semiology remained undermined in the architectural discourse of Turkey more than a decade, which has formed a gap in between its international counterparts until it has been realized as a remedy and received an overdue appreciation.¹¹

⁹ Kate Nesbitt, “Introduction,” Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: an anthology of architectural theory 1965-1995, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, p.32.

¹⁰ Ayşen Savaş, “Between Document and Monument: Architectural Artifact in an Age of Specialized Institutions,” Diss. MIT, 1994, p.2.

¹¹ For instance: Atilla Yücel, “Mimarlıkta Dil ve Anlam,” Mimarlar Odası İstanbul Büyükkent Şubesi, 2005; Uğur Tanyeli, “Türkiye’nin Görsellik Tarihine Giriş,” Metis Yayınları, 2010; The international semiotic conference “Is it real? Structuring Reality by means of signs” held in Çankaya University, 2013.

Today, however, the expatiation of the semiological discourse into the architectural milieu can be delineated as *passé* as the heydays of semiology was in the 1960s. But there is still a possibility of promoting knowledge in architecture through linguistic theories. The title of this thesis “Textual Readings of Architecture: Orienting Semiosphere” underlines a semiological term “semiosphere” which is the ultimate object and subject of this epistemological possibility. The thesis proposes to read architecture as a textual framework itself with reference to the concept of “semiosphere” which has been coined by Russian semiologist Yuri M. Lotman and it has become known in 1990s for breaking a new semiotic agenda.

The concept “semiosphere” is oriented into architecture by revisiting the seminal article of Diana Agrest, “Design versus Non-Design,” 1974. Although the definition of culture in her article has been made in reference to Lotman’s concept of culture, 1971, it has been credited only with a hidden footnote. Also, in the introduction to the article in the anthology edited by Michael Hays, neither the significance of the position of Lotman nor his definition of “culture” in comparison to “nonculture” is stressed. Therefore, in this study, the concept of “semiosphere” is studied in a Lotmanian methodology and detailed through the further interpretations of Julia Kristeva, Agrest and Hays.

The outline of the thesis has been formed around “textualization,” “semiotization” and the possible “semiosphere” of architecture. The first chapter, “Textualization of Architecture,” proposes to look at the anticipated expertise over language. Architecture proceeds considerably depending upon its discursive productions. Text and writing are determined as the integral ways of producing the discourse around buildings. Therefore, the role of textual production is constitutive in terms of the theoretical formation of architecture. Functioning as a communicative bridge between experience and expression, the spaces of texts propose abstract relations, in other words conceptual frameworks forming architectural theory. As a source of further impressions, linguistics and semantics effected architecture and proposed new

inquiries into the search of form and transposed models for the theoretical productions problematizing the definition of meaning and signification. Analyzing the linguistic analogies in architecture, in this chapter the so-called spaces of text will be studied in the works of two well-known architects; Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi where in Eisenman's work text declares the autonomy of architecture, in Tschumi's case, it shows the determination of architecture to its historical, social and economic context.

The second chapter, "Semiotization of Architecture" examines the "meanings" assigned to "text" in a poststructuralist discourse and overview the notion of textuality. It discusses the epistemological shift from text to textual; as text is defined what is readable and textual is the context. The chapter questions, when the architectural object is stated as a "readable text," is it simultaneously assigned as "textual" and referred to as it is unified by the notion of textuality? The confusion in the term "textuality" in architecture is asserted by the play of the term "text." Text as it is helps to declare the autonomy of architecture. Textuality, on the other hand, cannot avoid its extratextual determinants. Hence, it directs a more critical enquiry towards the search for autonomy of architecture.

Architecture is textualized in terms of its association with the social space, the greater network of "Text." Tracing over the paradigms that are formed around the search of a meaning in architecture, the study disassociates from the general approach that seeks for a unique interpretation on semiology of architecture. Transacting between disciplines does not compulsively yield to a complete "architectural object" as if it fully projects the application of advanced linguistics or semiotics by merely grafting them into the domain of architecture. However, the thesis proposes a "fusion" as in the case of K. Michael Hays' calling, architectural theory which can quest its own methods of production performed in signification. Hence, the inquiry is in convergence with the "semantic dimension" of architecture;

the plurality of meaning is created through its social functioning and expressed through its “discursive formations.”¹²

This study stands at a point distanced to the scope of syntactical analysis by attributing a direct resemblance between built work and language, in which the meaning is contained as a mere unity of conventional signs and brought together under the intention of the architect. However, it searches for the mediation in-between architecture and semiology, which can form “a body of theory... dislodged and pressed into the service of a quite different one, invested with unpredicted content, and refunctioned for unexpected vocations.”¹³

The inquiry into the epistemology of architecture through the lenses of “semiosphere” would appear that it stands apart a responsive approach to the practice of architecture, and it can arise critique on how would the inquiry that the thesis proposes concretize in the real ground of architecture, indeed the practice of building. Reading architecture as a network that bounds its discursive and material productions escapes a custom that expect a formal reflection of a theoretical transposition. The practice of building involving the design processes actualizes in a scheduled time that demands to compromise the pragmatic expectations formed around economic dynamics. While the formal apprehension may not take aside the status of architecture as a commodity, regarding the recent status of architecture in between materiality and culture, form may choose to exclude culture and disregard its cultural priorities that were seen formerly as a requisite. However, beside the intentions of architects and the commercial prospects, the built work continues to live and involve in the production of meaning. Yet, reading architecture in a textual way

¹² The notion “discursive formation” is used in reference to the courses “Housing and Discourse I, II” instructed by Prof. Dr. Ali Cengizkan in fall and spring semesters of 2011-2012.

¹³ Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel, The Singular Objects of Architecture, translated by Robert Bononno, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, p. ix.

deals with the instrument of transposition by transposing the concept of “semiosphere” in order to understand “the afterlife of buildings.”¹⁴

In order to clarify the communicative mechanisms of architecture and their forms expressed through spatially and/or textually, the study posits architecture on a semiotic level rather than theorizing an architectural semiology that propose an alternative way of reading the syntax of buildings viewed “as an entirely visual matter.”¹⁵ The goal of this research is not to find a meaning of architectural objects but is to suggest premises on how meanings are constructed relative to a greater network of external relations. Consent in architecture as a complex system of “signs,” architecture sustains its production of knowledge through reconstituting itself constantly towards the modifications of cultural and historical codes. In that sense, the perception of architecture regarding the position of reader/ perceiver is excluded on purpose in relation to embrace architecture as an overarching system.

Therefore, in Chapter Three, it is intended to highlight the reflexive character of architectural knowledge as an integrated part of culture. This integration into culture can best be explained with a semiological term ‘semiosphere’; a model for culture's semiotic space introduced and defined by Russian semiotician Yuri M. Lotman who has been “the leading figure in the Moscow-Tartu structural-semiotic school in the sixties.”¹⁶

¹⁴Patricia A. Morton, “The Afterlife of buildings: Architecture and Walter Benjamin’s theory of history,” Rethinking Architectural Historiography, ed. Dana Arnold, Elvan Altan Ergut and Belgin Turan Özkaya, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 220.

¹⁵ Geoffrey Broadbent, “A Plain Man’s Guide to the Theory of Signs in Architecture,” Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995, ed. Kate Nesbitt, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1973, p.127.

¹⁶ Boguslaw Zylko, “Culture and Semiotics: Notes on Lotman's Conception of Culture,” New Literary History, Volume 32, Number 2, 2001, p. 391.

“The Moscow-Tartu group’s first theoretical depiction of culture, conceived following Lotman’s lead in the sixties, was closely connected to a certain version of semiotics. From the point of view of semiotics, everything which is in any way associated with meaning in fact belongs to culture, and natural language is the central operator of culture.”¹⁷

The status of architecture as “a collective text”¹⁸ knotted into social context with its cultural relations can be called as a ‘semiosphere’ where the heterogeneous totality of architecture is operated. The challenge is to acquire an outline for the epistemology of architecture with the concept of “semiosphere.” This term has never been used in relation to architecture, which constitutes the reason to go back to semiology in this thesis.

While the search for a possible application of semiotics to the architectural form dominated the architectural discourse in the 1960s, it can be seen as the first attempt to bring together the semiological and architectural thinking. Later, the revival of the linguistic methodology has been followed by the diagrammatic thinking in architecture in the 1990s not for reading the final product as the former approaches indicate but generating the architectural design process. Therefore, reading architecture through the “semiosphere” may attend to the third shift in light of the history of the semiological studies in architecture.

First and foremost, questioning the status of architecture in signification processes entails an extensive illustration of the term coined by Lotman. “Semiosphere” is a very complex notion and its illustration can only be given via a list of extended definitions which is available in the chapter “On Semiosphere”. It is important to

¹⁷ Ibid., p.395.

¹⁸ The term “collective” is used in reference to Prof. Dr. Güven Arif Sargin and his studies covering the external dimensions of architecture.

envisage the notion carrying an abstract character and construed similarly as a metalanguage. Similarly, the strains of reflexing “semiosphere” into architecture utterly correspond imagining the practice of architectural discourse, operating on several media; such as talking, writing, drawing, building... In general, the study is conducted around the framework of “semiosphere” to ask the question: how architecture is involved in the social aspects of signification and how its status gives forth to textual strategies in the production of architectural theory and practice. Therefore, reconceptualization of cultural semiotics as a tool does not only propose a methodology but also it can be regarded as the potential generator of further interpretations of architecture. The inquiry searches for an architectural modality that proposes what Yuri M. Lotman calls as the “semiosphere” into the architectural discourse through which it is intended to illuminate: in the large extent; the production of architectural texts and their semantic space entangled through the exorbitance of references other than architectural. The research designates a ground on how architecture is textualized through mediating between the spheres of its own and of culture.

CHAPTER 2

TEXTUALIZATION OF ARCHITECTURE

2.1. Architecture That Writes.

“Writing does not describe a world independent of itself.”¹⁹

In “Words and Buildings: a vocabulary of a modern architecture” Adrian Forty refers to the essay of John Evelyn (1620-1706), “Account of Architects and Architecture” appeared together with Alberti’s “Treatise of Statues.” The essays were collected additionally under Evelyn’s own translation of the book “Parallel of the Ancient Architecture with Modern” (1664) written by French theorist of art and architecture; Fréart de Chambray (1606–1676).²⁰ The status of classical architecture with its theoretical basis introducing the first versions of Serlio, Vignola, Palladio and Scamozzi, rendered possible by his translation in Anglophone.²¹ Along with its significance to translate their work into English, Evelyn’s own contribution posits an inquiry into “the art of architecture” attained only through the fusion of four identities ascribed for an architect which Adrian Forty describes as follows:

¹⁹ Richard Harvey Brown, “Rhetoric, Textuality, and the Postmodern Turn in Sociological Theory,” *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1990, p. 191.

²⁰ Mark Crinson and Jules Lubbock, *Architecture - Art Or Profession?: Three Hundred Years of Architectural Education in Britain*, [Google Book Version], 1994, p.29. Retrieved from http://books.google.com.tr/books?id=bXe7AAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=snippet&q=john%20evelyn&f=false [last accessed 30.6.2014]

²¹ Ibid., p.30.

“First was *architectus ingenio*, the superintending architect, a man of ideas, familiar with the history of architecture, skilled in geometry and drawing techniques, and with a sufficient knowledge of astronomy, law, medicine, optics and so on. Secondly, the *architectus sumptuarius*, ‘with a full and overflowing purse’ – the patron. Thirdly, *architectus manualis*, ‘in him I comprehend the several artisan and workmen’. And fourthly, *architectus verborum* – in whom he classed himself- the architect of words, skilled in the craft of language, and whose task was to talk about the work and interpret it to others.”²²

Along with the intended expertise over verbal expression, architects produce involving within a layered production. Robin Evans’ definition of projection explains the relation between these layers: “What connects thinking to imagination, imagination to drawing, drawing to building, and building to our eyes is projection in one guise or another, or processes that we have chosen to model on projection.”²³ Each mode of projection can be referred as an individual communication mechanism which requires architects to specialize how to read and communicate over them.

Especially in verbal expression, architecture creates its own lexicon; a disciplinary terminology which is further nourished with the words subjected to semantic shift from other disciplines. The set of words conducted under the bound of language-use for specific conditions is referred as “linguistic *register*” by the architect Thomas A. Markus and linguist Deborah Cameron in their book; “The Words Between the

²² Adrian Forty, Words and Buildings: a vocabulary of a modern architecture, London: Thames & Hudson, 2000, p. 11.

²³ Robin Evans, The Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries, MIT: Press, 2000, p. xxxi.

Spaces: Buildings and Language.”²⁴ They address that the technical vocabulary of architecture initiates a system which works as an instrument of thinking pertaining to the architects, in addition they stated as: “Professional registers are often criticized as mystifying jargon whose main purpose is to exclude outsiders; but while that may indeed be one of their functions, they also allow a professional community’s accumulated knowledge to be codified and transmitted in detail.”²⁵ While the professional language enables the informative exchange targeting mostly the architects regarding the built or soon to be built object, the language used is transformed and expanded outside the narrower circle of architects. Markus and Cameron also recognize the role of language beyond its technical framework reviewing not only the interaction in-between the architects but between anyone²⁶. Architecture operates through the language, which constitutes a broad medium where the architectural object is displaced with ease beyond its disciplinary formation and becomes the subject of a wider range of audience; in other words becomes publicized. What designates the proficiency of the *architectus verborum*, correspondingly the expertise of “the architect of words” lies in reaching the audience that depends on the “voicing”²⁷ of the language-in-use.

