



Philosophy of Architecture



Erasmus+

Lecture 2. Means of restructuring of thinking (perception) in process of understanding of architectural problems

2.1. Introductory remarks

2.2. Means of restructuring of thinking (perception) in process of understanding of architectural problems

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2.1. Introductory remarks

Currently, it is still mistakenly thought that local features, cultural identity can be described directly. That does not require any special information units that could play a mediating role.

In this and other lectures we will show that such a false attitude is related to the residual functioning of the so-called classic rationalism in the consciousness of cultural heritage specialists.

Determining the valuable properties of cultural heritage by justifying it and further communicating of that data to all participants of the cultural heritage object management process takes place in a specific psychological regime when connotational informational data are inspiring the shift of perception, thinking.

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When organizing participation, it is important to properly present knowledge about the features of the location or object to be protected and transformed. It is necessary to create the conditions for a polylogue involving local people, researchers, and designers.

In that polylog, researchers must identify and defend the interests of *genius loci*. This cannot be done by local people as they operate in a narrower cognitive field.

Appropriate information about the place is the knowledge about the cultural meanings of the objects, the symbolic potential. Here it is important not to limit research to the finding of the denotative semantic meanings, it is necessary to link the connotative semantic characteristics to the information field of heritage management too.

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Because only the latter can ensure the continuity of socio-cultural values. This is because connotational data can trigger perception, thinking.

There are certain types of texts, what does not provide us with new information, but transforms a understanding of situation.

They are presenting us rather certain code, but not a message. Namely they become the initiators of our associations. Such text code works as shifter (or system of shifters) (In linguistics, the term shifter means the position dependent on the shift of observation point). The genius loci description units, have to be elements of such type of “text-code”.

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As shifters they have a function to restructure the mode of perception for better understanding of such phenomena as contextually actualized memory and traces of continuity in time.

The role such shifter kind informational elements is still not understood enough in the field of cultural heritage protection.

Because due to the not understanding the important idea that there can be no direct connection between thought and reality. We have to use certain intermediaries.

All that is said here is related with the problems that arise from defective principle of spatiality which is inherent in classical rationalism. According to M. Mamardashvili, principle of spatiality requires complete articulation of the matter outwards (available for external observation) as the condition of the things that could be generally known about the matter.

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According to the principle of spaciality the act of phenomena observation supposedly does not change the essence.

We want to emphasize, that the essence of genius loci can be perceived only through intermediaries – compactly expressed conditionalized knowledge, which introduces certain “devices” named by M. Mamardashvili as “substitutes of regularities (laws)”, peculiar “perceptual devices”, “intelligent bodies”.

An architect taking into account a set of such symptoms, which indirectly represent peculiarities of localities, as a certain archetypal role structure, has mores chances to grasp genius loci with empathy.

In this process architect can understand things that allows him to create something new at the same time taking into account cultural identity of locus.

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In the mentality of architects, the manifestation of defective spatiality principle is testified by the following:

- 1) in urban design cultural context is often understood as the closest buildings
- 2) when physical attributes of the building are considered the most valuable qualities of the cultural heritage object
- 3) when it is said 'why the comparative analysis of landscape is required if everything is well seen on the map'
- 4) when discussion of the value, benefit, possible functions of objects considers no cultural context of the functioning of the object.

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This is the latter issue wherein the important role is played by cultural connotations displaying the social cultural memory of the social community and appearing on the plane of collective psychology.

Texts regulating the activity and containing sufficient connotative possibilities stimulate an abductive solution grounded on integration of the existential experience of researcher or architect.

The New Testament may be referred to as the example wherein Christ bringing his teaching operates the generally comprehensible comparisons, i.e. metaphors (what have connotational nature).

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The solution grounded on abductive reasoning will be creative, however, only provided that the researcher or creator is able to use additional information on relevant “perceptual devices”, “intelligent bodies” (they were earlier already mentioned here).

In the case under discussion, the function of shifters is carried out by recognizable cultural ideas, symbols, connotations, cultural archetypes.

Socially significant constructs, i.e. connotations as ‘perception bodies’ or ‘perception tools’, may cover both symbols, metaphors and other conditionalized expert knowledge established in the process of any analysis of the object as well as carry out the function of mythological narratives important for communication of meanings.

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Hence, the valuable qualities of objects in descriptions should be listed along with the role in the context (represented by cultural ideas and connotations).

For instance, in possession P, preservation of a group of buildings as they are is desirable due to the following reasons:

- 1) they represent the industry uncommon - important namely - to the region
- 2) they contribute to the urban development of the quay
- 3) height of the buildings enables to ensure historically significant visual relations, etc.

Being sufficiently clear situationally, these characterisations capture the cultural memory.

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References

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**Project "SURE - Sustainable Urban Rehabilitation in Europe"
implemented in frames of Erasmus+ Programme
Key Action 2: Strategic Partnership Projects
Agreement n° 2016-1-PL01-KA203-026232**

This publication has been funded within support from the European Commission.

Free copy.

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

**Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union**

