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THE THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE
APPLICATIONS AND CONNECTIONS

BY

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The theory of architecture considers the whole sphere of architecture as a study matter and has applications in fields belonging both to the practice and to the knowledge. These are: architectural experience and architectural output (designing), to which we must add the architectural research, the history of architecture and the architecture criticism.

The theory enables us to understand the architectural experience, our perceptions in the "lived" architecture.

It also defines the factors which determine the creation of an architectural work and makes possible the critical estimate of the quality of a certain solution in a concrete case. The theory gives a conceptual base to the architectural research, pointing out its problems and putting its results in order; without a coherent theoretical basis, both architectural research and history of architecture lead only to knowledge without profoundness.

Each of these application fields goes through its own dynamic process, and, in its turn, the theory of architecture, having multiple interconnections with them, is a complex subject, in a continuous evolution.

1. Theory–Architectural Experience Relationship

The architectural experience comprises a whole of processes regarding the concrete relationship with the architecture, reffering to the use or only to the perception of architectural objects.

This relation and the attitude towards architecture may interest different situations according to the hypostasis in which the involved individuals are: they can be direct users or only have a visual perceptive relation toward architecture; they can be specialists (architects), well educated persons or, on the contrary, deeply ignorant concerning architectural matters. So, we cannot talk about an unique form of architectural experience; this is multiple and changeable.

It results hence that some particular subjective and fragmentary architectural experiences currently exist. But, a real architectural experience means to perceive the work as an integrating totality of the well known attributes, as a cultural object which shows both instrumental and symbolic aspects, as a whole, so that such an experience should make possible a pertinent and total description of the work.

Our daily life being inscribed in a concrete physical frame, where architecture has most important share, an insufficiently realized truth, our pragmatic relationship with the environment cannot be neglected, of course, but it has an aleatory nature, it is discontinous.

Instead, our aesthetical relationship with the environment is permanent. But the reaction, the attitude towards an architectural work as a form does not go without saying. This involves both our capacity to structure a certain framework from formal point of view and to perceive the forms which, seen from semantic perspective, are connected to the context; hence the necessity to possess perceptive patterns (schemes) corresponding to the structure of the work. As the infantile psychology researches made by Jean Piaget have proved, most of the people possess several patterns (geometrical, topological) in order to perceive architectural forms, but we do not find currently these schemes in the concrete perception as adults.

In this process operates rather our habitudes and expectations which engender perceptive schemes, that we also use in particular cases; for instance, architectural objects from other ages or places than the ours.

Certainly, in constructing perceptive schemes, the cultural, knowledge background of each individual plays an important role. But the fragmentary perceptive schemes, that people have, make them easily believe in there own superficial impressions and evaluate the aesthetic quality of a building, as they perceive it.

The formal language, primarily assimilated during the first life years, develops later, in the adult forming, in the complex process of learning "to see". Essential is the fact that people cannot perceive the characteristic order of architecture by a priori, given mental patterns, but by schemes that must be acquired.

This cannot be merely achieved. That is why, the general cultural development of the individual must be accompanied by a knowledge of architecture even since school, through direct information in which the theory elements are also comprised, and through understanding of the architectural experience out of the relationship practice with the environment.

2. Theory – Architecture Designing (Output) Relationship

The concrete tasks of the architectural work achievement, by technical and formal means, cannot be fulfiled without utilization of some methods developed on a theoretical basis.

Yet, the architecture achievement cannot occur only as a logical combination of elements pointed out by theoretical analysis of the program and of the available means. Being a materialization, the architecture achievement depends on an unifying creation process in which every component usually undergoes transformations under the influence of the general context.

The creation (designing) process cannot be learned exclusively through logical mechanisms although it is obvious that the analytical methods are necessary, but it is assimilated through practice.

The creation process cannot develop without existence of an analytically defined matter, on theoretical basis, but as it has in view both achievement of an ordered physical environment and of a significant framework of symbols, of significant expressive forms, it also cannot be achieved without contribution of the intuition, imagination, sensibility.