Emphasis the continuum of the role of the architect engaged with “the craft of language,” Paul Jones, the writer of “The Sociology of Architecture,” starts the chapter “The Public Discourse of Architecture: Socializing Identities” with excerpts from Mark Wigley’s 2004 dated interview for the magazine “Architecture Australia.”

²⁴ Thomas A. Markus and Deborah Cameron, The Words between the Spaces: Buildings and Language, London: Routledge, 2002, p.2.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷For further explanation of the term see: W. F. Hanks, “Text and Textuality,” Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 18, 1989, pp. 95-127.

“The architect is a thoughtful person, a person who is able to think in situations in which other people cannot think, and a person who is able to allow other people to think differently. This is why the architect talks so much... The architect is a certain kind of communicator, a certain kind of public intellectual ... the role of the architect is not to make buildings, but to make discourse about buildings, and to make buildings as a form of discourse, and this is the most fascinating form of social commitment.”²⁸

In the same fashion, Mark Wigley, in his presentation titled “Story-time” enrolled in the public forum held by the *Assemblage* editorial board; “Tulane Papers: The Politics of Contemporary Architectural Discourse” in 1995, asserts that “Architecture is only ever discourse about building.”²⁹ Then, he maps the recognition of architectural practice to its capacity of storytelling.³⁰ He points out that architects are qualified to tell stories which are supposedly told by the buildings themselves. Therefore, architects have to represent their work by a particular discursive position. Similarly, Jones points out the role of architects who also anticipate the meaningful reflection of their work to society, forming his discussion over the example of the Jewish Museum designed by Daniel Libeskind.³¹ While the museum can be sorted under “making buildings as a form of discourse,” the mere spoken discourse and its concretization as text – the written discourse also institute a solid medium for tracing the path of the discipline. “Texts and writing play instrumental role in shaping the critical and imaginative space in which members of built environment profession-

²⁸Mark Wigley, in Paul Jones, *The Sociology of Architecture*, Liverpool University Press, 2011, p.27. See the interview from <http://architectureau.com/articles/frampton-colomina-wigley/>, [last accessed 9.7.2014]

²⁹ Mark Wigley, “Story-Time,” *Assemblage*, Tulane Papers: The Politics of Contemporary Architectural Discourse, No.27, 1995, p.82.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Paul Jones, *The Sociology of Architecture*, Liverpool University Press, 2011, p.28.

architecture, planning, urban design – operate.”³² They tend to assign the course of the intellectuality engaged in practice. Nevertheless, besides their applicability onto other architectural practices, the production of text itself forms integrative and yet in a sense separate practice. The architectural text can be assessed in both manners: First, it can be proposed as the scholarly writing stimulating the intellectual thinking and transforming the boundaries of the discipline and its productions, and secondly can be posited as “a story of a building” speaking in place of the tectonic object. But both qualities can also be interwoven in some architectural text indicating their association. The architectural treatises - Evelyn’s translations as mentioned above - are the first literary sources. The textual production beginning throughout the treatises of Renaissance constitutes the initial embodiments of the classical discourse situated in built environment. However, while the description of the classical order in early treatises indicates a prescriptive mode, they also form the overall representation of architecture’s “cultural or disciplinary specificity” and designate the task of the architect as well as the architecture. It is possible to assert the search for autonomy of architecture and its relationship between diverse constituents through *the spaces of texts*:

“The existence of dedicated treatises on architectural design contributes to the set up and maintenance of a demarcated discursive domain. However, the stability and evolution of architecture require a problematizing theory, i.e. an explicit reflection upon architecture’s position and role within society, to orient the developments of the discipline’s internal; strategies and values.”³³

In the way Schumacher centers his argument; in order to determine the boundaries of architecture, the necessary critical position will substantially expand through writing.

³²C. Greig Crysler, Writing Spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism and the Built Environment, 1960-2000, London: Routledge, 2003, p.4.

³³Patrik Schumacher, Op. Cit., p.47.

Similarly Higgott in the chapter of “Architecture as Discourse” credits conceptual frameworks to draw the limits of architecture’s disciplinary formation.

“The nature of architecture involves, implicitly or explicitly, conceptual frameworks. Writing inevitably explores cultural norms and values which the writer is both writing within and departing from; while in its relationship to language, writing is always engaged with issues of representation, whether in describing, evoking or creating architecture. There have been times in recent past when it has seemed that the act of writing on architecture was privileged over the act of building: that writing was somehow more important than the development of a building project.”³⁴

Joan Ockman describes that the discursive production of architecture has risen into prominence in “the time that members of a newly politicized generation of architecture students mounted a challenge to a profession that it saw as arrogant, irrelevant and anti-intellectual.”³⁵ This turn of 1960s brought multiple products of text, which can be called as multi-layered and it questioned the intellectual association of architecture throughout the consequent periods. But later, the dominant status of textual production was charged with the disassociation from the disciplinary boundaries of architecture and its material production and seen as it was merely reduced to ‘theory’ which is away from operating in other aspects of architectural production in pragmatist sense. As it was illustrated by Ockman “during the following decades, the aphasia between architectural theory and practice intensified as “theory” became and increasingly autonomous and often arcane field of

³⁴ Andrew Higgott, Mediating Modernism: Architectural cultures in Britain, Routledge: New York, 2007, p.192.

³⁵ Joan Ockman, “Pragmatism/ Architecture: The Idea of the Workshop Project,” The Pragmatist Imagination: Thinking About “Things in Making, Princeton Architectural Press: New York, 2000, p.16.

specialization within the schools and media, preoccupied with debates taking place in philosophy and literary criticism but ironically enough (given its beginnings) distanced from everyday problems of the built environment.”³⁶ Therefore, within Ockman’s critical commentary which indicates text as the end product of architectural theory, writing becomes the major medium of expression bridging between architecture and other disciplines. However, defining theory as the counterpart of practice may form another debate centralized on the quest over the instrumentalization of architectural theory, what is problematized underlines representing architectural theory as a mere static ‘theory’ without its adjectival architectural. In the very beginning of “Linguistics in Architecture”, 1973, Mario Gandelonas refers to the extended interest in linguistics primarily in social sciences listed as anthropology, psychoanalysis, aesthetics and philosophy and introduced the rising trend in theoretical production in these fields and implied their progressive contribution to them.³⁷ In contrast, he evaluates the transference of the concepts derived from linguistics and semantics into architecture differently in terms of the indeterminate status “in architecture itself between what is technical practice and what is theoretical practice; that is, between the introduction of theoretical models either to solve technical problems, or to produce descriptive or explicative theories as an activity itself.”³⁸ He stands for the differentiation needed to be made “between what we shall call ideological functioning and theoretical functioning.”³⁹ Therefore, writing as the major form of production of architectural theory can be identified as a mediator in-between the other subsets of discursive formations and non-discursive

³⁶ Ibid., pp.16-17.

³⁷ Mario Gandelonas, “Linguistics in Architecture,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge,Massachusetts: MIT Press,1998, p.114. (First Published in Casabella 374, 1973.)

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

production of architecture, which reproduces itself through the reading of reflections of its material productions on social practice, and vice versa.

2.2. Linguistic Analogy: Textualization/Semiotization of Architecture⁴⁰

Investigation behind the contiguous relationship of architecture and semantics, acts as an interpretive and critical tool for the relation between the discursive formation of architecture and the built work. Language is attributed as belonging and characteristic of architecture. The literacy of architecture, gained through this analogical approach, constitutes a basis to comprise the discursive materiality functioning in cultural and social structures. Language becomes the object of analysis, the legitimization of which acts on ‘texts’ which directly makes it as the linguistic object. Consequently, considering architecture as a ‘text’ entails sequences of strategic operations which are fundamentally regarded as ‘reading’ and ‘rewriting’. Architectural object “in the form of representational apparatus” inherited innate characteristic of being communicable, partnering with linguistic, can be analyzed in terms of syntax under the supremacy of the structural quality of its very own grammar system. It is questioned whether architecture is codified with a repertoire of *morphemes*; which are basically defined within the boundaries of linguistic theory. Morpheme is the smallest linguistic unit has a “semantic meaning,” or at least a function, to the word of which they are components and cannot be decomposed into smaller units; for example the word *cat* is a free morpheme that can stand alone or the suffix “-s” in the word *cats* that can modify the word. Considering morphemes in architectural sphere, the term can be illustrated as “column:” “a

⁴⁰ This sub-chapter is derived from the unpublished research paper that the author wrote in the course “Introduction to Architectural Research” instructed by Prof. Dr. Ayşen Savaş, in fall 2011.

physical indicator which, while it has the structural meaning of support, may have at the same time the expressive meaning of, for example, “Ionic.”⁴¹

Is it possible to intensify the understanding of the production of knowledge within the limits of architecture, concerned with the *morphemes* of its own language, both tectonically and discursively? The formulation of architecture stands between these two poles; architecture as an architectonic discipline and architecture as a cultural product; dissected the possibility of architectural morphemes on the *loci* of Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi’s form of production in which, the process of fragmenting the object into a series of architectural *morphemes*, refers a displacement of traditional thinking about architecture. “It appears to be a form of analysis that dismantles or demolishes structures, an undoing of construction, and it is in this sense that is most obviously architectural.”⁴² That form of analysis resembles a generative modality, rooted again in structural linguistics, ‘morphological analysis’ which is having direct connotations to the epistemology of ‘deconstruction’.

The idea materialized in any form of environment, is transposed into a unity of forms which are limited by the scope of its embodiment, through to communicate. The ontological character of architecture (“as a constructional element that is shape to emphasize its static role and cultural status”⁴³) as the embodiment of its metaphysical core, transforms architecture into a representational apparatus by which the idea communicates. Therefore, the meaning of the way architecture constitutes a practice is twofold in this research. First, it is a form of material production, a ‘tectonic object’ which Kenneth Frampton entitles, and the second is a form of discursive

⁴¹ Mario Gandelsonas, Op. Cit., p.116.

⁴² Mark Wigley, The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida’s Hunt, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993, p.36.

⁴³ Kenneth Frampton, “Labour, Work and Architecture: Collected Essays on Architecture and Design,” New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 2002, p. 94.

practice which exposes what is present but hidden under the very physicality of architecture. In this sense; built space has no more authority than its discursive formation, basically formulated through texts. Yet, textualization of architecture stands in-between these two forms of architectural production.

“The repercussions of the textualization of architecture as a critique of modernist dogma would prove enormous, of course, extending over the next decade of architecture theory. But if the linguistic analogy was perhaps inevitable (semiotics is designed to manage all cultural phenomena, including architecture) and in certain ways already latent in earlier models of architectural interpretation (those of Emile Kaufmann, John Summerson, or Rudolf Wittkower, for example), one must still decide on the most pertinent and fruitful level of homology between architecture and language. Is the individual work or group of works like a language, or is architecture as a whole like a language?”⁴⁴

Indeed, the progression in enquiry is positioned from a simple homology between architecture and language to a correlation of semiology which is made clear in “Semiotics and Architecture – Ideological Consumption or Theoretical Work” by Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas.

Agrest and Gandelsonas refer to the methodology of Ferdinand de Saussure for defining semiotics, linguistic and linguistic signification. According to Agrest and Gandelsonas “the language itself is subsumed by the notion of semiotics. The definition of linguistics requires a simultaneous definition of semiotics.”⁴⁵ And how

⁴⁴ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction: ‘La Dimension Amoureuse’ in Architecture”, Architecture | Theory | since 1968, 1998, Massachusetts: MIT Press, p.36.

⁴⁵ Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas, “Semiotics and Architecture – Ideological Consumption or Theoretical Work,” Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995, ed. Kate Nesbitt, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1973, p.115. (First published in Oppositions I, September 1973)

Saussure defined semiotics is stated by Agrest and Gandelsonas; “semiotics as the science of the different systems of signs and the study of ‘langue’ (the system of language) as the study of only one of the various semiotic systems.”⁴⁶ He defines the concept of ‘sign’ (the units of the system) as a double entity composed of a ‘signifier’ (the acoustic image) and “signified” (the concept).”⁴⁷ Following this, signification is defined as a relation, internal to the sign, linking signifier and signified. Regarding this terminology, Saussure postulates language as being a device for communication. After all, Agrest and Gandelsonas stated that Saussure’s procedure of defining semiotics, linguistics and linguistic signification demands examination to establish the heuristic value of concepts and procedures as a tool for the production of a theory on architecture.⁴⁸

Mario Gandelsonas, in his article ‘From Structure to Subject: The Formation of Architectural Language’, which appeared in “Oppositions: Reader,” 1979, argues that the aim was to produce a systematic organization of the codes of architectural practice, to define an apparently finite and stable number of forms and their correlated meaning within a closed system; that is to create the illusion of language.⁴⁹ Indeed, the illusion of language is rooted not from the critic of the metaphoric transposition of ‘language’ in architecture but it indicates the utopia behind to generate pre-dominated, limited grammar in a position of functionalism which constantly “proposed new ‘words’ but no rules for their combination.”⁵⁰ In the case of the non-existence of any grammatical framework for their use viewed as illusionary. In addition, the way Gandelsonas addresses the problem of systematization of codified repertoire of signified forms, is standing at the second

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Mario Gandelsonas, “From Structure to Subject: The Formation of Architectural Language,” Oppositions: Reader, 1979, p.201.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

position of a twofold semiological distinction that Gillo Dorfles covered in "Structuralism & Semiology in Architecture," 1969. The former is based on the elements of symbolic transcription of its language and the latter is linked to the work itself; and to its constitutive elements; spaces, volumes and such. Those elements can be analyzed under the name of linguistic patterns but as he emphasized they cannot be reduced to schemes typical only for the verbal language.⁵¹ Therefore, any approach to assert formalistic classification of architectural elements stands illusory because the objective reality represented by language creates the illusion when a non-linguistic sphere is reflected in language.

