

## Deeper Than Decon: Culture and Conflict in Architecture

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### INTRODUCTION

The emergence of semiotics as a general interpretive method is clearly one of the most exciting intellectual achievements in the social sciences of the last thirty years. Its reverberations are still being felt in every discipline concerned with meaning and its understanding, environmental design last among them. Its late and highly polemic arrival on the architectural scene has resulted in the peculiar situation whereby the first exposure of many architects to semiotic principles is found embedded in attempts to apply the most highly evolved concepts of post-structuralist cultural analysis or deconstruction to architecture, thus short circuiting the developmental process through which structuralist thought evolved in the context of other disciplines and actually contributed to the framing of post-structuralist concerns. Although some of the consequences (and motivations) of this improvisational borrowing are now receiving consideration from critics within the movement, crucial issues remain which require attention. The aim of this essay is to outline what hasn't been considered: (1) the missing context of structuralism, (2) the implications of emerging critiques from within and without, and (3) some potentially interesting questions concerning the unique nature of textuality and arbitrariness in architectural form.

### LINGUISTICS/SEMIOTICS: STRUCTURALISM/POST-STRUCTURALISM

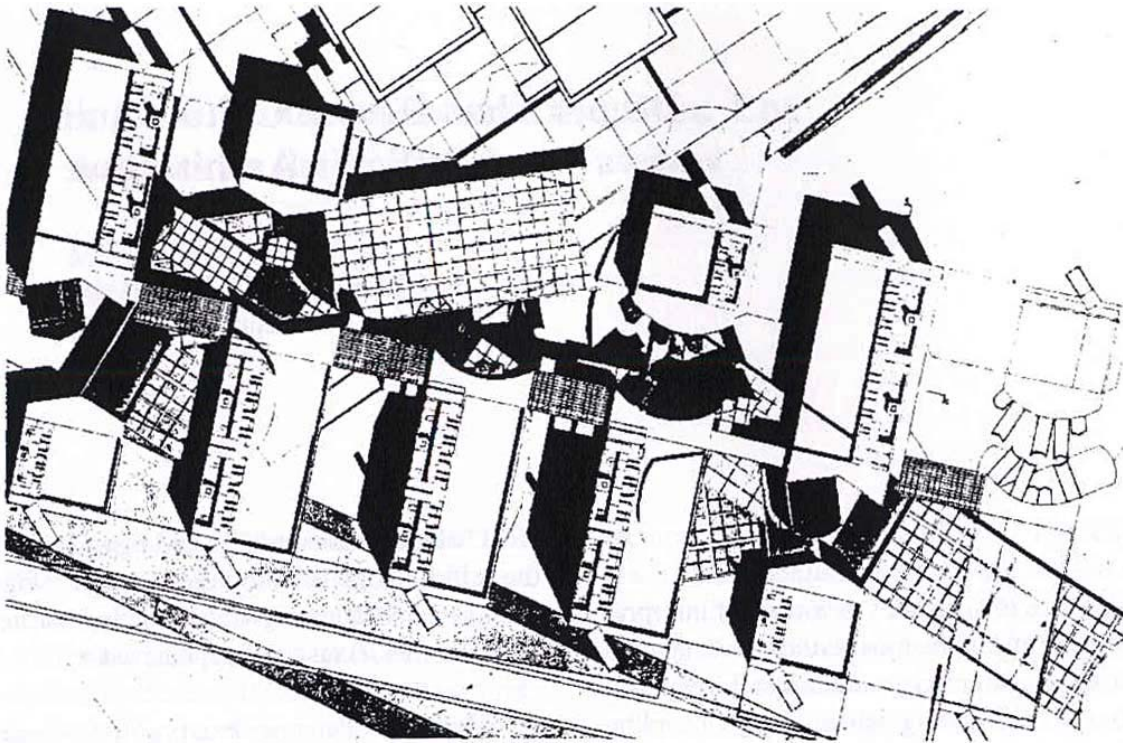
Semiotics was anticipated by Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* in 1922<sup>1</sup>, but it was not until the 60's that Claude Levi-Strauss, influenced by the structural linguistics of Noam Chomsky<sup>2</sup>, successfully analyzed cultural processes with a structural (synchronic) as opposed to historical (diachronic) method<sup>3</sup>. For Levi-Strauss cultural expression involved the making of choices within a framework of possibilities (analogous to