At the same time, in order to create a visual order by architecture we need a method based on a general Theory of Architecture.

On the one hand, Theory of Architecture helps us to define the architectural functions (tasks) in a certain period and to identify the means to accomplish them, and on the other hand it helps us to indicate the existing reports between these two cathegories. That is why the working method in creation must integrate theory and practice by coordinating different factors of the two cathegories.

The method, having an objective character, rejects both preconceived forms as solutions of architectural problems and the "added ones" with the purpose of confering an architectural status to a construction, in other words, it rejects formalism.

Method admits only to define problems on an objective basis and to interpret them in accordance with the suitable means, consequently to understand and to cover the architectural totality (integrality).

The components of the architectural totality – pragmatic, technical, expressive and semantic – can be to a certain extent separately analysed, but they remain permanently closely connected and any separate analysis of one of them throws into relief its relationships with the others.

In the designing activity, the architect also meets two secondary problems. The first one is connected to the necessity of auxiliary means he makes use of in order to present his ideas, and the second one is connected to the need to make himself understood by those involved in the output process of architecture-constructions (professional team of different specialists) and by the beneficiaries of this activity (customers).

The means, "tools" the architect disposes today, and uses in order to express his ideas by a project, are much more improved in comparison with the former ones, from the traditional means of bidimensional representation (plans, sections, elevations, etc.) to the volumetric representations (models).

The capacity of these traditional means to render the complexity of architecture, its "spatial reality", which is its fundamental feature, remains inherently limited and this fact was emphasized and minutely analysed, as far back as in 1948, by Bruno Z e v i in his book *Saper vedere l'architettura*. Not even other means, for instance photography or film, although the latter has the advantage of dynamic recording and rendering of images, are not able to give rise to experiences equivalent or at least near to the "lived space", which is possible only in the man-architecture (architectural space) direct relationship.

In the last decades the technological progress also penetrated the designing; the informatic tools of calculation and graphic representation, and the analytical and statistical methods became part of the usual practice of architecture and civil engineering design as well as of town-planning. More and more improved hardwares

with higher and higher stocking capacities and information processing speed, and more and more advanced and complex softwares raise the computer to the rank of indispensable tool in the contemporary architectural designing.

Beside it rapidly solves routine problems of designing, it has the quality to be able to present the image of the architectural space in a way that simulate man's movement in space and to render tridimensionally, from different angles, the image of any part of the form, and of the form as a whole.

Thanks to these qualities, computer is very useful in the relation between architect and beneficiaries, that have usually big difficulties in anticipating the image of a potential building only on the basis of some conventional abstract graphical representations.

But it is also useful as an operational mean in designing practice for the architect himself because it allows a quick and easy control of the form and of the effects that a partial change has on the whole. In designing architectural structures with complex geometries and multiple variables computer is irreplaceable, as in designing urban structures. Problem which arises is not that of the obvious usefulness of the computer as an auxiliary designing mean, which also offers a greater formal liberty, but that of the extent to which the concepts derived from its utilization – virtual reality or cyberspace – may be of interest to the designing of the "architectural reality". We shall not deal here with this subject, we shall limit ourselves to maintain that the origin and the intrinsic value of the architecture work lie in an idea, in a concept. As from primary drafts can be seen, which are sometimes simple sketches, achieved by great architects, the initial idea of the work can be concisely expressed without diminishing its potential value. Most frequently, the poetical, symbolical matter can be revealed just by such an essentialized presentation.

We consider that the genesis of the idea, which is engendered by specific mechanisms of the human creativity, cannot be transfered to the computer.

Project is a development in conventional forms of an idea, and it will always be an iconic sign of this one, of the process that engendered it and of its future materialization by the act of building.

In the proper project drawing-up process computer can be fully involved.

As an expression of the solutions concerning the architectural form, the project is the outcome of an antinomical process which operates both with objective mechanisms of the logical reasonings, utilizing algorythms rules and norms offered mostly by the theory of architecture, but also by other disciplines, as well as by vitalizing intervention of the intuition as a manifestation of the subjectiveness, in other words, of the personality, in the authentic architectural creation.