The strategy of superimposition is not one sided; basically semiology has been also extended its borders with architecture. However the translation is reciprocal; formed on the interchange of analogies, embedded in the very nature of language itself as a tool to broaden the production of theory. This contiguous relationship of linguistic and architecture is rooted in the definition of syntax given by Saussure. In particular, architecture has been used as a metaphor:

“From the associative and syntagmatic point of view a linguistic unit is like a fixed part of a building, eg: a column. On the one hand the column has a certain relation to the architrave that it supports; the arrangement of the two units in space suggests the syntagmatic relation. On the other hand, if the column is Doric, it suggests a mental comparison of this style with others (Ionic, Corinthian, etc.): although none of these elements is present in space, the relation is associative.”⁵²

⁵¹ Gillo Dorfles, "Structuralism and Semiology in Architecture," Meaning in Architecture, New York: George Braziller, 1969, p.48.

⁵² Broadbent, Op. Cit., p.129.

This analogy illuminates not only the basic division of the field from a no meaning attached linguistic to a system of signification but also constitutes the background of dialectic interaction, reciprocal influence between two disciplines. Moreover, the analogy between a linguistic unit and a column of a building unfolds one of the basic levels of semiotics, “syntax.” It “deals with the combination of signs (such as the way in which words are put together to form sentences) without regard to their specific significations (meanings) or their relations to the behavior in which they occur.”⁵³ So, “syntax” itself becomes the structure of sign-systems. Then, architecture as one of the sign systems, displays relatively a syntactic organization with its distinctive language. Referring to Wilhelm von Humboldt’s model of linguistic, 1836, which Noam Chomsky states in his book “Aspects of the Theory of Syntax,” 1965, “language makes infinite use of finite means,”⁵⁴ accordingly he states “the grammar of language must describe the processes that make this possible,”⁵⁵ and posits the creative aspect of language: the generative grammar. As a matter of his statement, language became the syntactic component; a structural tool to formulate external meanings onto the signifier. Translocation of the semantic procedures into architecture entails the understanding behind the relative, changing mapping of relations between signifier and signified that is linked tightly to the social binding of “connotational meanings” that Broadbent defined as the kind of meaning which will be built in architecture. If one outlines the semantic dimension as a general theory of signification, how one thing ‘stands for’ or ‘reminds us of’ another, the syntactic dimension of architecture ascribes the reasoning underlying the arrangement of architectonic units which assure to construe the architectural object in form of “reading.” Hence, the semantic characteristic is more explicit in the rhetoric side of the binary - architecture’s discursive materiality- is able to be read through

⁵³ Ibid., p.126.

⁵⁴ Noam Chomsky, “Aspects of the Theory of Syntax,” Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1965, p.5.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

the textual literacy of flux between the discursive representation and of its objective reality. On the other hand, the syntactic aspect in architectural material is apparent in its own entity. It communicates directly by its “syntactic codes;” “circular plan, ‘open’ plan, high-rise...”⁵⁶ Namely, its visual literacy depends on the syntax of -the unitary elements of building, which is codified by the smallest units of meaning - *architectural morphemes* and they are purified from any other “external determination, from the forces of economics, politics, or other ideologies foreign to design”⁵⁷ in a sense creating a self-reflective disposition.

2.2.1. Text: Peter Eisenman and the Scriptable Object

The process of systematic fragmentation of the object into a series of architectural *morphemes* is prominent in any work of Peter Eisenman. Architectural forms and their underlying structures offer a material for reading the written in a self-contained language as Eisenman suggests architecture’s autonomy. He posited a project of autonomy through the architectural analogy to linguistic and semiotics in his article “Autonomy and the Will to the Critical.” He affirmed that, the project of autonomy was “at the denial of the historicist propelling energies of zeitgeist in favor of something more permanent, essential and universal: for structuralists, that was language.”⁵⁸ His statement indicates ostensibly a parallel stance as Saussure’s description of an ahistorical system; “languages may have histories, but language

⁵⁶ Umberto Eco, “Function and sign: semiotics of architecture,” Rethinking Architecture: a reader in cultural theory, ed. Neil Leach, London: Routledge, 1997, p.193.

⁵⁷ Diana Agrest, “Design versus Non-Design,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge,Massachusetts: MIT Press,1998, p.207. (First Published in *Oppositions* 6, 1976.)

⁵⁸ Peter Eisenman, “Autonomy and the Will to the Critical,” Assemblage, No.41, 2000, p.91.

does not.”⁵⁹ This characteristic, outlined above, fulfilled an internalized architectural operation, a systematized analysis of the internal codes between architectural morphemes, how they establish the order maintaining the limits of architecture as language in an autonomous way without an externally contaminated history. The objective quality of the architectural material as an autonomous form at the rejection of historical attribute is questioned as well in K. Michael Hays’s “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form:”

“The opposite position begins with the assumption that the only alternative to a strict, factual recovery of the originating situation is the renunciation of a single <truth,> and advocates a proliferation of interpretations based solely on form. Interpretations made from this second position are characterized by the comparative absence of historical concerns in favor of attention to the autonomous architectural object and its formal operations-how its parts have been put together, how it is a wholly integrated and equilibrated system that can be understood without external references, and as important, how it may be reused, how its constituent parts and processes may be recombined.”⁶⁰

The structuralist reflection on architecture does not only reveal the intertextual relationships hidden in terms of Saussure’s definition of language as an ahistorical system, but is defined through the cross-referenced theoretical network decisive in tracing the codes of other disciplines that formalizes the built environment. With respect to the notions of metaphoric operations, having a crucial role in producing the intertextuality, is posited by as a tool which materialized at the “level of form the

⁵⁹ Christopher Wood, “Why Autonomy?,” *Perspecta*, Vol.33, 2002, p.51.

⁶⁰ K. Michael Hays, “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form,” *Perspecta*, Vol.21, 1984, p.16.

translation from extra-architectural to intra-architectural systems.”⁶¹ The production of meaning through that literal mechanism reserved in any metaphoric operation, endures on ‘the symbolic functioning’. However, while the productivity of it is bounded by the discursive materiality, Eisenman’s tectonic approach in searching for the autonomy requires “the cutting off of the sign function.”⁶² Referring to the initial notations -semantic deals with the production of meaning while syntactic addresses its structure- how the tectonic elements of architecture correspond to the morphemes of linguistic can be discussed.

“In the case of Peter Eisenman’s work, this traditional play of modifications –assimilation of new ideas without changing the whole- within a semantic dimension has been abandoned. In our judgment, one of the most interesting and original aspects in the work of Eisenman is the discovery of the possibility of modifications within architecture which are the result of a shift in the dominant characteristic of architecture from the semantic to the syntactic.”⁶³

As may be seen then, there is an obvious endeavor in excavating the understanding behind the structural linguistic translated in architecture in order to search for to script the structural relationship between the sign and the object over the split of semantic and syntactic.

⁶¹ Diana Agrest, *Op. Cit.*, p.203.

⁶² Eisenman, *Op. Cit.*, p. 91.

⁶³ Mario Gandelsonas, “Linguistics in Architecture,” *Op. Cit.*, p.116.

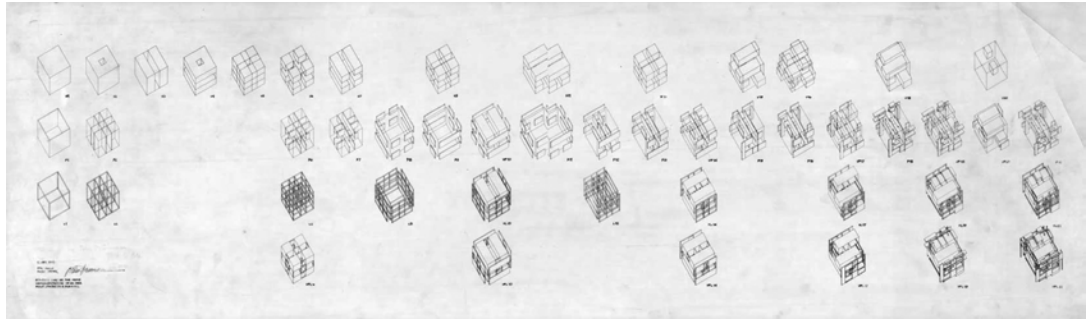


Figure 1 - Peter Eisenman, House IV transformation study, axonometrics, 1975. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Source: Hays, K. Michael. Architecture's Desire, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2010, pp.56-57.

A sequence of tectonic investigation is seen clearly in the transformation study of House IV; fragmenting the object into a series of architectural morphemes in favor of composing a spatial code reflects a linguistic model for architecture. The coding not only produces a form of reading but it becomes the subject of the generative grammar. A set of operations performed in deconstructive manner displays a mode of analysis; underlying the syntax of morphemes; rewriting.

The object and its elements- the cube in its particular emblematic status, the fundamental units of plane, volume, and frame and their mutual interaction- are foregrounded as an architectural writing, one that is *scriptable*.

The rewriting mechanism that put forward the scriptability of the architectural object is a characteristic of performativity of Eisenman's linguistic approach. As Manfredo Tafuri stated in "*L'Architecture dans le Boudoir*: The language of criticism and the criticism of language," without the act of disintegrating the object under analysis, it is impossible to rewrite it and there is not such a criticism that does not follow the

process which generated the work itself.⁶⁴ So, ‘doubling the object under critical examination’ consists in its own designations at the level of tectonic and discursive breakdown. The former came into being in the form of ontological transformations found in the object itself and latter, in the form of a second discourse built up on the former.

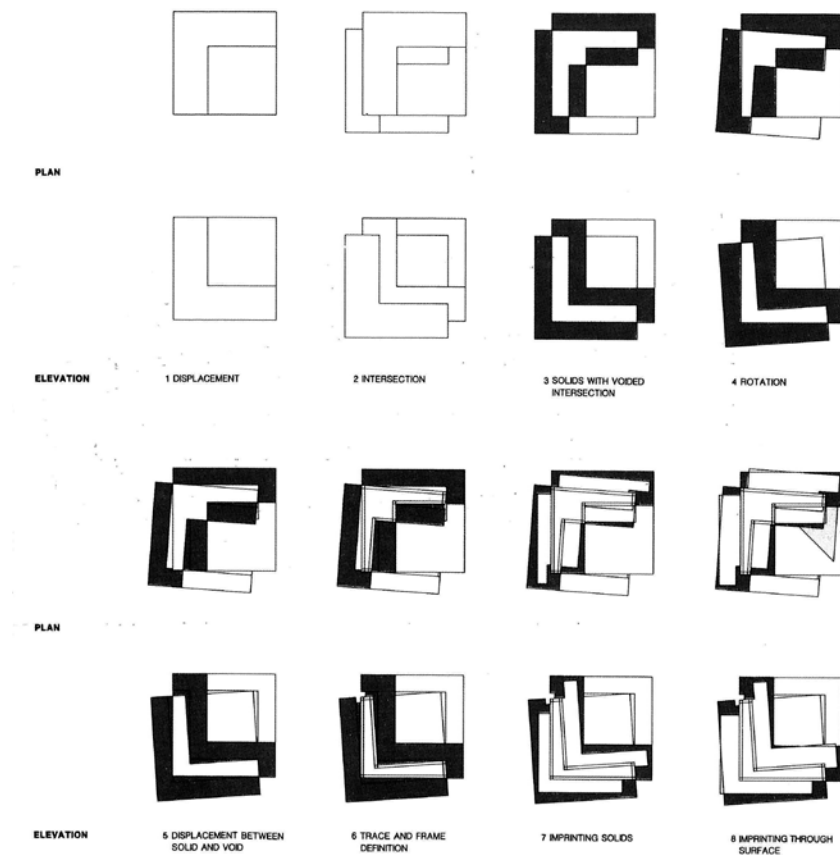


Figure 2 - Peter Eisenman, Guardiola House, Conceptual Diagrams, Puerto de Santa Maria Cadiz, Spain, 1988.

http://www.remixtheschoolhouse.com/sites/default/files/20120906150051570_0002.jpg Last accessed on 29.06.2014.

⁶⁴ Manfredo Tafuri, “*L’Architecture dans le Boudoir*: The language of criticism and the criticism of language,” *Oppositions: Reader*, 1999, p.295. (First Published in *Oppositions*, Vol.3, May 1974.)

2.2.2. Textual: Bernard Tschumi and the Scriptable Text

The search for a project of autonomy remains barely in the search for syntactic desire in the textualization of architecture, based on morphological construction as in Eisenman's case; it was put forward as a form of material production, a tectonic realization intrinsic to its formal principles.

The formation of architectural autonomy is questioned in between the twofold practices that architecture constitutes; the material and the discursive production. While the definition of architecture belongs to the latter, it is described by means of strategic inclusions and exclusions. How architecture constitutes a threshold between the domination of its physicality and the external determination of its form comprises the way architecture is textualized.

Jacques Derrida characterizes Bernard Tschumi's form of productions; "*l'architecture double*, an architecture of absolute autonomy together with absolute negation, of concept and sensuous experience, an architecture that seeks to transcend form through a spacing out of form,"⁶⁵ which is realized in a form of discursive practice, thus semantic, basically Tschumi's using of text as a trans-linguistic apparatus, producing a dematerialized space of texts peculiar to the absolute architecture.

