

Some of our German speaking readers will already have noticed that the first Architecture and Cultural Anthropology workshop «Reciprocal Spaces» is approaching. Its organiser has kindly been ready to contribute a text from the centre of his studies.

The Second General Assembly confirmed that IACSA shall pursue its goals as it did in the last two years. The suggestion from a member of the advisory board to highlight political aspects in CSA is picked up by the Network Editor, starting with the quotation of this issue.

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The CSA Quotation Guide, continued

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Announcement: First CAA Conference

The CSA Quotation Guide, continued

« The term <public space> is one component of a rhetoric of democracy that, in some of its most widespread forms, is used to justify less than democratic policies: the creation of exclusionary urban spaces, state coercion and censorship, surveillance, economic privatization, the repression of differences and attacks on the rights of the most expendable members of society, on the rights of strangers and on the very idea of rights—on what Hannah Arendt called <the right to have rights.> [...] The term, that is, is playing a starring role in what Stuart Hall, in another context, called "authoritarian populism," by which he meant the mobilization of democratic discourses to sanction, indeed to pioneer, shifts toward state coercion. Adapting Hall's concept, we might say that the term public has become part of the rhetoric of conservative democracy, which may well be the most pertinent political problem of our time. [...] Public space is another democratic concept, one that is central to discourse about cities, where it is used to support a cruel and unreasonable urbanism. »

From: Rosalyn Deutsche, *The Question of «Public Space»*. <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/37757877001/26638877001>, *Making Public Seminar 2, Part 2, Session 1, March 4th, 2005*. See also <http://www.kultur.at/van/howl/cyb/next/set01/exo04.pdf> (consulted 11-02-10)

« The wind of April blew over the flat roof. [...] And it was as if it fanned from below, as if the warmth of the lap of Moscow ascended. This lap still did not roar as terrifying and joyful as those of other big and lively cities, but nevertheless a kind of noise pierced upward the thin veil of fog. The sound was vague and weak, but all-embracing. From the centre to the circle of the boulevards, from the circle of the boulevards to the fringe of the city, to the fine blue and greyish smoke that concealed the vast surroundings of Moscow. <It seems as if Moscow sounds> I said, with uncertainty, leaning over the railing. <That's the NEP> my companion answered and held fast his hat. »

From: Michail Bulgakov, *Vierzig mal vierzig*. In: *Nakanune* (Berlin), April 15, 1923. Transl. JW.

The promise of architecture Emotional experience and the practice of translating

By Manfred Omahna*

What planners and construction workers are able to create relates directly to forms, possibilities and claims of acquiring space. My thesis is that the reshaping of space is closely linked to a continuous differentiation of society. Due to economic, often neoliberal processes of transformation, the forms of appreciation between people change as well. Feelings like guilt, shame, fear or anger are expressed as criticism towards one's own surroundings and thereby lead to cultural dissociation and differentiation. At the same time, every building operation can be defined as a feature of social and cultural differentiation.

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In the following remarks, I want to present architecture as an area of research within the field of cultural anthropology/European ethnology. Within this field, architecture is currently studied as part of urbanism¹, landscape research², material culture studies³ and space and culture research⁴. However, architecture

emerges relatively rarely as a field of study in its own right, although the view on the architecture of cities or of the landscape, on the architecture of public or private space would let expect answers in regard of the structure of practical action in this field.⁵ After all, the promises given to us when it comes to architecture are an essential part of our late modern culture with its predominantly material values. Architecture as an anthropological constant of building and producing almost forces us to a transdisciplinary examination, which epistemologically is characteristic of the field of cultural anthropology/European Ethnology.

