



Philosophy of Architecture



Erasmus+

Lecture 1. Introduction to philosophical aspects of architecture and philosophical analysis of architectural theories

- 1.0. Info about course.
- 1.1. Introductory remarks
- 1.2. Wrong way of heritage objects evaluation and interpretation
- 1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

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1.0. Info about course

Course structure

Semester 2nd

Form of classes and number of hours in semester:

Hours of lectures 15

Hours of Exercises 15

Hours of laboratory 0

Hours of design 0

Lectures

15hs = 15 lectures

Exercise

Topic selection, bibliography, writing

1.0. Info about course

The purpose and objectives of the course

Gaining knowledge on philosophical aspects important for a fostering cultural heritage understanding in the context of contemporary challenges built environment modernization

Raising ability of reflective critical thinking and cultural-ecological competency

Develop ability to understand the role of cultural archetypes, patterns in representing knowledge socially important for heritage preservation and renovation on the base of categories of collective psychology

To reveal the role of empathy for the creation of ecologically reasonable environment, for deeper understanding of participation nature – including subjectivity of place (*genius loci*) that was implemented in living environment by previous generations

1.0. Info about course

Initial requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and other forms of competence

Knowledge related with architectural design, urban planning, protection of monuments and historic towns, theory and history of the city

1.0. Info about course

Learning outcomes

Knowledge:

To know philosophical background of architectural, urban planning theories and practical activities inspired by them

To be informed regarding the nature and conditions of creative innovative process

Skills:

To be able generalize and interpret contexts of the different architectural-cultural phenomena, their causalities and later apply this knowledge in an original way while analysing and evaluating architectural processes

Analyse the available information about conflicts of interests of different actors that are planning or managing changes of environment and make argued decisions, based on it.

To be able to argue, justify his (her) creative ideas on the base of profound study of contextual information

Learning outcomes (continuation)

Social competences:

To get abilities to feel empathy for the subjectivity implemented in living environment by previous generations (genius loci) to understand its interests and be able to communicate those to other actors of planning changes of the environment (community, local administration)

1.0. Info about course

Course contents. Lectures (1-3)

1. Introduction to philosophical aspects of architecture and philosophical analysis of architectural theories (Info about course. Wrong way of heritage objects evaluation and interpretation. Principle of hypersemantization) (2h)
2. Means of restructuring of thinking (perception) in process of understanding of architectural problems (2h)
3. Ritual subtext of architecture. Myth and other esoteric issues of architecture. Reception of cultural archetypes in the field of architectural activity (Relationship between ritual and architecture. City main square as constant ritual situation presented using symbolic potential model. Mythological narratives of architectural features) (3h)

1.0. Info about course

Course contents. Lectures (4-6)

4. Meaning and other language-like phenomena in architecture (The architecture-language analogy. The role of semantics in creation of architecture) (2h)

5. Social, political and moral features of architecture (How creations of art are forming attitudes of their observers: theoretical preconditions. Relations between the means of artistic expression and ethical content. Role of architecture in upbringing of perceiver's mind) (2h)

6. Relationship between architecture and consumerism and commercialism (2h)

1.0. Info about course

Form of classes – exercise

Reading of the reference bibliography for the analysis

Critical analysis of the selected case study

Elaboration of an essay

1.0. Info about course

Didactic methods

1. Theoretical classes
2. Practical classes. Exercises
3. Individual activities
4. Group activities

Assessment methods and criteria

Assessment method description: Pass threshold
Written examination of lecture contents: 50%
Exercise elaboration: 50%

1.0. Info about course

Student workload

Contact hours of lectures 30

Including:

Participation in lectures 15

Participation in practical exercises 15

Student's own work 30

Including:

Preparation to examination 15

Preparation to classes 15

Total time of student work 60

Summary number of ECTS credits for the course: 2

1.0. Info about course

Basic literature

1. Leach, N. (2006). *Rethinking Architecture. A Reader in Cultural Theory*. London UK: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group
2. Mitrovic, B. (2013). *Visuality for Architects: Architectural Creativity and Modern Theories of Perception and Imagination*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.
3. Norberg-Schulz, Ch. (1980). *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. London: Academy Editions; New York: Rizzoli.
4. Palasmaa, J. (2009). *The Thinking Hand*. Chichester: Academy.
5. Pérez-Gómez, A. (1983). *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
6. Robinson, J. (2001). The Form and Structure of Architectural Knowledge: From Practice to Discipline. In: Andrzej Piotrowski and Julia Williams Robinson (eds.), *The Discipline of Architecture*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 61–82.