For Bernard Tschumi, text plays a crucial role in between the "paradoxical relationship between architecture as a product of mind, as a conceptual and dematerialized discipline, and architecture as the sensual experience of space and spatial praxis."⁶⁶ The construction of Bernard Tschumi's theoretical texts, entail sequences of strategic operations, while the core substance is rooted from different

⁶⁵ K. Michael Hays, "Spacing," *Architecture's Desire*, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2010, p.156.

⁶⁶ Bernard Tschumi, "Architecture and Transgression," *Oppositions*, Vol.7, 1976, p.57.

paradigms. As it is stated in Louis Martin's "Transpositions: On the Intellectual Origins of Tschumi's Architectural Theory:"

"After Tschumi's reading of Barthes, Genette and Kristeva, Tschumi conceived his texts as collages, palimpsests, composed through the intentional juxtaposition and superimposition of fragments of other texts that were *object trouvés* (found objects) whose origins and the context of their emergence were blurred."⁶⁷

In that sense in the plurality of what is external to architecture, the construction of architectural discourse fragment by fragment produces a "scriptable text"⁶⁸ composed of morphemes as the epitome of other disciplines. In Tschumi's own terms, "architecture when equated with language can only be read as a series of fragments which make up an architectural reality."⁶⁹

Tschumi's methodology of textual writing is based on "to develop an analogue to the contemporary production of other fields."⁷⁰ Thus, his texts could be referred as hypertexts, containing contiguous links to other texts of diverse episteme, tied to a cross-referenced theoretical network, pointing out its excessive intertextuality.

For Barthes, "'the notion of text' emerged after the critique of the sign, when the sign entered into crisis."⁷¹ As Louis Martin stated in exchanging the structuralist analogy

⁶⁷Louis Martin, "Transpositions: On the Intellectual Origins of Tschumi's Architectural Theory," Assemblage, no.11, 1990, p.30

⁶⁸ K. Michael Hays, "Introduction: Design versus Non-Design," Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge,Massachusetts: MIT Press,1998, p.199.

⁶⁹ Bernard Tschumi, "The Pleasure of Architecture," in Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: an Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, p.203.(First Published in Architectural Design, No.3, 1977, pp. 214-218.)

⁷⁰Martin, Op. Cit.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.29.

with language for the poststructuralist analogy with the text, Tschumi updates the rapport established between architecture and literature by introducing to architecture the crisis of sign.⁷² Parallel to that statement, Tschumi's texts became apparent as he states, indispensable production of limits that architecture doesn't exist without, after the crisis of sign. He expresses the crisis as any architectural work can face "the radical rift between signifier and signified, in architectural terms, space and action, form and function."⁷³

The transposition of concepts from one field to another stands as an operational tool, e.g. intertextuality, constitutes his questioning in the field of architecture. The application of structural linguistic to architecture externalizes his strategic operations as for "Bernard Tschumi argues for architecture as an open-ended text,"⁷⁴ and his literacy in linguistic theory and poststructuralism delineate his challenge to define an interdisciplinary architecture.⁷⁵

In the dialectic of transcoding between architecture and the disciplines of linguistics and semiology, the architectural objects whether in the form of a tectonic or discursive production are converged in the textual idiosyncrasy of architecture. The potential of analogy as a constitutional tool to motivate borders between semiology and architecture is established through the contingency based on structural linguistic. The enquiry is positioned over the autonomous performance of architecture through the codified repertoire of architectural morphemes, overloaded by "the mortal silence

⁷² Ibid., p.32.

⁷³ Bernard Tschumi, "Disjunctions," *Perspecta*, Vol.23, 1987, p.113.

⁷⁴ Kate Nesbitt, "Introduction: Architecture and Limits III," Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: an anthology of architectural theory 1965-1995, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, p.163.

⁷⁵ Kate Nesbitt, "Introduction: Architecture and Limits II," Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: an anthology of architectural theory 1965-1995, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, p.157.

of the sign”⁷⁶ and thereby read as a “text defined as ‘translinguistic’ apparatus, the productivity of which consists in its intertextuality.”⁷⁷

“One example of this textual mechanism is the graft, inserting other discourses into one as its iteration and exploring the disruptive repetitions that ensue. ‘The invention, in this case, consists in crossing the architectural motif with what is most singular and most parallel in other writings which are themselves drawn into the said madness, in its plural, meaning photographic, cinematographic, choreographic, and even mythographic writings. . . . An architectural writing interprets...events which are *marked* by photography or cinematography.’ Even the points, lines, and surfaces are here understood as grafts insofar as each system conflicts with and is superimposed on the others.”⁷⁸

Spacing out of architectonic form in favor of the identification of the discursive morphemes is reified in the scriptable texts of Bernard Tschumi. His methodology of producing architectural knowledge is achieved by juxtaposing the textual fragments that belong to an interdisciplinary mechanism. This approach is only motivated by his literacy in linguistic theory. Therefore, his works can be read in relation to what is not architecture, the discursive materiality posited “autonomous in the sense that it

⁷⁶ Tafuri, Op. Cit., p.292.

⁷⁷ Georges Teyssot, “Heterotopias and the History of Spaces,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.303. (First Published in II Dispositivo Foucault, Venice, 1977, Revised in A+U 121, 1980.)

⁷⁸ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction: “Point de folie - Maintenant l’architecture,” Essay accompanying the portfolio, Bernard Tschumi, *La Case Vide: La Villette 1985*, Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.567.

provides the form for the conceptual thought and social experience rather than being determined by them.”⁷⁹

⁷⁹ K. Michael Hays, Op. Cit., Architecture's Desire, p.38.

CHAPTER 3

SEMIOTIZATION OF ARCHITECTURE

3.1. From Text to Textuality: Architecture as a Social Practice

“Thought is a thread, and the raconteur is a spinner of yarns -- but the true storyteller, the poet, is a weaver. The scribes made this old and audible abstraction into a new and visible fact. After long practice, their work took on such an even, flexible texture that they called the written page a *textus*, which means cloth.”

Robert Bringhurst, "The Elements of Typographic Style"

When language in general is held as a comprehensive framework for architectural text and its textual productions; it encompasses the approaches of semiotics, structuralism and post-structuralism. Considering the centrality of texts, architecture is challenged among the woven nature of textualization, semiotization and spatialization. Architecture sustains its progression by the practice of building as well as the practice of writing. There is a double-fold discussion which re-questions both the text as an architectural production and the architectural space as “text” in its most poststructuralist sense of the term. While “the textual practice” in architecture was subjected and transformed through “the literary theory whose reorientation challenges the status of the text as an autonomous formal system of meaning,”⁸⁰ the architectonic object too was assigned to a “linguistic paradigm” that sees the building in a direct analogy with language and further sees it as a sign to communicate. Paul

⁸⁰ C. Greig Crysler, *Op. Cit.*, p.5.

Jones has been noted: "Reading architecture in a textual way gives problems of interpretation common to any 'text'."⁸¹ Therefore, it is important to decipher the case of "text" in detail.

Text, in its solely linguistic manner, can be referred as "strictly, a written text in the usual sense."⁸² However, it is assigned different meanings referred from several standpoints which are described as such: "Extended by some linguists to cover a coherent stretch of speech, including a conversation or other interchange involving two or more participants, as well as stretches of writing. Hence often equivalent to discourse, itself extended from similar motives."⁸³ While the definition of text tends to vary in terms of what it covers; W. F. Hanks in "Text and Textuality" explains what identify text as it is and stresses the notion of textuality and its qualifier whether it pertains to any text or not. He discusses it through the comparative examples whether all texts are attributed as textual:

"When used as a mass noun, as in "text is composed of interconnected sentences," text can be taken (heuristically) to designate any configuration of signs that is coherently interpretable by some community of users. As vague as such a definition is, already it commits us to a certain line of inquiry... The qualifier "coherent" distinguishes text from an undisclosed array of other nontextual or anti-textual phenomena such as the senseless cacophony of a crowded street (as opposed to the senseful exchange of mutually oriented interactants), the random scuff marks on a public wall (as opposed to

⁸¹ Paul R. Jones, "The Sociology of Architecture and the Politics of Building: The Discursive Construction of Ground Zero," *Sociology*, 2006, Vol. 40, N.3, p. 557.

⁸² "text." The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics, 2007, Web. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199202720.001.0001/acref-9780199202720-e-3400?rskey=aLe2N6&result=3&q=text>, [last accessed 23.6.2014]

⁸³ Ibid.

the intentionally executed lines of a drawing), or the noise of rush hour (as opposed to the concerted dissonance of a dramatic passage in a musical score). The fact of interpretability by a community of users locates text not so much in the immanent structure of a discourse as in the social matrix within which the discourse is produced and understood. It also signals a social orientation according to which text, whatever else it is, is a communicative phenomenon.”⁸⁴

Whereas what “text” and “textual” define is entangled in the linguistics’ frame, the term’s use in artistic and architectural domain also proposes alternative post-structuralist readings. To clarify; retaining to Hays’ highlight in the introduction of Tschumi’s “The Architectural Paradox”, “Text” is not an absolute linguistic phenomenon.”⁸⁵ The poststructuralist understanding of text also forms the basis for the architectural paradigm that sees any architectural object as a “text;” hence questioning whether it has “textual” attributions or not.

Kate Nesbitt in introduction to “The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End, 1984,” refers Eisenman’s proposal of “not-classical;” “architecture as an independent discourse, or as a meaning-free, arbitrary, and timeless *text*.”⁸⁶ While Eisenman’s purpose is to present the work freed from representation, a work with no meaning, he also initiates an understanding of “the end of the end,” in which he implies the form disengaged “a priori goals or ends” in

⁸⁴ William F. Hanks, “Text and Textuality,” Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 18, 1989, pp. 95-96.

⁸⁵ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction: The Architectural Paradox,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, 1998, Massachusetts: MIT Press, p.216.

⁸⁶ Kate Nesbitt, “Introduction: The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End,” Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995, ed. Kate Nesbitt, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1984, p.211.

his words; the desire to propose “the sign of pretending to be not what one is- that is, a sign which seems not to signify besides itself.”⁸⁷

“The end of the end also concerns the end of object representations the only metaphoric subject in architecture. In the past the metaphor in architecture was used to convey such forces as tension, compression, extension, and longation; these were qualities that could be seen, if not literally in the objects themselves, then in the relationship between objects. The idea of the metaphor here has nothing to do with the qualities generated between buildings or between buildings and spaces; rather, it has to do with the idea that the internal process itself can generate a kind of non-representational figuration in the object. This is an appeal, not to the classical aesthetic of the object, but to the potential *poetic* of an architectural text. The problem, then, is to distinguish texts from representations, to convey the idea that what one is seeing, the material object, is a text rather than a series of image references to other objects or values.”⁸⁸

The pure architectural meaning represented in the structural essence and originated from the coded syntagmatic relations between architectural morphemes is deciphered through the systematic fragmentation of the architectural object, which is sterilized from any external determinants in Peter Eisenman’s scriptable forms of production with respect to his approach corresponding to the two standard structuralist principle: “the first, the bracketing off the physical and historical context and, the second the

⁸⁷ Peter Eisenman, “The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End,” 1984, *Architecture | Theory | since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.530.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.533.

bracketing off of the subject in favor of a notion of an intersubjective structure of architectural signification that, like language.”⁸⁹

In this case, the critique of Mary McLeod on the poststructuralist approach in architecture is needed to be reviewed in terms of the notions text and textuality in reference to their notation both in literary theory and architecture. She criticized writing of the object content-free as in the following:

“... poststructuralist theory appears to have produced another kind of aestheticization, which privileges form (language) and “textuality” and which refuses any reality outside the object (text). Andreas Huyssen has written that “American poststructuralist writers and critics . . . call for self-reflexiveness, not, to be sure, of the author-subject, but of the text; . . . they purge life, reality, history, society from the work of art and its reception, and construct a new autonomy, based on a pristine notion of textuality, a new art for art’s sake which is presumably the only kind possible after the failure of all and any commitment.” This formal hermeticism seems to be doubly problematic in architecture, which, as already suggested, does not lend itself readily to the linguistic analogy. The poststructuralist literary critic can assert that the very process of meaning’s displacement involves content, even if its presence is ultimately—and solipsistically—denied; but for the architecture critic involved with the abstract formal explorations of deconstructivist design, even this modest claim is difficult.”⁹⁰

⁸⁹ K. Michael Hays, Op. Cit., Architecture’s Desire, p.54.

⁹⁰ Mary McLeod, “Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968 , ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.692. (First Published in Assemblage 8, 1980.)

However, when architecture is stated as a “readable text”⁹¹ and “textual” in the sense used by Mcloed, the notion of textuality is subjected to a semantic shift considering the term’s usage in the architectural domain. It is important to underscore Edward Said’s “The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions” where he discusses the approaches of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault addressing their descriptions of text and textuality. While he asserts the divergence between Derrida and Foucault, he sets up his argument on Foucault’s tendency to *resemanticize*; to redefine text in relation to “extratextual reality” sequenced as “institutions, offices, agencies, classes,..., ideologically defined parties and professions” in contrast to Derrida’s intention to *desemanticize*, reading text withdrawn from historical presentation.⁹²

While Eisenman’s mode of writing architectural objects and his approach toward textuality pursue Derrida’s method, it may be suggested to follow Foucault’s initiation towards reading text with its capacity to reproduce. Therefore, architecture as text can be read in terms textuality which is asserted in Foucault’s case “as an integral, and not merely an accessory, part of the social processes of differentiation, exclusion, incorporation, and rule.”⁹³ When architecture is read in this textual manner, it constitutes its discourse and it is conveyed through the medium of text. Functioning in this communicative address, text tends to constitute a space where the production of further meanings originates, in other words the continuum of the discourse. Once text is ascribed in this function, it creates a semiotic space, an abstract space, regarding Lotman’s definition: “A text is a mechanism constituting a

⁹¹ Charles A. Jencks uses the term in his article “Post-Modern Architecture”, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, London: Academy Editions, 1977. Also, Michale Hays uses the term in his introduction to the article “ ‘La Dimension Amoureuse’ in Architecture” by George Baird, *Meaning in Architecture*, ed. Charles Jencks and George Baird (New York: George Braziller, 1969) appeared in his book; *Architecture | Theory | since 1968*.