While the participation of the subjectiveness in the scientific activity is rejected as it is considered to be parasitical, disturbing, in the frame of the architecture design it cannot be eliminated although, in this respect, certain researches aimed at setting up a scientific designing methodology using informatical instruments (Christopher A l e x a n d e r – *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, 1964) and an architecturology having as object the architectural conception (Philippe B o u d o n – *Enseigner la conception architecturale*, 1995). Such researches had in view to diminish or even to

remove the zone of inexplicable, of imponderable, defined as a "black box" of the architecture designing.

Attempting to assimilate the process of architectural conception to a scientific process, Chr. Alexander was, in the sixties and early seventies of the last century, one of the most important promoters of the methodological connection to the formalizings of the inductive logic.

His case is noteworthy because, fervent upholder of the intervention of the informatical means in the architectural conception, being considered to be the first theoretician of this field, confronting himself with the concrete results of his studies, he realized the sterile character of some approaches which have proven their limits as architecture generating sources, approaches which remain often intelectual games in which the logical method is in an inflexible manner established, as a mere purpose.

Meanwhile, Chr. Alexander moved off such tacklings, ending by becoming their enemy. But despite of this abandon, significant, of course, the reflections having in view the building up of an architecturology, as well as the formalizings resulting from informatics and cybernetics continued to be present in the methodological studies, and many people imagine the architectural conception process as "a problem" solving process, and the design as "a solution" of the problem.

All these are of interest by themselves, but also because they suggest the possibility of a cutting up into the diachrony of the designing, so that two stages can be identified:

a) The programming stage, elucidation phase of the problem enunciation, which embraces the defining of the objectives, the collecting and analysing of the data, the determining of the exigences and performances, the specification of the context. This is the analytical stage, in which the rigorous rational steps, logically, are similar or at least close to the scientific research.

b) The stage of the euristical elaboration, of the creative action, developed on the reference plane of the first stage, in which the elements of this can be found either explicitly in deductive reasonings or implicitly in intuitive interpretations.

The two stages can be defined and appreciated as such, only in the frame of a purely theoretical analysis; the second stage is not at all the consequence of a determinism exerted by the first one, but they are two components – objective and subjective – closely connected of a same process.

Undoubtly, it is a substantial difficulty that the architecture project, which by its creativeness values belong to an iterative, synthetic and intuitive mode of operating, comprises information resulted from an analytical and discursive process. But, however seemingly paradoxical, the harmony between reason and emotion, between logic and intuition, must characterize the architecture designing as a process and, by this, its final result.

Usually, to the two major stages of the designing adds a third one, the stage of the execution process supervision on the building site, of technical assistance and of eventual changes, of adapting of certain project parts to the concrete execution conditions.

Through feedback, the results, data, experience of the execution stage, can be developed when the designing process is taken again, when certain technical or pragmatic aspects are reinterpreted.

The most active factor of the architectural creation stage, and at the same time coordinator of the entire designing process (excepting some special technological programs), by his abilities and duties, is the architect.

As a distinctly individualized professional, the architect is a product of the XIX-th century, when the architect profession separates from the constructor profession.

Each of these professions, as a consequence of the scientific-technical revolution, was subject of structural renewals regarding exerting forms, status, and began a process of continuous evolution and specialization, and this is a characteristic of both professions even nowdays.

The designing activity in architecture and in the other fields of the space organization, because of there complexity, is achieved in the frame of the pluridisciplinary team, comprising, besides architect, professionals of different specialized training and abilities – engineers (buildings, installations, roads), sociologists, ecologists, psychologists, geologists, economist, artists, etc.

So that the team to be able to work, the following conditions are necessary: existence of a common (professional) language; heterogeneous contribution of the team members; subordination of the whole team to the project; existence of a coordinating factor (center); the team spirit, opposed to the individualist one.