1.0. Info about course

Additional literature

1. Alexander, Ch.; Ishikawa, S.; Silverstein, M. (1977). *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Ballantyne, A. (2007). *Deleuze & Guattari for Architects*. London: Routledge
3. Benjamin, A. (2000). *Architectural Philosophy*. London: The Athlone Press.
4. Fisher, S. 2015. *Philosophy of Architecture* (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/architecture/>), Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
5. Norberg-Schulz, Ch. (1965). *Intentions in Architecture*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
6. Petrušonis, V. New technologies and specificities of synthesis of art and science modes of cognition. In: *Architectural Inquiries: theories, methods and strategies in contemporary Nordic architectural research*. Chalmers Göteborg, 2008.

Note: Also see other actual bibliography after lecture sections

1.1. Introductory remarks

A long time, since the 1980s, I actively have been working in the field of cultural heritage protection. A number of new things with theoretical and practical significance have been summed up by me. I have implemented it in the pre-project research of the historical centres of five Lithuanian cities, wrote many articles. Unfortunately, the spread of these my ideas is not wide - because of language problems (the research material and most of articles were written in Lithuanian).

Therefore with help of the new curriculum for the heritage protection professionals, I want to spread knowledge what is crucially important from my point of view and what I have done in this area. It should be emphasized that all my considerations presented here in lectures are related with important aspects of philosophy.

1.1. Introductory remarks

In this lectures, we will talk about important issues of cultural heritage protection that have a philosophical component.

First of all, we will emphasize what is related to reflection, the ability to see the world in all complexity, as multidimensional, and as certain kind of informational network. For understanding of such things, a classic view is not appropriate. Namely the classic rationalist approach in many cases blocks the adequate perception of the world.

Currently, the role of scientific (exoteric) cognition is still exaggerated by diminishing the significance of esoteric things (myth) in the cognition of world. All of this are treats of deeper understanding of cultural heritage objects, as well as the improvement of the cultural heritage protection system in general.

1.1. Introductory remarks

When discussing philosophical issues, it is important to know things such as the theory of global change, what are the ontological differences of objects, and the role of uncertainty in communication processes.

For a better understanding of this, familiarization with ideas that crystallized in artificial intelligence, knowledge engineering, dynamic chaos theory and autopoiesis theory can be helpful.

It is important to develop a culture of practical reflection, realizing that knowledge must be culturally and ecologically based and solutions have to be grounded on the differentiation of collective and individual values.

1.2. Wrong way of heritage objects evaluation and interpretation

The situation when objects of cultural heritage are evaluated and interpreted on the basis of denotative knowledge without taking into account additional connotative and broader background information presenting the cultural context, witnesses a crisis of methodology.

This crisis is related with a crisis of mentality in the phase of industrial civilisation. To Lithuania's disadvantage, the most important concern of cultural heritage assessment methodology is that description of objects ignore the context, while the cultural heritage protection process is inflexible and unable to find common ground with processes of environmental renewal and urban renovation.

Such cultural heritage assessment methodology represents ideology of so called classical scientific paradigm.

1.2. Wrong way of heritage objects evaluation and interpretation

The renovation of cultural heritage assessment methodology could be achieved only when methodological advantages and conceptual possibilities of the so called post-classical paradigm would be taken into account.

Only then it would be possible to coordinate both protection of cultural heritage as well as creative activity of architects in the field of contemporary architecture while making architectural designs for historically developed cities.

The main features of the post-classical paradigm can be disclosed: new modes of social communication, knowledge generation and use of the informational technologies, taking into account the socio-cultural context.

1.2. *Wrong way of heritage objects evaluation and interpretation*

References

Petrušonis V. Kultūros paveldo vertinimo metodologinės perspektyvos bendrųjų mokslinių paradigmu kaitos kontekste = Methodological perspectives of evaluation of cultural heritage in the context of changing scientific paradigms. In: *Journal of architecture and urbanism*. Vilnius: Technika. Vol. 36(1), (2012), p. 1-8. [In Lithuanian]

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

With classic world view also are related misunderstanding of phenomenon of hypersemantization.

It is related with the phenomenon of so called “aesthetic understanding” that has deep historical roots, but still unfortunately is not accepted in wide scale in scientific community.

Phenomenon of ‘aesthetic understanding’ is closely related with process of cognition (including esoteric way).

In contemporary cognitive phase of civilisation reframing of comprehension using virtual constructs and other modern concepts related with new information technologies gain special actuality.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

This cognitive phase is characterised by forms of non-linear modes of interaction and respects vision of the world based on so called quantum logic. The problem of cognition is important in the sphere of architectural activity while solving urgent problems of cultural identification.