⁹² Edward W. Said, “The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1978, p. 701.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.704.

system of heterogeneous semiotic spaces, in whose continuum the message circulates.”⁹⁴

Text is expanded beyond its lexical meaning through the literary theory which poses a sort of ambiguity regarding the multiplicity of its references. While text is merely organized around a verbal code, the “Text” in a broader perspective embraces the whole social practices operated through the convention of codes. The Text is constituted from among the relation between society and space. It maintains the plurality of voicing as asserted by Roland Barthes in “Work to Text:” “the Text is that *social* space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder.”⁹⁵ In this respect, it is possible to recognize text as a binder of the tripartite constituents of “the social space”: “spatial practice”, “representations of space” and “representational space” in the case that Lefebvre claims.⁹⁶ Therefore, it is important to understand the status of architectural text and its semantic capacity within this greater “textual” network of sociocultural space which implies an architectural embodiment. The relation between these two accounts of “text” can be proposed in an analogy what Lotman brought forward in one of his seminal articles, “The Text within the Text,” referring to the notion of textuality; text’s intratextual and extratextual levels. While the former indicates text’s own entity and “its internal relations within the text”⁹⁷ isolated from any other external determinants, the latter proposes a new modality for “the semiotic activity” considering text’s relations with its con-text.

⁹⁴ Yury M. Lotman, “The Text within the Text,” PMLA, Vol. 109, No. 3, 1994, p. 377.

⁹⁵ Roland Barthes, Work to Text, Image Music Text Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath, Fontana Press, 1977, p.164.

⁹⁶ For further information see: Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

⁹⁷ “intertextuality.” A Dictionary of Media and Communication, 2011, Web. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199568758.001.0001/acref-9780199568758-e-1434?rskey=aRb0rx&result=1&q=intratextual>, [last accessed 23.6.2014]

"The text is only one of the elements of the account. The real flesh of the literary work consists of a text (a system of intratextual relations) in its relationship to extratextual reality: life, literary norms, tradition, ideas. It is impossible to conceive of a text thoroughly extracted from this network."⁹⁸

He stresses that the meaning is created in between these two levels; intratextual and extratextual levels of the text, which means that the text communicates only when it is unified by the notion of textuality. Therefore, the term textuality requires a further definition when text is seen as socially constructed and communicated over the society. Does every text is unified by the notion of textuality? "Textuality" is clearly demonstrated by William F. Hanks in a two-fold stand regarding the status of text in relation to its reception to be interpreted:

"Textuality, on a first reading, is the quality of coherence or connectivity that characterizes text. On such a definition, this term is no more and no less vague than the first, since connectivity may be dependent upon the inherent properties of the textual artifact, the interpretive activities of a community of readers/viewers, or a combination of the two. It raises the further problem however, to which I return in some detail below, of whether all texts are necessarily unified by textuality, or whether some kinds of texts may not contain within them significant anti-textual elements. That is, they may fail to have thematic, stylistic, or other kinds of unity, but still constitute a "text." I take the position that whereas the formal and functional properties of sign complexes can aid in the

⁹⁸ Roland A. Champagne, "A Grammar of the Languages of Culture: Literary Theory and Yury M. Lotman's Semiotics," New Literary History, Vol. 9, No. 2, Soviet Semiotics and Criticism: An Anthology, 1978, p. 206.

establishment of textuality, it is the fit between the sign form and some larger context that determines its ultimate.”⁹⁹

His definition indicates the significance of the integration between the text form and the context that the text is situated in. It points out that text flows and expands over interaction. Therefore, textuality arouse from interpretability can be assessed as a ground which stipulates the representational capacity consisted in the text. When architectural object is stated as a text to be read, the issue of textuality and its premises constitute an alternative reading for the production of architectural meaning. Richard Harvey Brown clearly outlines that “meaning does not reside autonomously within a text but is created in the process of transforming experience into text in a dialogical relation with other texts and contexts.”¹⁰⁰ Hence, meaning is reified in the act of textualization once the constellation of a discourse rendered in form of a text, which results an involvement in the process of social signification. Hence, what Yuri Lotman attributes to text, can be read parallel with text’s capacity to expand its multiple meanings:

“It is altogether evident that the real artistic value of textual elements is comprehensible only by relationship to the extratextuals and that a similar quantity of textual elements related to different extratextual structures produces a different artistic effect.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ William F. Hanks, *Op. Cit.*, p.96.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Harvey Brown, *Op. Cit.*, p. 190.

¹⁰¹ Roland A. Champagne, *Op. Cit.*

3.2. Semiotic Dimension of Architecture as a Sociocultural Contract

“I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object.”

Jacques Lacan

The desire to formalize architecture through its tectonic production by scientific semiological analysis dominated the architectural discourse of the late 1960s. The articles nourished by that motive are brought together under the first book entitled, “Meaning in Architecture,” 1969, by George Baird and Charles Jencks comprises the initial research on the possibility of applying semiology to architecture.¹⁰² As Michael Hays notices in the introduction to George Baird’s “‘*La Dimension Amoureuse*’ in Architecture,” the formation of semiotics is adequate to conduct architecture as a cultural phenomenon¹⁰³. Charles Jencks states in “Meaning in Architecture:” “Semantization is inevitable; as soon as there is a society, every usage is converted into a sign itself.”¹⁰⁴ Accordingly, Baird and Jencks “proposed a preliminary semiotics of architecture elaborating the basic structuralist insight that buildings are not simply physical supports but artifacts with meaning – signs dispersed across some larger social text.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Charles Jencks, “Preface,” Meaning in Architecture, New York: George Braziller, 1969, p.7.

¹⁰³ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction: ‘*La Dimension Amoureuse*’ in Architecture,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.36.

¹⁰⁴ Charles Jencks, “Semiology and Architecture,” Meaning in Architecture, New York: George Braziller, 1969, p.11.

¹⁰⁵ K. Michael Hays, Op. Cit., Architecture’s Desire, p.23.

The inquiries are formed initially by the linguistic theory and sourced to the latter studies that makes architecture as the object of deconstructive reading as illustrated in Eisenman's and Tschumi's case in the second chapter. Linguistic paradigm is followed by semiotics, structuralism and in particular post-structuralism and constituted a base of the search for a meaning in architecture. The superimposition of one field of semiology to architecture requires a deeper understanding of its source episteme to put them in a dialogue. This dialogue poses an intertextual identity, expanding to other disciplines external to architecture.

In the preface of "Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture" Yuri M. Lotman outlines three aspects of semiotics underlying specifically the time period; the end of the twentieth century. First aspect is that semiotics is the scientific discipline what Ferdinand de Saussure initiated, problematizing linguistic forward.¹⁰⁶ Second, it is "a method of humanities, which is relevant to various disciplines and which is defined not by the nature of its object but by the means of analyzing it."¹⁰⁷ And the third aspect is its ability to be exerted through the cognitive consciousness of the researcher and his/ her capacity to semiotize everything in the light of his/her attention. While semiotics draws its own disciplinary boundaries, its usage as a method to analyze other disciplines introduces new challenges. Under those three aspects asserted by Lotman, the sought self-formalization of architecture was situated in a semiotic ground, which is not only in convergence with the architecture as an object with a meaning but also with the architecture as a thinking mechanism offering new ways of research. "At every instance of its production, semiotics thinks of its object, its instruments and the relation between them and in so doing thinks (of)

¹⁰⁶ Yuri M. Lotman, Universe of Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture, Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990, p.4.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

itself: as a result of this reflection, it becomes the theory of the very science it constitutes.”¹⁰⁸

If architecture is determined as a social practice, it is already irreducible to a purely architectural matter but it stipulates “architectural” to be able to sustain in equilibrium of its non-architectural determinants. Therefore, architecture is qualified in alignment with a ruling order that makes it possible to work simultaneously within the greater mechanism of other social practices or the social practice in general. Julia Kristeva claims that: “Every social practice, as well as being the object of external (economic, political, etc.) determinants, is also determined by a set of signifying rules, by virtue of the fact that there is present an order of language; that this language has a double articulation (signifier/ signified); that this duality stands in an arbitrary relation to referent; and that all social functioning is marked by the split between referent and symbolic and by the shift from signified to signifier coextensive with it.”¹⁰⁹ Correspondingly following her account, it throws light on the characteristics of architecture functioning by a set of signifying rules although the duality of signifier-signified and the arbitrary relation to referent are extended in posterior linguistics. Reading the productions of architecture as text, as a woven entity forming a social practice, requires a methodological frame which is capable to illuminate its own signifying system. In that sense, both the position of architectonic production ‘structured like a language’ and the discursive production acting at the level of natural language constitutes architecture as “a secondary modeling system” which makes it the object of semiotics. For Julia Kristeva “semiotics is an open form of research, a constant critique that turns back on itself and offers its own auto-

¹⁰⁸ Julia Kristeva, “Semiotics: A Critical Science and/or a Critique of Science,” The Kristeva Reader, ed. by Toril Moi, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, (first published in *Semiotika*, 1968.), p.77.

¹⁰⁹ Kristeva, “The System and the Speaking Subject,” *Op. Cit.*, p.25.

critique.”¹¹⁰ The critical capacity of architecture on defining its own disciplinary specificity and architecture’s distinguished status from mere building are accredited semantic tools to decipher architecture’s textualization.

It is possible to assert that first, architectural object was assigned to the linguistic paradigm analyzing the possibility to reach the pure form coded like language. Later, the criticisms on mere formal approaches shifted the study to an analysis of architectural thought involved in social context whose approach is not only take language as a possible model for its product but to see it a way of communication.¹¹¹ Markus and Cameron states which Umberto Eco points out in his seminal article “Function and sign: semiotics of architecture:” “while the elements of architecture constitute themselves as a system, they become a code only when coupled with systems that lie outside architecture.”¹¹² They stand for the discursive character of architectural objects “as a social and historical construct, subject to influence from outside the system.”¹¹³

“To begin with, it is clear that much of what is produced today in architecture consists of a discourse that comments on other already constituted architectural discourses: that is, the very special case of metalanguage in which both discourses belong to the same practice; architecture commenting on architecture, architecture “speaking” of itself.”¹¹⁴ The notion of “architecture speaking of itself” was introduced by Jorge Silvetti. He has appropriated semiotics into architectural thinking by constituting a meta-discourse which is eventually an inevitable probe for

¹¹⁰ Kristeva, “Semiotics: A Critical Science and/or a Critique of Science,” Op. Cit. p.77.

¹¹¹ Thomas A. Markus and Deborah Cameron, Op. Cit., p.8.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.9.

¹¹⁴ Jorge Silvetti, “The Beauty of Shadows,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.269. (First Published in *Oppositions* 6, 1977.)

architects, who ensure its reproduction as an unifying dominant agency. Hence, architecture capable of defining its projections onto itself, demands the formalization of its characteristics which stands for a framework in order to navigate the status of architecture immersed in the greater network of social systems. The assumption asserted by Jorge Silvetti in his article “The Beauty of Shadows” appeared in *Oppositions* in 1977, maps architecture as a model contributing to the production of knowledge.

“We should recall that we started our work by assuming that what characterizes architecture today is its capacity to be studied as a system of significations that establishes different levels and layers of meanings and sense and constitutes one of the symbolic spheres instituted by society. If our assumption was correct, we can further conclude that architecture defines its place and role in the spheres of the production of knowledge and the production of meaning, as well as in the technical production of artifacts, as being within the social practices, and that as such it can be regarded mainly as a technical-ideological practice insofar as it transforms both matter and man’s consciousness and utilizes both techniques and human relations.”¹¹⁵

K. Michael Hays reviews the position of Silvetti in the article as an extension of “the general tendency of architectural theory in the 1970s to look to (post)structuralist studies of language as a possible paradigm for architectural thought.”¹¹⁶ Even in today’s intellectual setting, this approach can commit itself to further amplitude nourishing the architectural discourse by the re-appraisal of its possibilities. Therefore, Silvetti’s interpretation draws a foundation for the modality sought for the possible “social network” of architecture.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.277.

¹¹⁶ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction: The Beauty of Shadows,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.269.

When the architectural discourse has been mediating between the “architecture ‘speaking’ of itself” and architecture speaking of other social practices, it refers to “text” and its representational capacity.

“There are those who want a text (an art, a painting) without a shadow, without the ‘dominant ideology’; but this is to want a text without fecundity, without productivity, a sterile text. . . . The text needs its shadows; this shadow is *a bit* of ideology, *a bit* of representation, *a bit* of subject: ghosts, pockets, traces, necessary clouds: subversion must produce its own chiaroscuro.”¹¹⁷

3.3. The Symbolic Dimension in between the Spatial Models of Architecture and the Semiotic Models of Culture

Reading architecture as a product of textualization introduces some semantic perspectives; which produce a link between the spatial-architectural form and its “shadows.” In this case, it proposes an investigation on how spatial models reflect the image of the world, culture in which they are constructed. More specifically, Yuri M. Lotman stated architecture as one of the spatial models in resemblance with the semiotic models of culture, arguing the mutual transaction between the spatial and semiotic models. He illustrates his statements through the image of the city in particular, St. Petersburg.