In order to perform its part of coordinator, which belongs to him in most of the architectural programs, the architect must get a vast general and professional culture, to have a theoretical, practical and management background of his own field, but also to have general knowledge of the disciplines that participate to the designing, building and equipping process of the architectural space.

The rapid evolution of the contemporary society assigns that architecture, as many other professions, becomes a profession of continuous learning.

The coordinating part of the architect appears in his relations with the specialists of the pluridisciplinary team as well as in the adaptation of the customer exigencies to the existing architectural system, in order to integrate the creative act in a larger functional, social and cultural context.

This opening of horizon, larger than a simple architectural operation apparently requires, becomes a permanent exigence of the profession. That is why, the exclusive specialization in a small fragment of the architecture field, despite a possible, but very limited increase of efficiency and competence, leads, in fact, to a background restriction, to an inability to discern and to rule the connections between processes and phenomena that concern the architecture, and to the responsibility consciousness in a broader sense.

The real difficulty, and at the same time the accomplishment of an architect's task, consists in harmonizing several factors deriving from different fields. Just because these fields are too complex at the present, the architect is not able to rule

them by his training as a specialist only; he must resort to the cooperation with different other specialists and to a continuous learning.

We insist again on the relationship with the beneficiary, because of the opinion that the architect must directly satisfy the demands of this one.

Certainly, we cannot ignore these demands, and the beneficiary of the design must find himself in the solution conceived by the architect, but the total quality of the design depends on the measure in which the architect defines clearly his own task as an integration of the problem in a vaster aggregate, that is not possible without a strong theoretic base and a responsable attitude towards arriving at a decision.

A real communication relationship between architect and beneficiary can function only if the latter is educated to appreciate architecture and its values; that is why we have pointed out that the architecture knowledge should be aimed even from early school years. Only in this way the two parts, architects–public, can substantiate their attitude on an understanding of mutual purposes.

The public, in general, defines its demands in accordance with limited and short term interests, without a larger outlook, the contradictions between personal and general interests representing a frequent situation.

In their turn, the architects often prove a lack of respect for there own professional field and give in to the demands of the public, often simple freaks of those who order and pay, playing some games of arbitrary forms. In our country, and not only, the architecture of the urban private houses became a field where such a situation is explicitly illustrated. Hence, the need to exclude compromise and yielding, the necessity of realizing that the responsibility of the architect transcends the demands of a certain customer, and that the functional and semantic order that he should create does not allow to consider the architectural problems in a fragmentary and reductive manner. To understand that is not possible without serious knowledge regarding the theory of architecture.

3. The Relation Theory – Research, History and Critique of Architecture

A frequently used concept having practical connotations is "the architectural analysis", which embraces a number of researches that do not belong to the proper theory of architecture.

Thus, we can study particular functions of the architecture, means of achievement and existing solutions. The analysis of the problems and of the means to solve them serves to achieve new architectural works, while the study of existing important achievements belongs to the history of architecture. All these types of researches which act in the field of architecture imply a general theory of architecture. No analysis is possible without operating with comparable units and valuation criteria theoretically established and it is of no real interest unless it allows empirical generalizations. This means that the analysis makes use of theory, and the theory develops thanks to its penetration by the results of the analytical studies.

The study of the existing architecture works represents the most useful type of analysis contributing to the theoretical training. The abstractions made by the theory are based on the analysis of the experience, of the significant practice of the history of architecture.

An integrating theory of architecture cannot be developed without a historical base, and the history of architecture cannot be pertinent without a theoretical base; there is an evident relationship between theory as a whole and historical analysis.

In conclusion, the architectural research comprises studies that serve directly the concrete problems solving, and the history of architecture deals with the analysis of the significant works belonging to the recent or remote past.

The criticism of architecture represents a distinct branch both towards theory and history of architecture, although in its turn it cannot operate without a theoretical support. But rather than submitting to a critical analysis a fragment of the architecture historical development, it assesses, utilizing specific apparatus and critical language, the quality of the solution of a certain architecture problem, both in general and in detail.