In order to avoid terminological inaccuracies, I would like to stress that by architecture, I mean the whole process of creating a built-up area. The notion of architecture includes the existing structural fabric as well as building laws and standards, regional and superregional concepts of development as well as the practical knowledge of building technique and the building trade. Architecture describes the culture of building and planning just like the culture of contracts (building, in-

¹ vgl. Rolf Lindner: Die kulturelle Textur der Stadt, in: Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde, Vol. 104, 2008, p. 137-147; Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch (ed.): Das ganz alltägliche Elend. Begegnungen im Schatten des Neoliberalismus, Wien: 2003.

² Cf. Wolfgang Kaschuba: Nation und Emotion. Europäische Befindlichkeiten, in: *Ethnologia Europaea. Journal of European Ethnology*, Volume 28:1, 1998, p. 101-110; Bernhard Tschöfen: Vom Geschmack der Region. Kulinarische Praxis, europäische Politik und räumliche Kultur – eine Forschungsskizze, in: *ZV*, Vol. 103, 2007/II, p. 169-195; Mikkel Venborg Pedersen: Cultural Landscapes. Spatial Aspects of Power and Authority in the Duchy of Augustenborg, in: *Ethnologia Europaea. Journal of European Ethnology*, Volume 31:1, 2001, p. 5-20; Manfred Seifert: Raum als Forschungskategorie. Zu Wegen und Zielsetzungen ethnographisch-kulturwissenschaftlicher Raumanalyse, in: *ÖZV*, Vol. 112, No. 4, 2009, p. 469-479.

³ Cf. Gudrun M. König (ed.): *Alltagsdinge. Erkundungen der materiellen Kultur*, Tübingen: 2005; Hermann Heidrich: *Dinge verstehen. Materielle Kultur aus der Sicht der Europäischen Ethnologie*, in: *ZV*, Vol. 103, 2007/II, p. 223-236.

⁴ Cf. Johanna Rolshoven: *Cultural Studies in Architecture*, in: *IACSA, Newsletter Vol 2, No 2, March 2010*, p. 2.

⁵ Cf. Ueli Gyr (Hg): *Themenheft Richard Weiss*, Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde, Vol. 105, No. 1, 2009; Eva Maria Blum: *Planungskulturen im Konflikt. Stadtbau im Raum Lissabon*, in: *ZV*, Vol. 103, 2007/I, p. 43.

heritance, labor and property laws) as a legally established promise to appropriate space in a certain manner. In this way, architecture enables us to analyze the forms and possibilities of taking possession of our material surroundings. Finally, the scientific field of architecture also includes the inventory and actions related to it. In what follows, I take as a starting point that the creation of a building or of a district goes hand in hand with needs that interpret social or cultural changes in a spatial manner. Finishing a building project allows new forms of contingency, new ways of experiencing space as well as new forms of distinction, though partially only in microscopic dimensions. The building sector can thereby be interpreted as an institution offering to culture new ways of differentiations. The possibility of an architectural order of social structures is based primarily on four areas:

1. The realm of the cultural memory of building which comprises the building substance, building laws, contracts and the knowledge about the technical aspect of building.
2. The area of materials available for building, i.e. tools, building materials and research on building and materials (the building industry).
3. The field of those people mediating between technical possibilities and the demands of society: planners, craftsmen and theoreticians.
4. The area of those people asserting their requests concerning the reshaping of space.⁶

In order to «translate» the requested changes of the living space adequately, a reciprocal interplay of all those four fields is necessary. I therefore assume that the different fields (job branches, planning authorities, institutions) of the construction industry need to develop separate identities, i.e. their own ideas of living space, in order to ensure their co-operation under the circumstances of the divi-

sion of labor.⁷ What the planners and craftsmen are able to create relates directly to the forms, possibilities and claims concerning the appropriation of living space.