“Humanity, immersed in its cultural space, always creates around itself an organized spatial sphere. This sphere includes both ideas and semiotic

¹¹⁷ Jorge Silvetti, Op. Cit., p. 280.

models and people's recreative activity, since the world which people artificially create (agricultural, architectural and technological) correlates with their semiotic models. There is a two-way connection: on the one hand, architectural buildings copy the spatial image of the universe and on the other hand, this image of the universe is constructed on an analogy with the world of cultural constructs which mankind creates.”¹¹⁸

Lotman qualifies the constitutive part of spatial models with an iconic mode particular to its physical embodiment.

“The importance of spatial models created by culture lies in the fact that, unlike other basic forms of semiotic modeling, spatial models are constructed not on a verbal, discrete basis but on an iconic continuum. Their foundation are visually visible texts and verbalization of them is secondary. ... But the first attempts at self-description of this structure inevitably involve the verbal level with the attendant semantic tension between the continual and the discrete semiotic pictures of the world.”¹¹⁹

Yet, the verbalization of spatial models follows after; it gains importance when it functions in the form of a “metalanguage;” a language used to make statements about a language. In architectural domain, the self-description of architecture designates its own meta-discourse. The iconic continuum Lotman refers to stands parallel with the definition of iconic sign in Peirce's triad; iconic, indexical and symbolic explained as “a mode in which the signifier is perceived as *resembling* or imitating the signified.”¹²⁰ And it can be exemplified for the architectural case “like the drawings

¹¹⁸ Yuri M. Lotman, Op. Cit., p.204.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Daniel Chandler, “Signs,” Semiotics for Beginners, web.

<http://users.aber.ac.uk/dgc/Documents/S4B/sem02.html> [last accessed 30.6.2013]

and models of architecture's medium.”¹²¹ Hence, within this continuum they create architecture's own privileged signifying system.

Architectural discourse mainly motivated and documented through the production of texts contributes to the disciplinary formation of architecture in the same way the built environment does. Therefore, built space cannot be considered superior to its discursive formation, but they are both actively engaged in the formation of the other. While Lotman characterizes the spatial models over their iconic basis, he further emphasizes the reciprocal formative relation between the social and spatial orders pointing out their representative character by referring them as “images.”

“No less complex are the relationships between human beings and the spatial image of the world. On the one hand, the image is created by man, and on the other hand, it actively forms the person immersed in. Here it is possible to draw a parallel with natural language. We could say that the activity generated by human beings towards the spatial model has its origin in the collective, whereas the reverse tendency affects the individual. ... As in the process of language-formation so in the process of spatial modeling both tendencies are active.”¹²²

Since he posited the role of the agency at the center of spatial modeling in a similar token with language formation, the signification of social meaning arose within this agency and its reflection on both the spatial and discursive products of architecture has become essential in understanding the process discussed by him. Nevertheless, the politics of the spatial, verbal or textual creation operates through different agents

¹²¹ Patrik Schumacher, The Autopoeisis of Architecture: A New Framework for Architecture, Vol. II, Wiley, 2012, p.218.

¹²² Yuri M. Lotman, Op. Cit.

under the “metaphysically complete”¹²³ architecture. As Jeffrey Kipnis stated; “discourse, literary writing, and architectural design are different; they each do things the other cannot.”¹²⁴ In this stratification, they are the constituents of the semiosphere of architecture in which the status of architectural text and the textualization of architectural object are proposed as mediators between architecture’s interdisciplinary status and the disciplinary totality of its diverse productions. And they are stood for both for the content and the form:

“The spatial image of the world created by culture is situated as it were between humanity and the outer reality of Nature and is constantly drawn to these two poles. It turns to humanity in the name of the outside world whose image is, while the historical experience of man subjects this image to constant reworking, striving for accuracy in its representation of the world. But this image is always universal while the world is given to human beings through experience only partially. The contradiction between these two mutually associated aspects is inevitable and ineradicable; together they form the universal plan of the content and expression, and the reflection of the content in expression is inevitably not wholly accurate.”¹²⁵

¹²³ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction: /Twisting the Separatrix/”, Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, 1998, Massachusetts: MIT Press, p.708.

¹²⁴ Jeffrey Kipnis, “/Twisting the Separatrix/,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.721. (First Published in Assemblage 14, 1991.)

¹²⁵ Yuri M. Lotman, Op. Cit.

CHAPTER 4

“SEMIOSPHERE” OF ARCHITECTURE

4.1 “On Semiosphere”

4.1.1 Architecture as the Subject of Semiosphere

Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman (28 February 1922–28 October 1993) was among the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century, founder of the Moscow-Tartu School which has been redirected the Soviet Semiotics milieu over last thirty years.

The term semiosphere is first appeared in Lotman’s seminal article “On Semiosphere” which is published in 1984 in the journal *Sign System Studies*, the magazine initiated by him in 1964 carrying the title of the oldest international semiotic periodical, in its original language Russian and translated into English in 1992.¹²⁶ Lotman’s influential book “Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture” also covers his approach in detail, and the part two of the book is also entitled as “The Semiosphere” forming a basis for his analysis on culture's semiotic space. The notion of semiosphere is very complex and abstract and it requires a list of further definitions which will be given in the following. Peeter Torop reassesses semiosphere by pointing out its discrete character: “On the background of the contemporary trends of science it has to be remembered that semiosphere is

¹²⁶ Wilma Clark, translator’s note in Juri Lotman, “On Semiosphere,” translated by Wilma Clark, *Sign Systems Studies*, 33.1, 2005, p.208.

simultaneously an object- and a metaconcept.”¹²⁷ In his article “Semiosphere and/as the research object of semiotics of culture” he describes the leading role of the concept in the change of understanding the object and the system of semiotic analysis. Torop states: “Semiosphere marks the complementarity of disciplines studying culture, the movement towards the creation of general culture studies and “understanding methodology.”¹²⁸

Namely, the introduction of “On Semiosphere” constitutes the foundation of the concept particularly addressing the subject of semiotics in significance. Lotman points out a very distinct shift departed from the shared characteristic of semiotic traditions in reference to Peirce-Morris and Saussure; which describes the semiotic procedure through isolating the signs and their relations. The article initiated a new approach for analyzing signification systems not only based on language as a primary modeling system but on others having adequate linguistic adjectival which are designated as “secondary modeling systems.” The article begins as follows:

“Contemporary semiotics is undergoing a review of some of its basic concepts. It is a well-known fact that at the heart of semiotics lie two scientific traditions. One of these goes back to Peirce-Morris and begins with an understanding of the sign as the first element of any semiotic system. The second is based on the theses of Saussure and the Prague school and has at its core the antinomy of language and speech (texts). However, despite the differences of these approaches, they share one important commonality: they are based on a simple, atomic element, and everything that follows is considered from the point of view of its similarity to this. Thus, in the first instance, the isolated sign is analyzed, and all subsequent semiotic phenomena are

¹²⁷ Peeter Torop, “Semiosphere and/as the research object of semiotics of culture,” Sign Systems Studies, 33.1, 2005, p.159.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p.161.

considered as a succession of signs. The second point of view, in particular, is expressed by the urge to consider a single communicative act — an exchange of communication between addressee and addressor — as the prime element and model of any given semiotic act. As a result, the individual act of sign exchange has come to be regarded as a model of natural language, and models of natural languages — *as universal semiotic models, whereas semiotics itself has sought to be understood as the extension of linguistic methods to objects not included in traditional linguistics*. This approach, originating with Saussure, was expressed with maximum clarity by the late I. I. Revzin who, during discussions at the second Summer school on secondary modelling systems in Kääriku (1966), proposed the following definition: *The subject of semiotics is any object, which acts as a means of linguistic description.*”¹²⁹

“The modeling system” is an important term initiated by Tartu-Moscow School. While it is further specified as primary and secondary, he constitutes this distinction relational over language and he refers language in most cases equated with organization.¹³⁰

“The Moscow-Tartu group defines religion, art, and other domains of culture enumerated above as “secondary modelling systems,” in the sense that they are both superimposed on natural language and modelled on it. Briefly, those domains are “languagelike.” Lotman’s own phrasing: “Those systems based on natural language which acquire additional superstructures in the shape of secondary languages

¹²⁹ Juri Lotman, “On Semiosphere,” translated by Wilma Clark, Sign Systems Studies, 33.1, 2005, p.208

¹³⁰ Tuuli Raudla, “Vico and Lotman: poetic meaning creation and primary modelling,” Sign Systems Studies, 36.1, 2008, p.150.

may be conveniently called secondary modelling systems.” As a consequence of this definition, “secondary languages are simultaneously communication systems (they serve to get across some definite information), as well as modelling systems (they provide multiple images of the world). Therefore every modelling system has a bounded image of the world as its necessary point of reference.”¹³¹

In “Semiotics: A Critical Science and/or a Critique of Science,” 1968, in reference to Tartu-Moscow School; “Troudy po znadowym sisteman,” 1965; the former name of the journal *Sign System Studies*, Julia Kristeva considers the extension of semiotics by exemplifying the practices functioned through social codes. In other words, she expanded the boundary of semiotics by pointing out that the establishment of the concept of a signifying system is freed from the bondage of linguistics. Hence, she has described a new coordinate to the scope of semiotics concurring with Lotman. Similarly to Lotman she indicates:

“Since social practice is envisaged as a signifying system that is ‘structured like a language’, any practice can be scientifically studied as a secondary model in relation to natural language, modeled on this language and turn becoming a model or pattern for it.”¹³²

While architecture like art can be classified under secondary modeling systems, it cannot project the overall semiotic analysis. It is impossible to fully externalize the *scientific* advanced semiotics, which is beyond of the scope of this analysis, but to line a “semiotic level” at which architecture and semiotics can both mediate. However, following the account of Kristeva architecture can be posited at a level which is distinguished from the scientific base of semiotics.

¹³¹Boguslaw Zylko, Op. Cit., p. 395.

¹³² Julia Kristeva, “Semiotics: A Critical Science and/or a Critique of Science,” Op. Cit., p.75.

“By borrowing its models from the formal sciences, semiotics could eventually become the axiomatization of signifying systems, without being hindered by its epistemological dependence on linguistics. The latter could then in turn renew itself by adopting these models. In this sense, rather than speak of a semiotics, we prefer to talk of a semiotic level, which is that of the axiomatization, or formalization, of signifying systems.”¹³³

Architecture produces both its objects and its instruments and those instruments vary only by means of different modes of representation. Architecture is also capable of modeling itself; it always designates its object by the constant reproduction of cultural codes. “Lotman defined cultural phenomena as secondary modelling systems for the reason that they need to be translated into natural language at some stage kind.”¹³⁴ Its representative capacity is further pondered and expressed by texts; the natural language in use. The collective translation of architecture into text makes possible to posit architecture as a secondary modeling system. As in the case of proposing the concept of semiosphere into architecture, the position of Kalevi Kull from Tartu School of Semiotic, a colleague of Yuri Lotman, solidifies the case for studying architecture as a model of knowledge. He emphasizes the potentiality of extending the notion of semiosphere on other modeling systems having semantic capacities.

“If we look at the level of models, of knowledge, and semiosphere being a concept or model belonging to semiotic knowledge, then it is obvious that we can speak about semiosphere everywhere where semiotic knowledge extends. Also, everything physical can be viewed semiotically, can be textualised,

¹³³ Ibid., p.77.

¹³⁴ Tuuli Raudla, Op. Cit., p.153.

and physical models can be seen (interpreted) as special cases of semiotic ones.”¹³⁵

4.1.2 The Bounded Semiotic Space and its Spatialization

Lotman in the part “Semiosphere” of his book “Universe of the Mind” devotes a sub-chapter discussing his argument over defining semiotic space. He basically points out the conventional approach referring the relationship between addresser and addressee. He confirms that “the principle of isolating an object and making it into a general model” has contingencies with early semiotic approach in the case that isolating the sign as the smallest unit of signification grounds a general reasoning to the whole over the part. However, the notion of semiosphere as Lotman suggests exceeds the former course by tending to change the method of analysis. He refers to the former approach as:

“Such an approach adheres to the well-known rule of scientific thinking: the movement from the simple to the complex- implicitly justifying oneself at the first opportunity. However, in this there is also the danger that heuristic expediency (the convenience of analysis) comes to be accepted as the ontological character of the object, which is assigned to it by the structure derived from the simple and clearly outlined atomistic elements, in accordance with their complexity. The complex object is thus reduced to the totality of the simple.”¹³⁶

He underlines the threat of reductive analysis, and he continued:

¹³⁵ Kalevi Kull, “Semiosphere and a dual ecology: Paradoxes of communication,” Sign System Studies, 33:1, 2005, p.184.

¹³⁶ Juri Lotman, “On Semiosphere,” Op. Cit., p.206.

“It may be possible to suggest that, in reality, clear and functionally mono-semantic systems do not exist in isolation. Their articulation is conditioned by heuristic necessity. Neither, taken individually, is in fact, effective. They function only by being immersed in a specific semiotic continuum, which is filled with multi-variant semiotic models situated at a range of hierarchical levels.”¹³⁷

He sees the isolated tripartite; addresser - addressee and their relation, not enough for an active communicative act and he says for this schema to “work it has to be “immersed” in semiotic space” and interact within that space.¹³⁸ This space functions as a semiotic universe, which only makes possible the production of meanings. Indeed, the space of culture is described as semiotic universe.