Saussure's *langue* or language as a whole). Choice itself was individual and unique. (analogous to Saussure's *parole* or individual speech). The bedrock of semiotic analysis is the distinction between the *signifier* (word, sound image, "real" object in the world), and *signified* (concept, idea in the mind). Together they constitute a "linguistic entity" often referred to as a sign.<sup>4</sup> Although separate and opposed to each other, Saussure emphasized that:

"the linguistic entity exists only through the association of the signifier with the signified. Whenever only one element is retained, the entity vanishes; instead of a concrete object we are faced with a mere abstraction."<sup>5</sup>

Levi-Strauss, in *The Raw and the Cooked*, for example, analyzes cultural practices in which food and the rituals and practices associated with it may be seen as a signifier, revealing complex social hierarchies based upon kinship and status.<sup>6</sup> After initial acceptance, particularly in the intellectually conservative milieu of France, where it tended to displace historicism with a new "scientific" rigor, the structuralist approach came under increasing attacks, grounded principally on the impossibility of stabilizing the relationship between signifier and signified. Some critiques emphasized the signified as in Foucault's political-historical analysis of the cultural motivations of structural operations<sup>7</sup>, while others attacks were primarily concerned with the signifier as in Jacques Derrida's philosophical effort to understand the indeterminacy of any structural condition.

Concerned with opening what he saw as the rigidly fixed nature of all structures, Derrida, in his work now known as deconstruction, argued in a new way for understanding as indefinite and provisional in nature all communication, and by implication, all hierarchies based upon language, particularly philosophy. Deconstruction is concerned with the inability to nail down correspondence between signifier and signified and the tendency of the signifier, especially under aggressive and autonomous reading, to overflow any bounds set for it and generate additional alternative, supplementary, and contradictory meanings. Derrida considers deconstruction not a theory or a technique, but a practice of analyzing texts to observe how, despite the intentions of their authors, they reveal ambiguities, and fissures, ultimately resulting in an *aporia* or an unresolvable indeterminacy of meaning.<sup>8</sup>



Eisenman Robertson Architects. J.W. Goethe Frankfurt Biology Laboratory Project, 1987. Model.

## THE SPECIAL CASE OF ARCHITECTURE

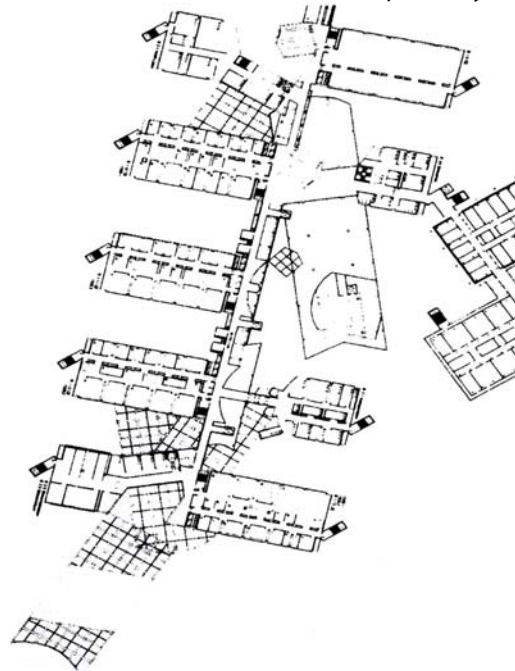
The linguistic properties of architecture have long been noted in a generalized metaphorical way. Some would argue that each building event can be seen as an occasion for the development and application of a particular and unique vocabulary of forms. Each architect is thus potentially an inventor of a new language, or at least and more likely, a new dialect of formal relations.

