

Theoretical discourse, Prof. filippos oraiopoulos

The theoretical discourse is one of the main constitutive elements of our school, along with art and digital technologies, having as a central aim the contribution to architectural and urban design;(this has already been discussed by my colleague Lois Papadopoulos)

I must make it clear that the relationship between these three areas is not a simple juxtaposition of a way of coexistence, but is bound to the organic interdisciplinary way, which relies on the transfer of the theoretical and practical discourse from one area to another. This transfer happens in a systematic way, based on the poetic metaphor, using Ricoeur's terminology, in fact in the constructive sense of the term and not only in the frame of poesies. Thus, the theoretical discourse is not only a knowledge autonomies(autonomous?) area, nor is it a simple mental interpretive tool, but is actively involved in architectural and urban design. All teachers have a personal theoretical reason, which they develop and then use in the design process. Therefore, there is a diffusion of critical ,theoretical and practical discourse that shapes in some places more and some less, the specific design.

I could use the terms of the general theory of writing concerning mainly the digital programs, as have been developed by the philosopher Flusser, in order to describe the use of the theoretical model of discourse in architectural design. *Poetry in the sense of a construction of experiential models is already beginning to develop now and will achieve dimensions in the near future that will exceed all expectations. What we will all perceive and experience in the future is unimaginable. (...). The new Poet, equipped with apparatuses and dining on them digitally, cannot be so naive. (...). His attitude to a poem is no longer that of the inspired and intuitive poet but that of an information designer. He relies on theories and no longer works empirically. Such an informatic approach to poetry has long been in preparation. In Mallarme, for example, this attitude approaches a theoretical informatic expression; (...)*

If Malarmé prophetically announces that a new presupposition for the creation of poetry is its relation to theoretical discourse, then Flusser confirms the same presupposition for contemporary representational techniques or writing techniques in general via digital technology.

In the above context my own research and contribution concerns the transfer of the contemporary theory of poetics from philosophical and literary thought (Heidegger, Ricoeur, Man, Derrida. etc) to the theory of architecture, and city, in terms of "new technologies".

Kant, after Aristotle, explores general poetics seeing the *Critique of Judgment* as an intellectual bridge between theoretical and practical (ethics) discourse, using terms of relative objectivity. Also, Kant in another text (for anthropology) speaking about poetry, incorporates in poetics the arts and architecture with an inventive dimension of rhetorical delivery, which the Aristotelian poetics refused. However, both, each in his own metaphysical approach, constitute the field of poetics (as *ποίησις* from not being to being), via conceptual essentialism.

Deleuze, historically places the beginning of a genealogy, which has replaced essentialism by eventual ontology (mannerism), replacing 'to be' by '**manner of being**' of the thing, an 'aspect', that is going beyond the quest for *what* it is to *how* it is. In addition, Badiou in *L'être et l'événement* approaches the conception of the same notion of event in the frame of a radical meta-ontological option, based on the theory of set, mainly in the notion of empty-void.

I would, from this viewpoint, suggest that we name such an event as an eidetic event, and the poetics as neo-poetics, since the meaning of the event extends the tradition of general poetic ontology concerning the hylomorphisme . At the same time its materialistic structure (analogical and digital) can be incorporated into an unsure, fluid and continuous redefinition. Such a conceptual point of view of the event allows the work of art, architecture and city to simultaneously include as many objects and the performative processes that have generated those objects, that is, it permits works of art, architecture, and city in general to adopt the theatrical narrative model as paradigm.

In my courses Neo-poetics I and II, I present the above theoretical process with corresponding exercise/projects using the technologies of video or performative constructions for the contemporary performative functions of city.

However, I would like to comment on an experimental course that has taken place for the last two years in the ninth semester, for which you will see results/projects, and in which there was a systematic effort to apply an interdisciplinary theoretical discourse which concerns the centre of Athens at this time of crisis. In the first case, with the title: *Centre, Void, Inventory (Reserve), Point interventions*.

The theoretical process schematically is the following:

We could say that Athens, in the last ten years, is a changing process from a Mediterranean capital into a "global city".

Athens is located in the heart of the crisis and the global interest, not only in economic transformation, but also in most of the institutions which are setting up new production mechanisms both public and private, and therefore all the mechanisms of production of urban space.