“The semiotic universe may be regarded as the totality of individual texts and isolated languages as they relate to each other. In this case, all structures will look as if they are constructed out of individual bricks. However, it is more useful to establish a contrasting view: all semiotic space may be regarded as a unified mechanism (if not organism). In this case, primacy does not lie in one or another sign, but in the “greater system”, namely the semiosphere. The semiosphere is that same semiotic space, outside of which semiosis itself cannot exist.”¹³⁹

In addition, Lotman both in the article “On Semiosphere” and the chapter “Semiosphere” entitled a section “The notion of boundary.” He demarcated the semiotic space by a boundary in an abstract sense through which semiosphere interacts with non-semiotic spaces. The boundary is the mechanism that is spatial in

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Yuri M. Lotman, Universe of Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture, Op. Cit., p.123.

¹³⁹ Juri Lotman, “On Semiosphere,” Op. Cit., p.208.

the sense that it defines the external communication and the semiosis developed through translation between semiospheres.

“But the unity of the semiotic space of the semiosphere is brought about not only by metastructural formations: even more crucial is the unifying factor of boundary, which divides the internal space of the semiosphere from the external, its inside from its outside.”¹⁴⁰

Particularly addressing Tshcumi, “Architecturally, to define space literally meant “to determine boundaries.”¹⁴¹ What Umberto Eco quotes from Lotman in his introduction to “The Universe of the Mind” draws attention to the analogy how Lotman creates the imagery of semiosphere around space as “*a priori* representation.”¹⁴²

“...imagine a museum hall where exhibits from different periods are on display, along with inscriptions in known and unknown languages, and instructions for decoding them; besides there are the explanations composed by the museum staff, plans for tours and rules for the behavior of the visitors. Imagine also in this hall tour-leaders and the visitors and this as a single mechanism. This is an image of the semiosphere.”¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Yuri M. Lotman, Universe of Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture, Op. Cit., p.130.

¹⁴¹ Bernard Tschumi, “The Architectural Paradox,” Architecture and Disjunction, MIT Press, 1996, p.30.

¹⁴² Andrew Janiak, "Kant's Views on Space and Time", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Web. Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/kant-spacetime/> [last accessed 25.6.2014]

¹⁴³ Yuri M. Lotman, Universe of Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture, Op. Cit., p.126-127.

His illustration of the image of semiosphere through an analogy to museum space, in which objects assembled through an authority, is represented by the break-down of their space-time continuum and construed in a new space-time setting by means of museal codes. What Lotman orders in his description of semiosphere as museum space, indicates certain mechanisms of reading exhibitions. For example, the instructions and explanations accompanying the object or the architectural schema redirecting the exhibition plan can lead visitors to intended meanings. While the former positions the relation between the object and its text, the latter suggests the impact of the potential position of the object in the total grouping can change the total perception of the exhibition. Thus, the narrative character is constructed by the possible interpretations. In this respect, Ludmilla Jardonova in “New Museology” pointed out that “A museum can never be read as a single text.”¹⁴⁴ Therefore, spatialization of semiosphere in this illustration can be read parallel with the approaches of museum studies in relation to culture.

In “Introduction” to the book; “A Companion to Museum Studies,” Sharon Macdonald calls attention to what museum studies encompasses in scope lately in academic practices. “This expanded and expanding museum studies does not, however, have a single ‘line,’ and it is significant that a collective plural noun is replacing a singular one.”¹⁴⁵ Therefore the spatialization of cultural space corresponds with the complexity of the spatial organization of museums.

“‘Cultural space’ is understood in a literal as well as a figurative sense. Lotman goes on to analyze specific spatial oppositions active within any semiosphere. By emphasizing space’s ability to acquire semantic features, he removes semiotics still further from linguistics, replacing

¹⁴⁴ Ludmilla Jardonova, “Objects of knowledge: A Historical Perspective on Museums,” *New Museology*, ed. by Peter Vergo, London: Reaktion Books, p.32.

¹⁴⁵ Sharon Macdonald, “Introduction,” *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald, Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, 2006, p. 2.

verbal conventionality by spatial iconicity (semiosis based on relations of similarity rather than on arbitrary conventions).”¹⁴⁶

Thus, museum is a semiotic space in which each individual object is valued on the subject of the constructed totality. Departing from his stance, the analogy also suggests premises to rethink the semantic space of museum through the focus of semiosphere. However, with respect to the key in understanding the notion of semiosphere, its direct ligature to culture as a set of texts constitutes a model on how culture is constructed and structured as a complex network, using space as a special apparatus.

4.2. The “Cultural Turn” in Architectural Discourse

““The future of architecture is not architectural.” The key is to agree on what architecture is... and where it’s going. The key is to agree on what culture is and where it’s going.”¹⁴⁷

There has been an ongoing academic orientation readdressing the notion of “culture” and seeking to review the status of architecture and culture in relation to each other in recent years. “The cultural role of architecture: contemporary and historical perspectives” (2012) is lately revisited the issue of culture in architectural discourse, and the architecture as the psyche of culture. Deciphering also the sociological

¹⁴⁶ Stephen Hutchings , review of *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* by Jurij M. Lotman, *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 2 , 1992, pp. 246.

¹⁴⁷ Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel, *Op. Cit.*, p.17.

frameworks, architecture is assigned “as a field of cultural contestation.”¹⁴⁸ While the cultural milieu is revisited in architectural domain lately, the point of the thesis dates back to Diana Agrest’s seminal article “Design versus Non-Design”, 1974, seeking to find the intersection of approaches in the focus of culture with Yuri M. Lotman.

Agrest in “Design versus Non-Design” dates the place of architectural discourse in the larger sociocultural ground by revealing “the mechanisms which relate architecture to culture – the processes by which meaning is produced, not only architecture or design, but also in the domain of non-design.”¹⁴⁹ While the article involves in the mid-1970s theoretical milieu which sees “semiotics a way of reading architecture as a field of knowledge,” it also combines the question of culture and the production of meaning. Her remark on two distinct forms of cultural or symbolic production stated as; first is *design*, a normative process by which architecture relates to cultural systems outside of itself and second is *non-design*, described as a way in which interrelations between different cultural systems arose and form the built world, an indirect product of any institutionalized design practice rather resulted by a general process of culture.¹⁵⁰ Thus, her approach to the urban environment as the object of reading is constituted as cross-referral comprised of ‘a set of fragments’ or in her emphasis “units of reading.” The “semantic volume,” the density of meanings embodied by the built environment specifies the dimension of it.¹⁵¹ While the dichotomy is formed around the definition of culture, she defines culture in reference to Lotman’s essay “Problèmes de la typologie des cultures,” in *Essays in Semiotics*, edited by Julia Kristeva, Josette Rey-Debove, and Donna Jean Umiker and founded her argument on Yuri Lotman’s notion of text.

¹⁴⁸ Paul R. Jones, Op. Cit., 2006, p.550.

¹⁴⁹ Diana Agrest, Op. Cit., p.201.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.200.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.209.

“Culture, on the other hand, is understood to be a system of *social codes* that permit information to enter the public domain by means of appropriate signs. As a whole, culture can be seen as a hierarchy of these codes, manifested through various texts.”¹⁵²

Significantly, it should be noted that her paper “Design versus Non-Design” first presented at the First International Congress of Semiotic Studies in 1974, Milan.¹⁵³ In his introduction to “Design versus Non-Design,” Hays stressed that the basis of her argument advanced on Agrest’s former essay “Semiotics and Architecture: Ideological Consumption or Theoretical Work,” in collaboration with Mario Gandelsonas¹⁵⁴ and he underlined their theoretical position as being parallel to French literary magazine *Tel Quel*. While in the editorial board of *Tel Quel*, Kristeva assured the contribution of Lotman to French intellectual sphere:

“In 1968 I published in *Tel quel* (no. 35) the first French (indeed, the first Western) translations of the Tartu semioticians. Together we established the International Semiotics Association; although Lotman could not leave the Soviet Union to attend the founding congress in Warsaw, he became vice president of the association in 1968.”¹⁵⁵

“On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture” Lotman and Uspensky underlines the multilayered nature of culture and concentrate on only two definitions within the variety; first, culture as featured belonging; “never a universal set, but always a

¹⁵² Ibid., p.201.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.200.

¹⁵⁴ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction: Design versus Non-Design,” *Op.Cit.*, p. 198.

¹⁵⁵ Julia Kristeva and Martha Noel Evans, “On Lotman,” *PMLA*, Vol. 109, No. 3, 1994, p.376.

subset organized in a specific manner” which means and second, a system of signs, established its definition over the dichotomy of culture and nonculture.¹⁵⁶

The notion of semiosphere posited by Yuri Lotman, corresponds that framework covering the status of diverse architectural productions and its non-architectural determinants. With this intention architecture is not a mono-semantic system rather a poly-semantic one in which the contexts are decisive in signification. In that sense the multiple forces of architecture’s own internal dynamics and other cultural codes external to them as distinguished by Agrest as design and non-design.¹⁵⁷

Her proposed zoning of design and non-design can be accorded to the notion of semiosphere in resemblance. Architecture is considered under the set of practices of design which is stated as “a closed system not only in relation to culture as a whole, but also in relation to other cultural systems such as literature, film, painting, philosophy, physics, geometry, etc.”¹⁵⁸ In addition, designs distinct features that define design as it is, separate its domain from other cultural practices and constitute a boundary between what is design and what is not.¹⁵⁹

As Agrest and Gandelsonas refer in their seminal article “Semiotics and Architecture: Ideological Consumption or Theoretical Work,” they clearly state that: “the theoretical object of a semiotics of the built environment must be the development of an abstract conceptual structure which explains the production of signification in the configuration of the built environment.”¹⁶⁰ Therefore, “Semiosphere” can be read as that concept which introduces architectural knowledge

¹⁵⁶ Yuri M. Lotman, B. A. Uspensky and G. Mihaychuk, “On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture,” New Literary History, Vol. 9, No. 2, Soviet Semiotics and Criticism: An Anthology, 1978, p.211.

¹⁵⁷ Diana Agrest, Op. Cit., p.200.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas, Op. Cit., p.119.

derived not only from the finished product of “design” within its closed boundaries tending to fix the meaning, but rather from the intersection of ‘design’ and ‘non-design’ where the plurality of meanings enriches discursive grounds of architecture. Then, the intersection of those two domains is subjected to an operation which renders possible meanings brought to the surface.

4.3. The Semiosphere of Architecture

“The concept of architecture is itself an inhabited *constructum*, a heritage which comprehends us even before we could submit it to thought.”¹⁶¹

Michael Hays in his 1984 dated article “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form” over his review of Mies van der Rohe’s projects, stresses “the fact that an architectural object, by virtue of its situation in the world, is an object whose interpretation has already commenced but is never complete.”¹⁶² He compares the two opposite stance considering the status of architecture focused around form and culture under the subtitle of “The worldliness of architecture.” While the dichotomy is represented through the dominance of culture and the instrumentalization of architectural object in opposition to a search for autonomy internal to the form, the article gives an indication of both by analyzing architecture’s “special status as a cultural object with a causation, presence, and duration of its own.”¹⁶³ Therefore, from the scratch its materialization embodied, evolved and construed through the designations of both what is external and what is internal to the architecture.

¹⁶¹ Jacques Derrida, “Point de folie- Maintenant l’architecture,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.572.

¹⁶² K. Michael Hays, “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form,” Op. Cit., p.17.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

As he introduces in “Architecture | Theory | since 1968,” textualization of architecture is vital in production unless the ultimate autonomy of architecture is assured. Hays’ integrated approach to the domain of architectural theory and its productions questions how architectural thinking places theory in position of its own subject; his methodology to unite both the discursive and architectonic productions of architecture in a single semiotic space reconfigures the relationship between architectural theory and theory of meaning.

“A primary lesson of architecture theory is that what used to be called the sociohistorical contexts of architectural production, as well as the object produced, are both themselves texts in the sense that we cannot approach them separately and directly, as distinct, unrelated things-in-themselves, but only through their prior differentiation and transmutation, which is shot through with ideological motivation. The world is a totality; it is an essential and essentially *practical* problem of theory to rearticulate that totality, to produce the concepts that relate the architectural fact with the social, historical, and ideological subtexts from which it was never really separate to begin with.”¹⁶⁴

What Michael Hays proposes to the problem of theory reflects a holistic view of world. Whether the importance of the production of new concepts within architecture itself is crucial, his definitional architectural theory constructs a parallel approach to Lotman’s semiosphere projecting a comprehensive course addressing its object of analysis. Emerging from the field of semiotic, the possible projection of “semiosphere” into architectural thinking appears to accord with the quasi-autonomous structure of architecture. The concept of semiosphere can contribute multiple readings in the expression of architecture’s totality. Hays in “Architecture’s Desire,” 2010, further reconceptualizes the question of signification and its

¹⁶⁴ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction,” Architecture | Theory | since 1968, ed. K. Michael Hays, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998, p.xii.

transformative capacity on both the discursive and spatial production, and clearly discusses the transitional nature:

“If ontology is the theory of objects and their relations- a structure within which being itself may be given some organization- then, I believe art (generally) and architecture (especially) can and do operate ontologically. Architecture is fundamentally an inquiry into what is, what might be, and how the latter can happen. Architecture is one way of attaining the verb ‘to be.’”¹⁶⁵

Retaining his position in “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form,” architecture’s potency to be part of semiosis; “the process by which a culture produces signs and/or attributes meaning to signs”¹⁶⁶ is remarked. In that sense, the essence of architecture stands not in finding an inherent fixed meaning of architectural objects but suggest premises on how meanings are constructed relative to the greater network of relations between signs considering its dynamic context. In the very beginning of “Architecture’s Desire” he states: “I write here about architecture’s status as a domain of cultural representation.”¹⁶⁷ Therefore reading his position over semiosphere suggests an explanatory methodology. By studying over the notion of semiosphere; a model for culture’s semiotic space, Lotman clarifies the condition of renewal: “the set of languages in an active cultural field is constantly changing, and the axiological value and hierarchical position of the elements in it are subject to even greater changes.”¹⁶⁸ Taking that into architectural account, the theoretical treatise of Vitruvius marked by the triad of architecture, *the firmitas, utilitas, venustas*, has still retains its anteriority designating “the requisite qualities of

¹⁶⁵ K. Michael Hays, “Architecture’s Desire,” Op. Cit., p.2.