This a-historical, structuralist / post-structuralist formulation resonated in profound ways with the nature of architectural praxis. As John Whiteman observed:

"...the basic problem is that architects are probably the last adherents of a discredited Platonism. That is to say, they implicitly believe in a correspondence theory of truth, and are largely unaware of the developments in modern philosophy of a reference theory of truth."<sup>9</sup>

Generations of students, teachers, critics, and architects have conceptualized their efforts as directed toward achieving certain correspondences or representations linking form and idea. That architectural form was to represent an ideal world in accord with geometricized

representations of natural elements, that architectural form should represent tectonic structure, and that architectural form should represent use organization, have all been major theoretical positions characteristic of classicism, modernism, and functionalism respectively.



J.W. Goethe Biology Laboratory Project. Plan.

There was thus embedded in most architect's understanding of architecture, in a way that survived numerous changes in the character of the dominant expressive tendency, the naive belief that the architect actually could choose among these ideas and subsequently apply an appropriate formal vocabulary in correspondence to the representational task. The teaching of architecture has often been approached as a kind of language instruction, where speech performance based upon given ideologies and representational vocabularies is the measure of success.

For those who based their architectural instruction on an assumed correspondence/direct representation model, the advent of deconstruction was truly subversive for it asserted the impossibility of achieving stable relations between signifier and signified. The deconstructivists, for their part, often asserted that all architectural instruction other than their own was based upon the erroneous correspondence model of signification.

## **DECONSTRUCTING ARCHITECTURE: THE FIRST ATTEMPTS**

It is thus not surprising that the evolution of semiotic thought from an emphasis on structuring principles to emphasis on "de-structuring" principles would inspire a search for its architectural analogue. Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi have closely associated themselves with deconstruction, even to the extent of working directly with Derrida on architectural projects.<sup>10</sup> Daniel Libeskind has also expressed a strong interest in deconstruction, but in the context of attempting to retain a phenomenological reading of intention.<sup>11</sup> Each has produced provocative architectural proposals, which have provoked vigorous debate.

After the first wave of excitement typical of any encounter with the new and unanticipated, the profound problems raised by the first "deconstructive" efforts in architecture have begun to be voiced by critics both within and outside the decon establishment.

## **TWO VIEWS FROM THE INSIDE**

A concise and thoughtful overview of contemporary architecture that attempts to place deconstruction in context was recently offered by Jeffrey Kipnis, himself a strong advocate:

"The stylistic destitution and impoverishment of vocabulary that was the dominant legacy of architectural modernism in the U.S. has led recent

design theory to be written in semiotic (and postsemiotic) terms, emphasizing the meaning engendering function of architectural design and symbolism. It is, however, both possible and desirable to rearticulate the same concerns in spatial terms."<sup>12</sup>

Kipnis goes on to characterize and dismiss the Beaux Arts as concerned with the expression of hierarchy and modernism for its efforts to substitute an equipotential spatial continuity for all hierarchies. He concludes with the following characterization of attempts to acknowledge difference in architecture:

"As we have grown increasingly aware that any discourse of empowerment must respect difference, we have also grown aware that the homogenous space aspired to by modernism was equally hegemonic in suppressing difference. The problem that faces postmodernist design in spatial terms, therefore, has been to reinvigorate the exploration of heterogenous space. Some argue that premodern hierarchies are essential to spatial heterogeneity [postmodernism of the classical variety?], others argue that genuine heterogeneity flows from georegional differences, [critical regionalism?] while still others pursue a radical heterogeneity, one that supports the proliferation of differences without alignment and without allowing difference to sediment into any reified, categorical hierarchy. [deconstruction?]"<sup>13</sup> (comments in brackets added by the author)

By suggesting a move from a semiotic focus to a "spatialized" one, Kipnis at once locates deconstruction in architecture within a continuous discourse of difference, and makes the whole discussion more congenial to a Marxist-historical interpretation of space as an index of power.<sup>14</sup> Both of these steps would be viewed with some alarm within the deconstructive establishment as an attempt to rehabilitate methods of historical analysis which deconstructivists consider to be thoroughly discredited.

