

Narrative theory as a designing tool to immerse human into “building’s reality”. The proposal of the new, international airport at Heraklion, Greece

Ms. **Alma Tralo***, atralo@isc.tuc.gr

Technical University of Crete, Greece

Abstract–

Architecture and literature have been crossed many times in their common desire to narrate, create and express space. They are both ways of communication and as such, they use narration in order to communicate with their receivers. Man has the innate ability to relate the information to specific images in mind and organize them in a narrative way. For this reason, exploring the nature of the narrative, also, means that we explore one of the fundamental ways in which we give meaning to our world.

Before the invention of printing, architecture functioned as a book where the narration of the history and the current culture took place. The architecture thus, mirrored society and functioned as another kind of literary narrative. Victor Hugo believed that architecture died with the Industrial Revolution and the invention of printing, it ceased to be the symbolic core of society and lost its role. Of course, printing did not kill architecture, but instead, literature “nourishes” architecture in the name of development. The narration is used by both the author and the architect in shaping new “worlds” that can offer a *new reading of the world*. Understanding the narrative methods, as they emanate from narratology (branch that has emerged from the study of literary texts), helps architects realize that narration as a tool makes architecture more human-centric.

The theory is based, primarily, on the narrative theory of Gerard Genette and his book *Narrative Discourse: an essay in method*, and as a case study is defined the Thesis project of Georgia Voradaki and Alma Tralo for the new, international airport at Kastelli, Heraklion, Greece. An airport is a place where people from all around the world, with different cultures, traditions, notions, memories and experiences meet. However, they hardly ever interact with each other. Passengers come and go and no kind of communication takes place among them, resulting in losing the chance of getting knowledge from other passengers’ experience, with completely different background. In other words, the accumulation of so many people is equivalent to the accumulation of abundant knowledge, which is not utilized in the case of the airport. In this project, narrative analysis is used in the synthetic process in order to make people in the airport interact with each other. Architect is seen as a writer and meanings, like pause, ellipsis, summary and scene that are related to literature, are encountered in the design. From the exterior to the interior, the building is designed in a more human-friendly way and tries to bring people together. The exchange of information, even in the simplest way (e.g. chatting), could be considered a valuable contribution to the broadening of an individual’s mental horizon and this can be easily achieved in a place such as the airport, where there are so many different people, each one of them carrying his own history. Any personal history includes and carries pure knowledge, which is as unique as the human fingerprint. Our design proposal aims to reveal this knowledge in order to understand the character not only of different cultures, but the character of the different kinds of people of the same culture as well.