Until the final purpose of scientific knowledge is the description (of observational character) of the world and its separate fragments, the mathematics will be used only as means of calculation.

Another new gnoseological scheme (when scientific theories cease claiming to the role of unique possible copy of an object and start to be treated as reality representing means) – it was applied in science, in a form of equations' system, in the works intended to D. Maxwell's electrodynamics.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

At that time observational ideology started to contradict to the structure of real knowledge process.

When the scientific thinking instrumentally adopts the principles of prohibiting and preservation, the contradiction, hidden in the depth of natural science reasoning since its origin, is naturally eliminated.

Direct relationship between scientific knowledge and technology emerges. In scientific worldview the objective world appears as a sphere of real possibilities, allowed by the nature.

It is possible to affirm that the scientific research of objective world becomes the definition of limits of free human activity (here the idea of V. Ivanov that “the culture is finding of the ways that are not worth going” is quotable). However the condition of this free activity is the knowledge of basic objective characteristics of the world.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

The quantum theory of XX century had accepted these principles of preservation and prohibition taking into account time-spatial structural constructs “deciphering” them from manifestations of reality but not simply deriving them ‘theoretically’ according certain “right” rules.

However it is interesting that the similar nonlinear (and not causal) understanding of reality and its models had been accepted in medieval culture but this had stayed in marginal position in later ages.

We have in mind the achievements of philosophers of Byzantine Cappadocian School in interpreting of the phenomenon of Trinity (these parallels had been drawn by N. Muschelishvili and V. Sergejev who suggested that the interpretation of process of contemplation of Trinity has resemblances in quantum physics that was described by Niels Bohr using the category of complementarity.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

In both cases, according N. Muschelishvili and V. Sergejev, the representing of the phenomenon is carried out in apophatic way gradually rejecting definitions and getting to the comprehension of phenomenon in “aesthetical manner”.

According to the principle of complementarity single experimental situation does not present an object in full extent. Also other (complementary) experimental situations are possible.

The principle of complementarity means that such corepresentation has implies no contradictions. Notion “complementarity” expresses certain “hidden sense” that involves semantic features of conjoining, synthesis, removing of contradiction (N. Muschelishvili, V. Sergeev).

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

The mechanism of such presentation is based on aesthetical features and can be named as “aesthetical comprehension” that can be treated as more primary than logical comprehension (and in large scale is rooted in esoteric way).

In the mode of aesthetic comprehension the pattern introducing complicated semantic structure, from contemplator’ perspective could come into his consciousness not by the use of terminological qualities of words, but contrarily – using the ambiguity of words and creating “hidden point structures”.

In medieval poetics of India this process was called “dchvani”. Profoundly hypersemantic nature of phenomenon of dchvani (that primarily was described by Anandavardhana in book Dchvan'jaloka) was disclosed by Pavel Grincer.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

The principle of hypersemantisation based on “aesthetic comprehension” was implemented in the author’s conception of modelling and respectation of cultural identity of central parts of several Lithuania towns (1981, 1994, 2001, 2002, 2003).

The sense of identity is determined by the physical reality of the observed locality, i.e. the objects it embraces, their properties and associations that arise in connection with them. Such a situation is but the result of hypersemantisation.

When taken together various meanings expressed in a locality turn out to be the source of a certain hidden meaning which, when perceived, inspires the sense of identity. In the standard case of code employment, the message-receiver’s task is simply to decode the message.

In the language demonstrating the hypersemantic nature, the general code may undergo modifications in the process of comprehension.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

Therefore the message receiver should at first orient himself in towards the possible alterations of the code in order to rightly decode the message (P. Grincer).

To sum up, the sense of identity displays its cognitive character and hence is not related solely with the visually perceived tangible facts.

In this case the asymmetry of comprehension (different ability of human cerebral hemispheres) has been taken into account. The code of hypersemantic units is analogical to the language of hieroglyphs (V. Ivanov). The significance of the impact of the hieroglyphic language to guarantee the identity (or equivalence) of the text in the flow of time is more generally revealed in the phenomenon of heterography (each hieroglyphic sign may be translated by a great number of words that may not even be synonymous (V. Ivanov).

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

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Thesaurus presents information through semantic fields. Thesaurus is not only a semantic dictionary but also the lexicon of a human individual or a certain group of individuals, i.e. an individual model of the world (J. Shreider, A. Sharov).

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

Thus, Thesaurus presents in one body both a semantic model and the positionally expressed subjective interests of locus understood as a living subject.

A very important feature of Thesaurus is the fact that a systematic classification of the semantic fields may at the same time embrace both dictionary and grammar (S. Nikitina).