Mark Wigley, curator of the Deconstructivist Architecture exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art recently expressed his concerns on the superficial obviousness of the geometric metaphor often drawn between complex discontinuous spaces and deconstruction:

"It is now over 20 years since Derrida's first books were published. Suddenly his work has started to surface in

architectural discourse. This appears to be the last discourse to invoke the name of Derrida ....After such a long delay - a hesitation whose strategic necessity must be examined there is such a haste to read Derrida in architecture. But it is a reading that seems at once obvious and suspect. Suspect in its very obviousness. Deconstruction is understood to be unproblematically architectural. There seems to be no translation, just a metaphoric transfer, a straightforward application of theory from outside architecture to the practical domain of the architectural object. The hesitation does not seem to have been produced by some kind of internal resistance on the part of that object. On the contrary, there is no evidence of work, no task for the translator, no translation. There is just a literal application, a transliteration. Architecture is understood as a rep- of deconstruction, the material representation of an abstract idea."<sup>15</sup>

These critiques from within raise issues of: (1) the obviousness of the formal analogue and the implicit worry that a new form of correspondence is indeed being attempted (Wigley), and (2) the apparent isolation of deconstruction from the spatial history of architecture and contemporary critiques of space as a manifestation of power (Kipnis).

## TWO VIEWS FROM THE OUTSIDE

Kipnis was anticipated in his concern for the potential significance of the effort to spatialize post structuralist theory in 1974 by Algirdas Greimas who found quite another problem affecting the development of a semiotics of urban space:

"Of the two possible methodological approaches (the interpretive approach and the generative approach) corresponding to the two poles of the structure of communication-the city, considered as a global utterance readable by the receiver and the city enunciated by the sender-it is the latter, for reasons that are not all of a scientific nature, that interests most architects who wish to investigate urban problematics from a semiotic perspective. In adopting this perspective, it is as though town planners naturally found themselves once again in a familiar ideological landscape. By

identifying with the sender-enunciator of the city, in their own eyes they are transformed into the *producers* of the city, thus misrepresenting their fundamentally individualistic and reactionary ideology. We know to what degree the myth of the individual creator, which dates only from the eighteenth century, is deep-rooted and self-serving. The subject of enunciation,...is transformed into an obsessive focalization for all ideological, aesthetic, and sociological ills. Such a focalization ensures delaying the actual establishment of urban semiotics."<sup>16</sup>

In his concern for the narcissistic focus upon the individual creator, Greimas also anticipates the realization of this as a crucial problem found in other recent work on the subject.<sup>17</sup>

All this would, perhaps, be an interesting side discussion in the history of architectural theory were it not for the enormous claim made by deconstructivist architects that their methods are the only ones free of the taint of the correspondence theory of representation. Perhaps this could be viewed as an excess of rhetorical enthusiasm. In his critique of deconstruction, however, John Ellis argues otherwise, suggesting that deconstructive practice depends upon finding and retaining the most objectionable version of the idea to be deconstructed:

"The traditional idea is questioned, subverted, and undermined-and then *retained* in order that we can focus on the act of subversion itself, which, however, does not constitute a final rejection of that idea."<sup>18</sup>

He goes on to suggest that in order to focus on the most obvious cases:

"Deconstructionist thinking shifts the context we begin with, away from the most sophisticated thought achieved to date, on to unsophisticated, simple notions."<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps this tendency can be read in Kipnis's concise history that permits him to dismiss both the Beaux Arts and modernism in the same paragraph.