All these three architecture disciplines – research, history and criticism resort to theory in order to analyse architecture problems, achievement means, as well as the relationship between these cathegories.

The architecture research deals especially with problems and means as such, and uses experimental methods in order to verify the congruence between solutions and problems.

The history of architecture points out the qualitative poles of the existing works, cultural testimonies of the past, signs of the evolution, and the criticism examines and estimates to what extent a certain proposed or already materialized solution satisfies some specific value criteria.

4. Architectural Research

In a general sense, the research, a logical, discursive and analytical process, directed towards discovery, by its specific activities, aimes to reveal, to analyse and to decipher some processes and phenomena from parts of reality, of smaller or larger extent. With that end in view it uses exclusively rational, logical methods as well as the verbal and the abstract mathematical language as expression means. The practical finality is not necessary; its immediate purpose, although its results, especially the applicable ones, are turned to good account in various fields of the human action, but its most important contribution is the revealing of new premises and directions of action with a view to a continuous improvement of the practice and to the drawing up new concepts and theories, and all these are of highest interest for the architecture.

The difficulty to identify some logical conceptual guide marks and some methods of objective assessment in the architectural conception, as elements of an analytical approach, pre-eminently rational, specific to the scientific research, difficulty gene-

rated by the plurivalent and contradictory nature of the architecture, explains the fact that the research is present in this field just since a few decades.

The methodological researches aiming at the renewal of the designing appeared in the sixties of the last century in U.S.A. (Chr. Alexandre), in a moment when the architecture output underwent a manifest theoretical void, in order to give to the architecture a rational image, based on the ideas of the functional movement.

The action was somehow facilitated because the buildings and their component spaces were generated almost mechanically starting from their functions, the conceiving of an architectural design being firstly perceived by quantifiable data and limits.

To search for "form" basis, to discover the mechanisms of a form generating reflection and to elaborate methodological tools that integrate functions and needs have been the objectives of the Chr. Alexander's researches, that he finally presented in *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (1964).

Defining a method or a process he hoped to find the necessary means to become precise and to be able to discover the good way, the good "solution", his mathematical training, beside the architectural one, giving him strong trumps to his attempt to discern scientifically and systematically the process of the design elaboration. But finally he abandoned such approaches. We were telling previously that Chr. Alexander's change of point of view, after understanding the sterility of the logical methods for the architecture creation, is significant just because this came from a personality activating inside the profession of architect, competent and strongly motivated for the rigorous systematical approach.

The architectural research, hesitating and marginal at the beginning, organized meanwhile, enriched thematically and institutionalized.

In U.S.A., Canada, in Europe (France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Netherlands, Great Britain), specialized institutes, departments of architecture schools deal with the architecture and town planning research as a specialized activity, publications and conferences of international level focus on research.

Alike theory, the architectural research can distribute its interest, deviding in research focussed on the functional, technical or formal problems, on historical aspects, etc.

The three sides of the architecture (functional, technical, formal) are interdependent, but an architectural research integrating all of them is still too little active, as the punctual researches, particularly that dealing with technical problems (comfort, energy saving, etc.) as well as that dealing with functional aspects related to the sociological ones, for instance, are more developed.

There are some fields of the architectural designing (restoration) or of the town planning (urban renovation), where the historical research is a compulsory step, but the research aiming the designing theme and the site must precede the proper creative designing whatever architectural program could be.

In France, thematically various and complex researches have been performed by Ph. Boudon's team, with the obvious and ambitious intention to turn into good account the analytical investigations in theoretical synthesis having a high degree

of generalization. These researches have been finalized in articles and books whose titles point the research themes and the concepts that the authors consider, with good reason, of highest interest for the architectural knowledge.

We mention the most significant ones: *On the Architectural Space* (1971), *From Architecture to Epistemology* (1991), *Teaching the Architectural Conception* (Architecturology course). (1995).