The most interesting international debate on these issues (in critical terms) seems to lie mainly in the urban social geographical and political activism (Harvey, Bourdieu, Hal, Hardt-Negri, Chicago School, California School, etc).

The basic conceptual system used in this project, are: Centre, Void, Inventory (Reserve), Points intervention. The world of reference to such a system is generally poetic ontology, in urban social anthropology and systemic thoughtful redesign and can be described in the following schematic way:

The concept of the centre, as it is known, is ambiguous (here we mean the centre as 'what' and for 'whom'.) Geometric centre, economic, authoritarian and residential, communications, from the "local", the immigrant, the employee, the tourist and the resident of the suburbs, (...). So, perhaps it is better to negotiate with someone in Athens as a kind of polycentric system, as a network system with continuous movement.

The void may be: literal, meaning land surface, operation, communication, (...) and poetical metaphor, not just symbolic or retracted from the oblivion of history, but mainly conceptually imaginative, and not just existing in the sense of discovery but in fact made of the subjects (students, teachers) in the frame of social practices in urban space. In other words we are talking about a void containing potentially functional structures in the production of social space.

The Inventory (reserve) is nothing more than the deposition of the constructed (invented) spatial structure in an established practice functional space, a kind <<gift>>, composed of spatial patterns in specific circumstances (economic, social, authoritarian, cultural, political).

The points of intervention are a kind of a systemic network of nodes, where deposited material construction (literal) or poetical metaphor (invented) enclosing

the pool of spatial practices (institutions, construction, operations, actions), a sort of enlarged and opened conceptual architecture of the city. From this standpoint it could be talking about urban events, certainly as both (literal and metaphorical) points, systemically tend to change all urban life (daily or otherwise) without interruption.

Methodologically, the richness, the range and the description of fields, which these concepts (Centre, Emptiness), Inventory, Point interventions) can acquire, are elicited by a zone of weekly presentations from different disciplines with exemplary reference to the city centre these are the Policy Economics of the production of space, Demographic structure of the centre of Athens, Urban social geography of the centre, Immigration and Gendered sites, Spaces in general delinquency, Public art, Places of safety and heterotopia, Representations Internet, etc. The goal of such an influx of heterogeneous disciplines is to strengthen the power of the imagination for the projects and emergences of different microstructures, invented in the level of practice spaces.

This was made through the participation of the theoretical discourse, as described above, where each student team built its own architectural program for the kind of intervention. The latter has as a result the emergence of architectural structures that do not belong to known architectural and urban typologies, but are unexpected building structures located between architecture and urbanism.

At the same time, such a conceptual approach, when trying to organize the spatial practices, has come up against antagonism (economic, social, cultural, authoritarian) from urban groups with different interests. Thus, it has resulted in conflicts in different fields of political discourses. It is the time of the meeting of the city's architecture with politics and therefore the admission of the political responsibility of the architect, both in the selection of fields and the grounds of an enlarged concept of architecture and urban intervention.

In the second case, with the title *Athens ground*, the course followed the same interdisciplinary methodology, as the first, but has included a decisive change giving more interest for the program and specifically in the area of the construction of small community institutions specific for each individual from the group of students. This poetic operational process has allowed for the invention of unexpected institutional microstructures, with no need for typological repetition. The discipline of poetic, in this case, has not its origin in hylomorphic construction, but in the construction of the constitution of microstructures for a variety of community coexistence in the city. In this case the architecture of the city is consciously humble and discredited in relation to the official architecture.

If, then, the urban factors of Aldo Rossi are still influential today and are important for the common good of a town but at the same time this influence cannot continue to produce hylomorphic monumental urban factors, as he continues to produce the modern globalized architectural gigantism. This poetic model proposes the invention of institutional microstructures, where the effect is strongest in the constitution of the common ground of the city, in the form of Community forms of coexistence. In this case the architecture has minimal existence: local, specific, without typologies and standardization, allowing for radical changes in public and community coexistence.

To conclude my presentation I would like to mention the start of the production in the last four years of a series of doctoral theses (currently around 15) their theoretical contribution is certainly important in producing a modern and innovative theoretical discourse on the architecture of city.