Just as some educators influenced by deconstruction appear to believe that all other methods are tainted by the correspondence model of signification, the claims for deconstruction in architecture can be seen as

dependent upon sweeping assumptions about the history of architecture. Must we believe, for example, that only now, as the heirs of semiotics, and newly aware of the problems of logical positivism and correspondence theories of language, that we are the first architects to be able to see the possibility of an alternative to the geometric reinforcement of organized authority through architecture? Or, to put it differently, have there always been architectural practices which either intentionally or unintentionally problematized direct representational efforts?



**Francesco Borromini. San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane. Rome. 1634-41.<sup>20</sup>**

The most superficial review of the history of architecture reveals many such alternative discourses: famous ones such as the mannerism of the Michelangelo's Laurentian Library, the baroque of Borromini's St. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, or the expressionism of Scharoun or Haring, or more obscure discourses such as those of Hannes Meyer at the Bauhaus or the Indian Nationalist movement. Since each of these can no doubt be deconstructed, the lack of interest of contemporary proponents of deconstruction in so doing reveals yet another implicit position, namely that deconstruction is somehow concerned or aligned *directly* with the development of a new and attractive contemporary formal vocabulary, and that therefore efforts which would not advance this cause are of peripheral interest.

Is it necessary, therefore, to summarily abandon deconstruction or are there alternative paths, possibly some which might be illuminated by an investigation of structuralism in

architectural thought prior to the emergence of post-structuralism? It is to this enterprise that we now turn.

## **ROOTS-ANOTHER LOOK AT SAUSSURE AND WITTGENSTEIN**

It is also surprising to find so little in the discussions of architecture and deconstruction which refers to its own methodological evolution. Although Saussure is occasionally referred to as the founder of semiotics, there is very little reference to another giant of the 20th century, Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose views on language are close to those of Saussure.<sup>21</sup> This omission is hardly accidental, for the conclusions he draws create profound problems for deconstruction in architecture. Even Christopher Norris (a strong supporter of deconstruction) acknowledges the significance of Wittgenstein's view of the diverse and provisional nature of the conventions which enable communication:

"Language is now conceived of as a repertoire of "games" or enabling conventions, as diverse in nature as the jobs they are required to do. The nagging problems of philosophy most often resulted, Wittgenstein thought, from the failure to recognize this multiplicity of language games."<sup>22</sup>

Norris suggests that according to Wittgenstein the Saussurian emphasis upon the distinction between the signifier and the signified, in fact falls into the trap of implying yet another form of correspondence between them.<sup>23</sup> Wittgenstein deconstructs the opposition between the signifier and the signified, by recognizing that it, too, is based upon a convention, thus destabilizing any future work for which this distinction is foundational. The notion that there indeed might be a multiplicity of games, rather than one game, here acts both to open the discourse and increase the relevance of an examination of the diverse systems of meaning offered by any cultural setting.



**Hans Scharoun, Edgar Wisniewski. Kammermusiksaal. Berlin. 1984-88.**

## ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURE

Is it possible that the difficulties first predicted by Griemas and belatedly felt by Wigley and Kipnis are the result of an attempt to resuscitate an abstract formalist tradition in architecture from the impasse reached in the late 70's between postmodernism of the classical collage variety and the abstracted classicism of rationalism by introducing to rationalism new anti-classical geometric procedures supposedly legitimated by deconstruction. This could only be done through compound distortions of the conceptualization of architecture and the processes of its making and interpretation which when reasserted in an adequately robust fashion reveal the inability of these formulations to generate anything other than formalist spatial exercises of limited interpretive resonance. The implications of this possibility suggest considerations of: textuality, language, and form.

## PROBLEMS IN THE TEXTUALITY OF ARCHITECTURE

The notion of text, crucial to semiotic analysis can be understood as the establishment of a field within which semiotic relations can be pursued. In literature the nature of textuality is easy to comprehend at a superficial level as the book or the titled work.<sup>24</sup> To read architecture as a text is at once easy and difficult: Easy, for textual conditions are apparent in any building as a unique organization of space and materials, often understood as the "work" of known individuals. Difficult, though, for architecture is that it activates a complex stream of significant realms, all potentially addressable through semiotic analysis: use, perception, movement, technology, construction are among the obvious. Less obvious are languages of, regulation, iconography, symbolism, and interpretation itself. Still additional levels are further outside any pretense of autonomous control of the architect such as land use economics, the investment use of buildings, etc. Each, however, is a language or more properly, a dual language mixing natural and arbitrary characteristics.