Therefore, in the case when the correspondence between the architectural project and the locality is estimated the projects are assessed or constructed on the grounds of a Thesaurus worked out for a certain locality.

Thus it is possible to claim that communication takes place on the basis of the language that is familiar to the locality and that complies with the rules of that language.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

The structural peculiarity of Thesaurus rests in characteristic that it has more than one entry point (usually at least four). It is determined by the interrelations of the two elements of Thesaurus, i.e. the sign and the concept.

Thesaurus of locus' identity may perform not only the function of an instrument for the verification of correctness of the code solution but also play the role of a solution catalyst.

The relations of concepts or identity interpreters (or attributes) and signs (territorial units) contained in such Thesaurus could work as the organizing codes performing the function of organizing the complex of designer's associations.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

The inquiry leading from concept to sign is carried out and can be used in linguistic “design” demonstrates the example presented by J. Casares, author of ideological dictionary having the structure in some extent analogical to Thesaurus: “Writer raised the pen and fell in meditation state hoping to find the attributive word for a character who figures out in a shabby and stained robe. What place of ideological dictionary writer has to open that it would help him? Not yet. The character suggests to writer patterns of slovenry and dirtiness. Besides that he stimulates a thought about poverty, if he wears so badly because he can’t differently or penny-pinching if he wears such robe saving the money. After such short analysis, when all the aspects relevant for author become actualized, it is time to open the dictionary.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

Let's say that our author decided for instance that the word he is seeking has to express the penny-pinching and dirtiness of character. Further all is simple. After going-over two groups of words he will see that in both there are the lists of attributives differing by nuances, and will find out that both series intersect in word "sordido" (in Spanish "incredibly dirty and penny-pinching") that in the same time means dirty and moneygrubbing man" (J. Karaulov).

1.3. *Principle of hypersemantization*

The list of features describing the locality and its segments (territorial units) conforms to the different periods of the locality' existence therefore it should be formulated according easy recognizable physical characteristics and the concepts accepted in standard language, such as one-storey building, spectator-oriented object, sleeping accommodations, administrative institution, object of military purpose, etc.

Such features intended for the denomination of locus' concepts appear as *fields* in the sense of the category of locus-centred culture. Separate features become memory concepts in the concrete territorial points only after modelling of the entire development of locality which reveals the holistic aspects (by defining the importance from the point of view of all its history).

A trait of identity, their set, can also be determined by the weight of its role in a defined socially important context.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

The modelling of locus' historical development has to be undertaken when seeking to determine what kind of concepts related to separate segments of a locality perform the function of the information units of the internal memory of locus.

The entire period of the historical development of the locality should be subdivided into equal segments of time and each of them treated as a historical synchronic cut and described by means of an identical set of stereotypic primary description units, or features viewed as fields.

Statistic calculations are resorted to in order to establish the importance of the features in a certain territorial unit. Informational models as analogues of dynamic semantic dictionaries of concrete localities could be created with recourse to the capabilities opening up due to new information technologies.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

Innovations are possible in a locality not only by means of amending (not cancelling) the peripheral attributes levelling the locality character, but also through the embodiment of those that are core from the point of view of history of the entire locality, but currently are not present (i.e. potential).

Moreover, the preconditions for innovation are created by the fact that at the expense of peripheral attributes of smaller localities the potential attributes of larger localities can be implemented (or vice versa).

As any dialogue, the dialogue of the community with the environment (more precisely – with a certain “locality”) is distinguished by dynamic, non-linear character and feedback. According to the reaction of the other subject that emerged in the process of research the need may arise to change the solution – not just detail, but maybe even the strategy of the project itself.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

Since the use of the Thesaurus is of a dynamic, recursive character, it can be useful to coordinate not only with the subjects present in a locality, but also to consult direct subjects (politicians, designers) regarding possible activity in the locality or to assist in controlling their activities.

Moreover, it can help to implement the monitoring of identity change.

Today most scientific models related with solution of problems of cultural identification in architectural sphere are too much based on observational principles that hardly fit technological requirements of assistance for architectural creative activity.

1.3. Principle of hypersemantization

It is reasonable to join the efforts of architectural researchers in creating of the integrated informational environment working of the base of hypersemantic principles and heterography. That would help the architects in solving problems of cultural identification that are especially important today then the globalization is inevitably impacting on the creative palette of architects and city planners.

References

Petrušonis V. New technologies and specificities of synthesis of art and science modes of cognition. In: *Architectural Inquiries: theories, methods and strategies in contemporary Nordic architectural research*, Göteborg, 2008.

https://www.academia.edu/5487741/Petrušonis_New_Technologies_and_Specificities



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