Each of these books is the outcome of a long and systematical research work and makes some conceptual and methodological contributions of real interest for the theory and practice of architecture. Ph. Boudon persists tracing out, by these successive steps, the way leading to *architecturology*, an attempt to explain the fundamental concepts of architecture, obviously preoccupied not with the way in which the architecture is achieved, but with what the architecture is, not so much with the clarifying a problem but with the way of approaching it.

We shall pay a special attention to the last of these works, because it claims to be a "handbook dealing with a knowledge of the architectural conception", which implies the conclusion that "to conceive architecture", consequently to create it, is a process that cannot be entirely grasped by an objective discursive model and communicated as such by the means of the architecture pedagogy.

It is evident that the work comprises many elements of theoretical interest, but it is doubtful that by its simple assimilation we can learn the architectural conception, in other words to create architecture.

In a critical presentation of the book in L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui, *128* (1995), J.C. G a r c i a s, considers that Boudon's architecturology dodges any debate and any contact with the reality, taking refuge in the paradise of the autonomous and "scientific" discipline, and draws the following conclusion: "As the war is a too serious matter to give it in the military charge, the construction is a too serious thing to give it in the architecturologists charge. Leaving aside the polemics, I fell that the architecturology puts the cart before the horse. Instead of meditating on the means that would allow the increase of the medium cultural level of all those who order architecture, from that who builds his own chalet to the local minidespot [...] Boudon and his supporters persist in giving a scientific interpretation to the conception process of buildings ordered by uneducated or semicultivated people. This selfisolation condemns architecturology to remain a sect". A reaction caused by the excess of positivism, of scientism, represents a result of the vulnerable conviction that "everything" must be explained in architecture.

But the architectural research, in a pluridisciplinary frame, will explore some processes directly linked to the reality of the relationship between man and environment: the psychology of the architectural space, the behaviour in the built environment, the psychology of habitation, the architectural semiotics, etc.

In the same frame of pluridisciplinary interferences, the architectural research will have to face the provocations which the contemporary world addresses the disciplines that participate in the carrying out of the built environment. In this sense, problems of the ecological architecture, of the sustainable architecture and of the smart buildings, of the informatic era consequences – social, cultural, technological,

economical mutations – on the architectural conception, are already priority themes of the actual research in the architecture field.

To a great extent such researches have been developed on experimental basis, but their results will be felt not only in the designing practice, but also in the enlargement of the thematic background of the theoretical interpretations.

5. History of Architecture

The theory of architecture endorses its approach and argues its conclusions through exemplifications of individual works. But an architectural work, in order to be completely understood, must be integrated in its historical context. In its turn, the historical context can be apprehended only knowing the individual works and the characters that unify them.

The generalizations resultated as a consequence of analysing a limited number of individual works can be applied to other cases, and in this way they can be revized and improved.

Hence in the theoretical approach, historically argued, we can identify three independent thoughts: description of the individual works, historical evolution and theory of architecture. By this process a developed theory allows us both knowing the individual work and its historical context. With regard to the individual work, the theoretical analysis consists in revealing its intentional poles and its architectural quality, as well as its historical situating. The intentional poles and the architectural quality cover whole attributes spectrum of the form: pragmatic, technical, formal, semantic.

The theoretical knowledge allows in its turn the development of the history of architecture as a discipline in the integrality of its general coordinates and disciplinary segment such as: history of styles, history of programmes, history of semantic relations, etc.

History of styles relates the development and the succession of the architectural forms, aiming at their chronological arrangement and the way they appear and then debase owing to their extensive utilization.

The transition period from one style to another, the period of abandonment of the worn-out ones, and of searching and chrystallization of new styles, represents a very significant theme of study for understanding the birth and the evolution process of the architectural forms.

History of programmes, of the dominant or secondary architecture problems in a certain period and a given cultural space, belongs necessarily to a complete history of architecture and plays an important role in the general history of culture.

History of semantic relations deals with the more special problem of the significance and symbolic forms.