One of the reasons for the strong resonance of deconstruction and semiology with architecture can be found in the realization that most of the languages of meaning in architecture are in continual conflict with each other. The shaping and mediating of these conflicts is one of the most important things architects do. There is thus an important motivation for architecture to seek methodologies which might acknowledge rather than attempt to eliminate conflict. The

image of architecture that begins to emerge from these circumstances is not one text linear in the nature of its reading, and dominated by the author's intent, but many texts simultaneously written in multiple languages, sometimes involving multiple authors, each of which is intelligible only in context.

Architecture is a medium of expression which may employ culturally identified vehicles of meaning, yet material artifacts and their unique employment by individuals changes both their meaning and the language itself. This activates a unique synthesis drawn from many levels of culture.

This textuality thus inscribes many discourses. The application of deconstruction has tended to privilege only a representational discourse, namely the task of representing itself in form. It is inherently destabilized by any attempt to make it material. The materiality of architecture brings with it a form of meaning different from representation, and found extensively in vernacular architecture, which can be called "embodied intelligence." This is the notion that a material element reveals in some way, (maybe only to a very abstract examination) the calculations and history that went into its establishment. Henry Glassie, forexample, in his classic analysis of the vernacular architecture of Tidewater Virginia, suggests that one can read the measuring process and therefore the intellectual tradition of the builders from the room shapes and other characteristics of the buildings. This is quite a different form of intelligence than representation.<sup>25</sup>

An understanding of the "vehicles of meaning" in semiotic terms is necessary in order to establish the conditions of textuality. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz has expressed himself on just this point with respect to art:

"...the notion that the mechanics of art generate its meaning, cannot produce a science of signs or of anything else, only an empty virtuosity of verbal analysis. If we are to have a semiotics of art (or for that matter, of any sign system not axiomatically self-contained), we are going to have to engage in a kind of natural history of signs and symbols, an ethnography of the vehicles of meaning."<sup>26</sup>

If we are to have a semiotics of space, an analogous ethnography will likewise be necessary.

## NATURAL VERSUS ARBITRARY LANGUAGE

One of the first issues such an ethnography would have to take up would be the quality of architecture as either a natural or an arbitrary language, or as *both* a natural and an arbitrary language. Traditional spoken and written languages are composed of arbitrary sounds or symbols which have been given associative meaning by psycho-cultural processes. Conversely architecture and other systems of meaning such as fashion, or food customs, have both natural and arbitrary characteristics. For example, architecture's provision of shelter and shaping of patterns of activity or movement might be considered natural (natural in the sense of providing shelter at all, but quite arbitrary in the different ways that shelter is actually provided), while types of decorative form and varied compositional preferences including the organization of space might be viewed as arbitrary.

Alan Colquhoun attempted to sort through the difficulties of applying the linguistic model to architecture:

"The application of the linguistic model to the arts resulted in a certain confusion., for it could be interpreted in one of two ways: as a syntactics that was 'empty' or as a semantics that was 'full'. Neither of these interpretations contradicts the notion of the arbitrariness of the signs. Nor do they necessarily exclude each other, since one is concerned with the signifier and the other with the sign (signifier + signified) as an object of attention. But, I would argue, it is the second of these two interpretations that applies to architecture, a position best justified by Levi-Strauss in his discussion of ...music. ...In music, meaning (that is, 'musical' meaning) is only imaginable if the sonic material has already been given a structure; no meanings can only emerge as modifications of an inherited structure. Now in music the basis for any such cultural structuration already exists in the natural degrees of dissonance. I would argue that a similar basis exists in architecture and that, therefore, architecture, like music, is both a natural and an arbitrary system."<sup>27</sup>

Characteristic of architecture, is, however, its continuous tendency to make the natural arbitrary and the arbitrary natural. This is

an inherent quality of attempts to find meaning in form and space. For example, the unique approach to the organization of spaces in a building takes the natural or phenomenal space, and makes it arbitrary -- a unique pattern which can be distinguished from other patterns.