I now postulate that the reshaping of this space is directly linked to the differentiation of society as a whole. Changes in society and culture do not happen arbitrarily, but relate – at least when it comes to the building sector – mainly to the possibilities of the division of labor, including social exclusion, as a crucial scheme of meaning in the late modern world. As Marshall Sahlins has already pointed out, the material reality is not simply a reflection of the cultural order. It is not decisive that people live in a material world, but rather that they live in certain schemes of meaning, marked by concrete ideas about space which they developed themselves.⁸

In the construction sector, a functional differentiation, as explained by Luhmann in his later works, becomes particularly obvious. In order to create, redesign or renovate a building or a certain area within a city, a variety of lines of business differing in their respective function is necessary. Apart from the structures of market economy or redistribution, these separate entities within the construction industry are linked to each other reciprocally in an existential relation.

Coordinating these different functional fields is the direct responsibility of the building management. However, legal norms guide them indirectly as how to communicate

⁶ According to Henri Lefebvre, the areas 1 and 2 would be part of physical space, area 3 would fall under the category of mental space resp. Thirdspace, whereas the fourth area would be part of social space. Cf. Henri Lefebvre: *The Production of Space*, Oxford: 1991.

⁷ The theory of „perspectivism“ shows that every human being perceives his surroundings from his own perspective. Cf. Brian Fay: *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science*, Oxford: 1996, quoted after John R. Searl: *Geist, Sprache und Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt am Main: 2004, p. 32.

⁸ Cf. Hermann Heidrich: *Dinge verstehen. Materielle Kultur aus der Sicht der Europäischen Ethnologie*, in: *ZV*, Vol. 103, 2007/II, p. 226.

among themselves. Each line of business does its part of the work at a defined point in time. A direct exchange between construction workers of different fields is hardly needed as these aspects are already regulated by state norms, employment contracts and deadlines. Construction laws therefore represent inherent promises that all partners involved are going to respect the corresponding norms.⁹



The construction sector is characterized by specialization, which in turn makes specialists in one field incompetent when it comes to tasks required in other areas. Each system of functions is characterized by a different internal social environment, «precisely because each system of functions is differentiated in order to serve its particular function.»¹⁰ This intensification of collective group-identities leads to an exaggerated opinion of one's own abilities compared to those of the others. The sections of the construction industry thereby appear as a «system of lines of force» as defined by Bourdieu in his theory of fields formed by the habitus. Finally, the relational concept of space relates to the reciprocal link of different notions of space, i.e. they relate to the concept of habitus and the theory of functional fields.¹¹

Only in this way, the different functional

systems can convert exchange, competition, cooperation and conflict into conditions, which do not take into account social considerations.¹² We could even claim that the different lines of business rule over their respective tools by which they are vested with a certain right as well as a duty to interfere in nature and to change it.¹³

The promise of providing a service which can be trusted in this way becomes an «institutional fact». The trust inherent to this promise, apart from expertise, shall make clear that the respective fields of the construction business are located within a common structure of intentionality.¹⁴ The different terminology of the respective functional fields relate to their own materials, norms and techniques, to their specific forms of „flow experience»¹⁵. We could therefore go as far as to say that the different fields of the construction business relate to their individual «promise culture» which is the result of long training and practical experience.

Still, we should not lose sight of vertical hierarchization, as especially in the construction sector, the traditional hierarchy of the master craftsman, journeyman and apprentice and global forms of illicit and part-time work play an essential role.¹⁶

The view that employees have to be made redundant or that certain working conditions are unacceptable are primarily due to the way

⁹ This „mechanical solidarity“ of functional systems defined first by Durkheim is a view pointing to the reciprocity of different fields of society.

¹⁰ Cf. Niklas Luhmann: Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft, Frankfurt am Main: 1998, p. 746.

¹¹ The relational notion of space was formulated in the 18th century by Johann Gottfried Herder referring to Kant. He defined different concepts of space as relational notions of experience and as spectrum of directions of orientation. Cf. Stefan Günzel: Physik und die Metaphysik des Raumes, in: Jörg Dünne und Stephan Günzel (ed.): Raumtheorie. Grundlagentexte aus Philosophie und Kulturwissenschaften, Frankfurt am Main: 2006, p. 33.

¹² Cf. Niklas Luhmann: Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft, Frankfurt am Main: 1998, p. 823.