¹⁶⁶ Teresa de Lauretis, Alice Doesn’t: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema, London: Macmillan, 1984, p.167.

¹⁶⁷ K. Michael Hays, Op. Cit.

¹⁶⁸ Yuri M. Lotman, Universe of Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture, Op. Cit., p.124.

architecture.” The disciplinary reification of architecture is asserted through definitions and the textual dependency. Whether over four hundred years of its discovery, the intention to project the triad into practice does not lose its significance, yet what each named qualities indicate has been displaced. The crisis of meaning in/of architecture roots in this constant renewal of codes. But those codes also determined through the exclusions and inclusions of the new stream. Therefore it is possible to problematize the integrity of architecture always in reference to culture.

However, in his article “Architecture Theory, Media and the Question of Audience” presented in the public forum; *Tulane Papers Politics of Architectural Discourse*, 1995, Hays was critical about the formation of architectural theory.

“Difference itself is a relational concept rather than a mere inventory of instances. This understanding of the structural totality enables us to ask what I think is the crucial question in architecture theory: Is architecture a free floating object or is it embedded in some context? And if the latter is true, does architecture simply replicate the context ideologically, or does it possess some degree of autonomy in which architecture itself could be seen in constructive terms as producing compensations, repressions, negations, or affirmations of that context? The possibility of building up an answer to this question is lost when theory denounces concepts of semi autonomy and structured totality, or something like them?”¹⁶⁹

While his former dichotomy is still problematized, the semiosphere of architecture proposes interaction with other semiospheres; attaining its certain autonomy while being part of the totality. Semiosphere of architecture as a unified totality with its

¹⁶⁹ K. Michael Hays, “Architecture Theory, Media and the Question of Audience,” *Assemblage*, No. 27, *Tulane Papers: The Politics of Contemporary Architectural Discourse*, 1995, p.42.

manifold productive processes also constitutes itself as a 'semiotic border'. It suggests a semiotic delimitation and designates what is inside as well as outside of the semiosphere. Thus, the boundary of architecture's semiosphere can refer to the notion of specificity, the term posited by Diana Agrest. It clarifies the codes in line with their relations to design or to other cultural systems and indicates the difference between them since it manages to retain the limits of architecture.¹⁷⁰ Correspondingly, the specificity of architecture deploys on the boundary of semiosphere which "represents the division of self from other."¹⁷¹

According to Lotman, "the notion of boundary is an ambivalent one: it both separates and unites. It is always the boundary of something and so belongs to both familiar cultures, to both contiguous semiospheres. The boundary is bilingual and polylingual. The boundary is a mechanism for translating texts of an alien semiotics in 'our' language (for our case; architecture). It is the place where what is 'external' is transformed into what is 'internal', it is a filtering membrane which transform foreign texts that they become part of the semiosphere's internal semiotics while still retaining their own characteristics."¹⁷² So this approach can manifest an alternative reading to Hays' inquiry.

Thus the boundary epitomized a filtering mechanism that controls the articulation between design and non-design. It is the periphery where the semiosphere gets in touch with non-semiotic or extra-semiotic spaces;¹⁷³ similarly it provides the communication between architecture and non-architectural spheres manifested by transformation. As Hays in his introduction to "Design versus Non-Design" remarks the enclosure of specificity which "is unconstrained by an imperative of

¹⁷⁰ Agrest, Op. Cit., p.202.

¹⁷¹ Juri Lotman, "On Semiosphere," Op. Cit., p.210.

¹⁷² Yuri M. Lotman, Universe of Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture, Op. Cit., p.136.

¹⁷³ Juri Lotman, "On Semiosphere," Op. Cit.

representation; it can combine multiple networks of self-reflexive meaning and provide various points of access for filtering material from outside.”¹⁷⁴

Hence, specifying the surrounding discourses and their semantic play on architecture’s semiosphere helps the subject (architect, architectural historian, and architectural theorist) to understand the potential transformative capacity and the valence of their exchange. The reciprocal relationship based on the penetration of codes evokes a certain level of criticality on the limits of architecture. And the question of autonomy always finds itself a place in discussion which leads a refounding of the discipline over again. Since the boundary defines itself as a model for reorganizing its own territory, in accordance to the contract between architecture and other discourses, architecture’s semi-autonomous status is privileged by its constructive motif on production of new references that stimulate discursive thought. In that sense considering the position of architectural theory in the twenty first century defined as the end of theory which seeks to instrumentalize any discursive production in practice in utilitarian sense and seen as an obstacle to innovation without any impact on practice, degrades the heterogeneous totality of semiospheres of architecture into one practice; material production.¹⁷⁵ This shift characterized by giving primacy to the technologies and processes emerged through late-capitalism, diminishes the centrality of meaning in architecture.¹⁷⁶ Although, it asides “the ideological hegemony of critical theory,”¹⁷⁷ it was brought into the ground still with its critical capacity to define architecture’s boundary surrounded by those newly concepts such as innovation, technology and intelligence. Thus it becomes evident that architectural theory cannot be considered as an alienated practice that is operated

¹⁷⁴ K. Michael Hays, “Introduction: Design versus Non-Design,” Op.Cit., p. 198.

¹⁷⁵ Michael Speaks, “After Theory,” Architectural Record, June 2005, pp.72-75.

¹⁷⁶ Marcus Carter, Christopher Marcinkoski, Forth Bagley and Ceren Bingol, “After Narrative: Editor’s Preface,” Perspecta, Vol. 38, p.9.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

in a metaphysical world but rather a form of knowledge mediated between diverse discourses including the architectural and non-architectural.

“The architectonic and linguistic codes conceptually appropriate the world in its totality. And, in a mutually implicative fashion, they topologically incorporate each other. In their origins, functional structure, and operant behaviors they are stereoscopically inseparable. Any picture of human cognitive and symbolic origins which excludes one or the other, and which divorces both from the complex systems of sociocultural behavior in which they are necessarily embedded, is an academic fiction.”¹⁷⁸

The search for elucidating the semiosphere of architecture as well as its dynamic boundary is a meta-discourse that strives to define the generation of new meanings within the complex system of cultural codes. Following the account of Donald Preziosi; “in this endeavor, we need to understand many things.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, the notion of semiosphere introduced into architecture demands deciphering the text of architecture’s multi-partite totality.

¹⁷⁸ Donald Preziosi, Architecture, Language and Meaning, Mouton Publishers: Paris, 1979, p.113.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. p.111.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

“First there was his notion of the text as a "reduced model of culture", not a philological phenomenon but the complex and interactive activity that creates meaning - the semiotic activity. This notion shifted the focus from the text to its periphery, thereby immersing the text in history and society: the text is engendered not only by the internal play of linguistic elements within a closed structure but also by cultural movements and documents.”¹⁸⁰

Revisiting the intellectual period starting from 1960s on ‘linguistic paradigm’-that is to say linguistics and semiology, the research designates a ground on how architecture is textualized through its bound to criticality which facilitate mediation between architecture and its non-architectural determinants.

In the first place, architecture has its own language; it does not only require specialization in its defined verbal lexicon but requires literacy in its multiple modes of representation. This plurality of expression constitutes architecture’s heterogeneous productive unity. Within this totality, the “*architectus verborum*” defines an architect, an expert in language, also literate in multiple projections of architecture. In this case, the “*architectus verborum*” is someone who has the ability to manage between the communicative mechanisms of architecture and foresees the possible formation of meanings. Only within that definition of architect, architecture constitutes its discursive ground. Therefore, discursive practice is constituted as the counterpart of the tectonic practice that is embodied as built work. In this thesis, text is held as an instrument of thinking and a powerful medium of architectural discourse

¹⁸⁰ Julia Kristeva and Martha Noel Evans, Op. Cit.

and writing is seen as the complementary constituent of architectural productions and at the same time a separate practice reflecting the architectural knowledge. No longer is the material production, the built work, denoted as architecture with capital “A,” but architecture as “text” took the possession of this ascription.

The “textual” production of architecture is not restricted in the verbal and the approach to the term “text” proposed a productive ground in assessing the architectural form. In this sense, the search for a possible homology between architecture and language was a source to several inquiries. Reading how linguistics is transcoded in architectural domain is enfolded as a mode of analysis and as a source to find the inherent generative capacity of the architectural form and it provides questioning on the disciplinary formation of architecture. While architectural form is described through the generative grammar, the study goes into detail of neither the Saussurean nor the Chomskyan semiotics, since inclusiveness of “semiosphere” goes beyond those. Yet, the tectonic variations of Peter Eisenman and the discursive productions of Bernard Tschumi are the cases reviewed to illustrate the textual approaches in architecture forming around the debate of autonomy.

“Text” is studied as an intricate ascription and a term that is multifaceted. While its notations in the disciplines of linguistics, literary theory and architecture differ, what “text” represents in architecture is argued over the dichotomy between architectural discourse as “text” and the architectural object read as a “text”. Following what makes architecture is “textual”; the focus of the former approach is shifted from the pure architectural form to the architectural meaning. The departure is constituted over the notion of “textuality” and text’s dependence on extratextual reality. Therefore, how architecture is involved in the mechanisms of signification uncovers architecture as a socio-cultural practice which cannot be posited as an autonomous “text” shaped only by its intrinsic properties but in engagement with the larger context that it is situated in. Hence, the semiotization of architecture is aligned with

the revision of “text” to “textual” and foregrounds the relation between culture and architecture.

“Saussure’s procedure for defining semiotics, linguistics, and linguistic signification demands examination both as a device for the discussion of ideological notions and to establish the value of semiotic concepts and procedures as a tool for the production of a theory on architecture.”¹⁸¹ In view of Terry Eagleton, the notion of ideology is a matter of ‘discourse’.¹⁸² Thus, discussing the discursive formation of architecture through the lens of semiotic tools posits an inquiry on how architectural discourse as a form of constellation becomes visible textually. Yet architectural discourse sets upon at the level of texts, its semantic capacity orients the question towards the cultural codes, which are determinative on architecture’s signification. The relation between architectural and cultural codes and their position to each other create a great potential for the production of architectural knowledge and its “quasi-autonomus”¹⁸³ status. Departing through the Derrida’s claim that all meaning is cultural, his approach could lead us to the basis of productivity of architecture as text: “we would need to deconstruct the relationship of the built environment and culture, since the built environment and culture are built things; that is, our culturally built world is a sham of social, historical embodiments of the metaphysics of presence.”¹⁸⁴ Around the issue of representation, understanding of architecture often works in between the spatial models of architecture and the semiotic models of culture. In this duality, a new conceptual framework to approach culture allows

¹⁸¹ Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas, Op. Cit.

¹⁸² Terry Eagleton, “What is ideology?,” Ideology: An Introduction, London: Verso, 1991, p.9.

¹⁸³ Stanford Anderson, “Quasi-Autonomy in Architecture: The Search for an ‘In-Between’,” Perspecta, Vol.33, Mining Autonomy, 2002, pp.30-37.

¹⁸⁴ Robert Mugerauer, “Derrida and Beyond,” Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: an anthology of architectural theory 1965-1995, ed. by Kate Nesbitt New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, (originally published in 1988) p.186.

developing the “design and non-design” opposition asserted by Diana Agrest and proposes a holistic reading of architecture in process of culture. Her redefinition of culture as text is given in a veiled reference to Lotman in the article “Design versus Non-Design” and the hidden footnoting oriented the focus of the study to the concept of “semiosphere” which has been defined culture in regard to its counterpart nonculture.

The “specificity” of architecture designated in “Design versus Non-Design” is proposed as the equivalent of the possible “semiosphere” of architecture. The disciplinary limitation of architecture is determined concerning the articulation of non-architectural substances into the architectural domain. It creates a constant tension between what is architectural and what is not. Therefore, the transience of what is defined in between the sociocultural and architectural codes requires a comprehensive dynamic thinking, which describes the poly-semantic system of architecture, its heterogeneous totality.

“The shift, from the conception of culture as a bundle of primary and secondary modelling systems to the notion of semiosphere, is also a shift from static to dynamic thinking. If we took the former approach, culture would resemble a motionless unit made up of semiotic systems; whereas if we follow the semiospheric approach, culture takes the shape of a heterogeneous whole bustling with multiple rhythms of development and transient dominants.”¹⁸⁵

Broadening the scope of semiosphere into architecture, the concept adheres to the endeavor in understanding the semiosis in which architecture is involved, and urges to define the epistemology of architecture together with its status entangled in the external spaces of texts.

¹⁸⁵ Boguslaw Zylko, *Op. Cit.*, p. 395.

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