Similarly the building of a decorative molding or a classical column takes an arbitrary language and makes tangible form with it which then can be again interpreted in both natural and arbitrary linguistic contexts. The implication of this is, of course, an endless chain of natural making and arbitrary making -- in a process which is akin to an endless regression of slanted mirrors --each layer potentially shifting the meaning of the next. Have some deconstructivists simply magnified a piece of this larger continuum and mistaken it for the whole thing?

After Wittgenstein we can suggest that each project sets up its own custom language scheme consisting of relations specific to a project or site which have their own peculiar position with respect to the natural and the arbitrary. This is particularly evident although by no means limited to projects larger than a single building, such as urban design schemes, where a variety of strategies with respect to the meaning of the existing context maybe inherently active.

The complexity suggested here might imply a certain futility in the semiotic/architecture project, but all it really is doing is serving to tell us that the work is far more complex than generally understood and that the initial efforts to employ semiotic thinking as a generative rather than interpretive tool have limited themselves to very narrow self representational territory.

## FORM AND ITS GENERATION

What then of form and its generation? Attention to this issue has historically been attempted by means of formal analysis with the attendant risks of a static formalism. Have the efforts to introduce deconstruction in architecture a formalism of product with a formalism of process? If so, it may again, therefore, be of interest to examine the means by which architectural form itself may be understood in both its cultural and formal settings.

The physicality of architecture results in elusive transformations of meaning. The implementation of geometry (an arbitrary although logical system of relations) creates a natural form which will then exhibit certain qualities which are arbitrary or natural with respect to alternative hierarchies of meaning. The search to replace the geometry of the renaissance which attempted to create

an ordered world with new geometries which attempt to create a disturbed world is still a search for correspondence -- the human mind is capable of far more subtlety in its manipulation of the ambiguities of architectural form.

Much of the previous discussion has been presented in terms of form as a signifier of some representational meaning. The work of Henry Focillon can be construed to remind us that there exist conventions of a purely formal nature where the signified and signifier are both forms which present us with a realm of discourse which has not yet been joined:

"The most attentive study of the most homogenous milieu, of the most closely woven concatenation of circumstances, will not serve to give us the design of the towers of Laon. Exactly as mankind modifies the face of the earth and crates a sort of geography that is his alone, by means of agriculture, deforestation, canals and roads, so does the architect engender new conditions for historical, social and moral life. No one can predict what environments architecture will create. It satisfies old needs and begets new ones. It invents a world all its own."<sup>28</sup>

And maybe Clifford Geertz writes the epitaph for the whole enterprise when he states:

"The variety of artistic expression stems from the variety of conceptions men have about the way things are, and is indeed the same variety."<sup>29</sup>

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course de Linguistique Generale*, published posthumously by his students, 1922. Various editions and reprints. References from Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, Wade Baskin, trans. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966)
- <sup>2</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge: MIT, 1965)
- <sup>3</sup> Claude Levi Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963)
- <sup>4</sup> In some versions, there are three elements: signifier, signified, and a concept or "real thing" inaccessible directly. For this essay the two part

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emphasis of Saussure will be employed. See George Baird, "La Dimension Amoureuse in Architecture," in Baird and Charles Jencks eds., *Meaning in Architecture*, (New York: Braziller, 1969) 78-99.