These fragmentary specialized studies are unified in the general history of the architectural system, a discipline which studies the architectural objects as formal totalities and can become a branch of history of art.

The theory of architecture, as a whole, allows to study the fragmentary historical disciplines and to synthesize the results, and, in its turn, it collects, from this knowledge, a part of the material supports for its own analyses, demonstrations and conclusions.

Theory is based on a fundamental empirical material, which is limited, but its conclusions keep their characteristics even in case when this material increases quantitatively. As the theory interprets problems as a coherent logical totality, it is capable to organize the disparate results of the fragmentary historical disciplines that we already mentioned, as it does in the case of other disciplines, either technical or humanistic, involved in conceiving and creating the built environment. It acts as a coordinating system, unifying a certain number of particularities.

6. Architectural Criticism

If, owing to the force of circumstances, the architectural research is imposed with necessity and develops in a more and more organized frame, instead, criticism has rather an aleatory aspect, being dominated by the arbitrary of the subjectivity. A well structured critical apparatus, with a conceptual and terminological support clearly defined, is missing. This is the explanation of the fact that we can meat contradictory criticism with regard to the evaluation of the quality of a same work.

An authentic critical approach can be built only on a firm theoretical basis.

The architectural quality criteria validated by the theory must also operate in the space of the criticism.

Without this the dilettantism cannot be surpassed in a field which plays an extremely important role in the values hierarchically ordering and in the orientation of the options regarding the education of the public.

The critical analysis must surpasse the unilateral judgements of aesthetical values, must grasp the form as an architectural structure, in the totality of its attributes and in the ensemble of the relations it develops with its own context. But, usually this aspect is neglected and a position visibly determined by an outward impression, by image and its correspondence with the criticism's personal testes or its alignment to certain fashion, is adopted.

An architectural criticism reduced to the estimation of the aesthetical qualities is unacceptable. This is why the fact that the Venice Biennial Architecture Exposition – 2000 had the theme "The city, less aesthetics, more ethics" is very significant.

We do not question the aesthetical value through which architecture contributes to the general quality of the environment but the speculative art for art's sake attitude, often of a purely commercial motivation, concerning the built environment.

In a critical assessment of an architectural work must be expressed the impact this work has upon the environment, from all points of view (visual, ecological, social), the extent to what it represents a wise utilization of resources, it attaches itself coherently to the relation with the present and the past, and it is able to adapt to the demands of the future.

A pertinent criticism cannot ignore these exigences without harmful consequences. Such criticism is essential for a healthy development of architecture, hence deriving the great responsibility of the critic. This should be free of preconceived ideas and, besides a large knowledge background permitting him to understand connections through which the architecture is integrated to culture, he should have sound theory knowledge; this provides not only concepts and terminology, but also assessment criteria and the necessary analytical methods.

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TEORIA ARHITECTURII
Aplicaţii şi conexiuni

(Rezumat)

Teoria arhitecturii consideră întreaga sferă a arhitecturii ca obiect de studiu şi are aplicaţii în domenii aparţinând atât practicii cât şi cunoaşterii. Acestea sunt: experienţa arhitecturii şi producţia (proiectarea) de arhitectură, la care se adaugă cercetarea de arhitectură, istoria arhitecturii şi critica de arhitectură.

Teoria ne ajută să înţelegem experienţa arhitecturii, percepţiile noastre în arhitectura "trăită".

Ea defineşte, de asemenea, factorii care determină producerea unei opere arhitecturale şi permite aprecierea critică a calităţii unei anumite soluţii într-un caz concret. Teoria oferă o bază conceptuală cercetării arhitecturale, semnalându-i problematica şi ordonându-i rezultatele fără un fundament teoretic coerent, atât cercetarea cât şi istoria arhitecturii conducând doar la o cunoaştere fără profunzime.

Fiecare dintre aceste domenii de aplicaţie cunoaşte o dinamică proprie, iar, la rândul ei, teoria arhitecturii, aflată în multiple interconexiuni cu ele, este o disciplină complexă, în continuă evoluţie.