¹³ Within the area of research of the building trade, «landscapes of taste» a shave been defined elsewhere for certain regions or cities hold an importance that should not be underestimated. Craftsmen working with wood, metal or stone are traditionally linked to specific smells, sounds, rhythms and a pace of work. In late modernity, this kind of «emotional culture» is underlined by high technology, corporate identities and the presentation on the internet.

¹⁴ Cf. Tobias Nikolaus Klass: Das Versprechen. Grundzüge einer Rhetorik des Sozialen nach Searle, Hume und Nietzsche, München: 2002, S 94.

¹⁵ Cf. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi und Eugene Rochberg-Halton: Der Sinn der Dinge. Das Selbst der Symbole des Wohnbereichs, München Weinheim: 1989.

¹⁶ Cf. Heinz Bude und Andreas Willisch: Die Debatte über die „Überflüssigen“, in: Heinz Bude und Andreas Willisch: Exklusion. Die Debatte über die „Überflüssigen“, Frankfurt am Main: 2008, p. 17.

people perceive themselves. Due to economic, often neoliberal transformation processes, the forms of appreciation between people change. Feelings like guilt, shame, anxiety or anger are expressed as criticism of one's own environment and initiate cultural dissociation and differences. Feelings can not only result in certain circumstances or actions, but make them rational.¹⁷ Global transformation processes express themselves in an individual feeling.

As places of unease, where according to my hypothesis a claim for spatial change becomes noticeable, the margins of society are certainly of special interest¹⁸. By these I mean the border area between work and unemployment, especially under the aspect of age, gender and migration. However, as Homi Bhabha pointed out in „*The location of culture*«, the difference or the differentiation is not necessarily the borderline between the inside and the outside, but an inevitable place even right at the center.¹⁹

A critical evaluation of the surroundings is, as already mentioned, a sign that different groups demand different forms of life and new functions. A first realization of the need to distance oneself from the surroundings can be traced back to too much or too little appreciation, meaning to impressions of self-perception.



Philosopher Theodore Kemper points to the fact that too much or too little appreciation cause mixed feelings like guilt, shame, fear,

¹⁷ Sabine A. Döring: Allgemeine Einleitung: Philosophie der Gefühle heute, in: Sabine A. Döring (ed.): Philosophie der Gefühle, Frankfurt am Main: 2009, p. 17.

¹⁸ Cf. Johannes Moser: Volkskundliche Perspektiven, in: ZV, Vol. 104, 2008/II, p. 231.

¹⁹ Cf. Homi K. Bhabha: Die Verortung der Kultur, Tübingen: 2000, p. XI.

anger or depression.²⁰ These so-called hostile feelings are an important part and a clear mark of social differentiation. The feeling of turning away from someone or turning towards somebody is the result of one's own experience, the consequence of an ongoing «evaluation» and «comparison» which precedes these emotions. The social and cultural circumstances therefore trigger cognitive responses, which are felt as emotions.



The different views of the living space always merge with identity constructions mediating between the inside and the outside, right or wrong, known and unknown in order to codify one's own position as the cause from which observations are made. Criticism against one's own environment therefore describes an ontology of the claim for spatial change and is a sign of a personal and collective borderline situation and of transformation.

The so-called «Teilgewerbeverordnung»—a regulation going back to 1998 according to which parts of the master builder's competences can be undertaken even without a master craftman's diploma—stands as an example of this late modern form of social differentiation due to the division of work into smaller units. It furthermore symbolizes the beginning of new forms of inclusion as well as exclusion. The liberalization of trade regulations leads to an acceleration of changes inside the world of employment. Not only in the building trade, new forms of self-employment, single-member companies, the transition to flexible working hours or the subjectivization of the demands of work lead to intensified occupational mobility and com-

²⁰ Cf. Theodore D. Kemper: Social Models in the Explanation of Emotions, in: Michael Lewis and Jeanette M. Haviland-Jones (Ed.): Handbook of Emotions, New York, London: 2000, p. 50.