- <sup>5</sup> Saussure 102-103.
- <sup>6</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, (New York: Harper, 1969)
- <sup>7</sup> see, for example, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977) for a discussion of Chomsky and Foucault see: Paul Rabinow, ed. *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984) 3-7.
- <sup>8</sup> see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Hopkins, 1976). Derrida attacked the stability of the bond between signifier and signified suggested by Saussure, arguing, among other things, that writing is before speech in logical priority.
- <sup>9</sup> John Whiteman, "On the Classical Representation of the Human Soul and Its Denial," in *Investigations in Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard GSD, 1986) 13 n32.
- <sup>10</sup> see for example, Peter Eisenman, "Biology Center for the J. W. Goethe University of Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main, 1987," *Assemblage* 5 February 1988, Peter Eisenman, "Blue Line Text," *Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume*, Andreas Papadakis et al. eds. (New York: Rizzoli, 1989) and Bernard Tschumi, *La Case Vide: La Villette* (London: Architectural Association, 1985), Bernard Tschumi, various works in *Deconstruction III*, Andreas Papadakis, ed. (London: Academy Editions, 1990). See also my critique of Eisenman's Biology Center project: George L. Clafien, Jr., "Borrowing Architectural Theory: Fissures in the Simulation of Coherence," in *Architecture: Back ...to...Life*, (Proceedings of the 79th Annual Meeting of the ACSA) (Washington: ACSA Press, 1991), and my general critique of Eisenman methodologies in George L. Clafien, Jr., "Something Borrowed, Something Blue: Some Problems in the Critical Methodologies of Peter Eisenman," *Who Designs America?* (Proceedings of the 76th Annual Meeting of the ACSA) (Washington: ACSA Press, 1988) 242-249.
- <sup>11</sup> see for example, Daniel Libeskind, *Countersign* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992)
- <sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Kipnis, "Moonmark", *Assemblage* 16, December 1991. 9.
- <sup>13</sup> Kipnis 10.
- <sup>14</sup> for a discussion of the contemporary Marxist view of space at the georegional scale, see Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989)



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- <sup>15</sup> Mark Wigley, "The Translation of Architecture: The Product of Babel," *Deconstruction III*, ed, Andreas Papadakis (London: Academy Editions, 1990) 6.
- <sup>16</sup> Algirdas Julien Greimas, *The Social Sciences: A Semiotic View*, Paul Perron and Frank Collins trans., (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1990) 155.
- <sup>17</sup> Linda N. Groat, "Rescuing Architecture from the Cul-de-Sac," *Journal of Architectural Education* 45.3 (May 1992) 138-146.
- <sup>18</sup> John Ellis, *Against Deconstruction* (Princeton: Princeton U., 1989) 71.
- <sup>19</sup> Ellis, 138.
- <sup>20</sup> The reference is to Kipnis.
- <sup>21</sup> Roy Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein* (London: Routledge, 1988)
- <sup>22</sup> Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1982) 129.
- <sup>23</sup> Norris, 129.
- <sup>24</sup> see Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text", chapter in, *Image, Music, Text*, Stephen Heath trans., (New York: Hall and Wang, 1977) 155-164.
- <sup>25</sup> Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1975, 1987) This is one of the few structuralist studies of environmental design actually implemented. See also for a discussion of the implications of intentionality of the emitter and the interpreter, Juan Pablo Bonta, *Architecture and its Interpretation: A study of expressive systems in architecture*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1979) 28.
- <sup>26</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (New York: BasicBooks, 1983)
- <sup>27</sup> Alan Colquhoun, "Postmodernism and Structuralism: A Retrospective Glance," *Assemblage* 5 February 1988: 10.
- <sup>28</sup> Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art* (New York: Zone, 1989) 149.
- <sup>29</sup> Geertz, 120.

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## ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Figure 1, 2: *Assemblage* 5 28, 42 respectively.

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Figure 3. Paolo Portoghesi, *Roma Barocca*, (Cambridge: MIT, 1970) plate 121. Permission requested.

Figure 4. Author.

Figure 5. Daniel Libeskind, *Countersign*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1992) 107 top. Permission requested.