We can furthermore assume that due to the change of the job outline of those who are responsible for building, the demands on the quality of the space to be built has changed, too. It therefore remains to be examined to what extent a late modern esthetic of building as an «objective» structure is also the result of the cultural dynamic mentioned above.

As a counterpart to the changes in social structures, we can refer above all to the changes in urban development when it comes to traffic planning. In past years, this led to a radical increase in the number of roundabouts and—as a consequence—to a fundamental reshaping of urban space. Apart from that, during the last decades this has led to the emergence of new types of retail businesses known as big box retail. Here, it is not the product itself which is in the center of attention, but the logistics controlling the flow of commodities.²²

On the whole, we can note that besides the trend to plan big events, there has also been a trend to restructure not only companies, but the whole public space.

I therefore think that, due to the reasons mentioned above, it is epistemologically appropriate to define architecture as a field of research within cultural anthropology/European ethnology. A critical evaluation of one's own surroundings can be interpreted as a motive and a claim to new forms of the appropriation of space. At the same time, each building project can be defined as a mark of social and cultural differentiation. ◀



All pictures © Manfred Omahna

²¹ Cf. Irene Götz und Andreas Wittel: Ethnographische Arbeitsforschung, in: Irene Götz, Andreas Wittel (ed.): Arbeitskulturen im Umbruch. Zur Ethnographie von Arbeit und Organisation, Münster, New York, München, Berlin: 2000, p. 7.

²² Cf. Marc Angélil: 08/15-Städtebau. Von der Negentropie zur Entropie, in: transit, Vol. I, Triebkräfte der Architekturentwicklung, Nr. 15, 2009, p. 18.

Announcement

First CAA Graz Conference, March 14th, 2011 «Cultural Anthropology meets Architecture»

Reziproke Räume: Räume, Menschenbilder und Stadtgestalt
Interdisciplinary Conference on the Theory of Space and Culture (in German)

Organised by the Department of Folklore and Cultural Anthropology of the Karl Franzens-University Graz, in co-operation with the Institute of Architectural Theory, Art History (IAAC) and Cultural of the Technical University Graz, the Forum Kulturanthropologie und Architektur (FKA), and the International Association for Cultural Studies in Architecture (IACSA)

Directed by Johanna Rolshoven and Manfred Omahna

Venue: Haus der Architektur (HDA), Palais Thinnfeld Mariahilferstrasse 2, 8020 Graz, Austria

Date: Monday March 14th, 2011, 9:00am to 17:30pm

«Cultural Anthropology Meets Architecture» seizes a stimulus and an opportunity which has been repeatedly given during the past thirty years. The encounter of a discipline rooted in humanities—Cultural Studies and cultural anthropology—with a practical and pragmatic discipline—architecture in its full scope—longs for deepening.

The conference will centre on the ideas and representations of man which guide the becoming of architectural form and the interpretation of spatial social action in space. Around this theoretical pivot the exchange of both groups of disciplines will be able to benefit from each other.

The discussion will deal with the basic assumptions and paradigms of the production of knowledge and the production of built space. It aims at overcoming the common mutual allegations of «theory-building far from practise» respectively of «building without theoretical aims». Its ambition is to replace this barren field with the study and respect of difference in the contemporary dispute over the primacy of applied or of fundamental research.

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Impressum

The INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CULTURAL STUDIES IN ARCHITECTURE IACSA is an association according to Swiss law, founded in 2008. It consists of the ADVISORY BOARD, the WORKING BOARD, and the NETWORK EDITOR.

IACSA membership is open for everyone interested and willing to contribute to build the network. IACSA's registered office's address is at Hammerstrasse 14, 4058 Basel, Switzerland. The IACSA Newsletter is published every two months in electronic form.

MEMBERSHIP: Membership is free. If you sense that the

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