

# “SPACE AND EMOTION”

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Architectural space and scenic space: From construction to emotion.

At other times we've said that the Theatre is not a show but an event. And this concerns the game between worlds that we witness and the emotion of our complicity: creating surroundings for a scenario that is not distracting the audience from the play and creates a place that is in harmony with the author's thought, based on clarity and proportions in another reality that pays attention to the symbolic space of action, namely, that promotes and establishes an emotional behaviour in reading or understanding that theatrical fact.

We can consider there is an emotional situation when there is an excess of motivation in the possibilities of the individual's adaptation. From this concept we will identify some of the situations more often used by the representation of space (stage design or scenic space) in the creation of emotional situations, especially in the audience. According to this perspective, for Sartre (1965) “the emotional conduct is not in any way a disorder: it is an organized system of devices aiming at an end. This system is named to mask, replace and refuse a behaviour that cannot or is not intended for us to keep. “

For these reasons, it seems important, first of all, to try to understand some of the elements considered important in psychological terms to carry out the theatrical phenomenon. These elements are necessary to understand the overlap of the perceptive aspects that the illusory space has over the intelligible space made by man. That is, the complicity with the proposed readings of the space.

According to some studies, it is thought that many of the motivations of our creation and aesthetic feeling, perception and behavioural analysis of artistic action are justified by analysis methods. These are only partial views, given the limited experiences on paranormal or pathological states and consciousness, where there could be obtained significant advances in understanding the phenomenon of spatial and artistic enjoyment.

The theatrical phenomenon, as the privileged place of encounter between the intentionality of perception and the reading (the public knows what illusion is and wants to be deceived), is a particular human manifestation of space experimentation and its study may bring an increase of the emotional perceptual / spatial understanding to architecture as a discipline.

In the theatrical phenomenon, there is emotion when the subject (viewer) cannot develop a response to the situation unfolding before his eyes. The uncertainty of the text's construction, the uncertainty of the events' succession, involves man in a sense of imbalance compared to the relationship stimulus/response.

Surely there isn't a single stimulus and each one reacts according to their experience and emotion or need. However, "the uncertainties of unprepared man become emotional reactions by the direct effect of the onset of the reaction that is thought to have no escape." (Paul Fraisse et Jean Piaget, 1963)

Situations of representation (or theatricality that interferes more with perception and knowledge in the sense of image creation and experience of a virtual space) are the variety of reactions and understanding of the phenomena of the new, unusual and unexpected.

We may distinguish situations as being new when nothing has prepared us to understand and the event encourages the emotional or intuitive response.

The viewer reacts if he is involved, without the possibility of prediction of a new situation. In a second phase, he begins to systematize rational schemes, slowly, in order to cancel the emotion, which is the first instinctive response.

For Wallon the unusual "may be born from a blend of known and unknown factors." It is a compounded reaction, since the stimulus is essentially different from the new, because it may be already known from the start, but it does not allow, however, a positive reaction. The example is the loud noise, which always triggers a strong emotional reaction. It is clearly stronger in children than in adults, but the emotional feature does not change.

Darkness, loneliness, physical exhaustion and the products of imagination are situations that can trigger emotional reactions through uncertainty in posture or through the unexpected. For Pierre Janet, "the great cause of emotion is surprise" and this happens when there is a mismatch between the stimuli's timing and its necessary reaction, or role and status change in their normal order.

The reaction to the unexpected is the most basic emotional reaction, and an arousal response to a stimulus is a need to consider an attitude: an exaggeration of the natural reaction. That is, an awareness of formalizing a different response from the ordinary.

The contemporary world has been abandoning the Kantian perspective of space as a receptacle – an a priori form of our understanding - and accepting the idea of space in constant transformation, in a permanent relationship with other places, objects or entities that, whilst containing it, they are still contained by all that go through and enjoy, thus conditioning the forms of interaction and understanding among individuals who also present themselves either passive or actively.

So, the scenographic space beyond the emotion gives us a very strong human characteristic, which is a clear strategy of seduction. We have already mentioned that the stage space is moving through complementary premises to the psychological experience. How many times, when we speak of space, do we discuss the notion of emotion, of the new, of the surprise and unusual. But one of the aspects that the stage space clearly develops is a seductive attitude, an attitude of communication towards the viewer.

This attitude, conceptually speaking, shows the centripetal character that the stage space organizes, the role model place that suggests and evokes, space that organizes many spaces and is, paradoxically, a centrifugal space as a selfish manifestation of the seductive aspect.

The problem lies, therefore, in the space's communication which, at this level, becomes subjective.

It could be argued that the stage space is the highest expression of architectural space as art, in the sense that it is not just related to the utilitarian values that constitute the real, but largely with aesthetic phenomena unrelated to mainly disciplinary notions. Thus, the space reveals itself a purely visual experience and, although Pierre Francastel has said that the Theatre is not just a "visual thing", in order for it to exist it needs to be seen: "In order to visualize there must be something to see, there must be a text. It is not just a show, it is an event. Any event is an act, it is so named because it represents a gesture, a body attitude: it is crystallized in this way in some fictitious and imaginary elements." (Pierre Francastel, 1987)

Renato de Fusco develops this visualization phenomenon as an idea of Architecture, referring essentially to the nineteenth and twentieth century. However, our perspective is based on the assumption of the inherent manifestation of a utilitarian sense in architecture, already stated by Vitruvius and within the very notion of project - a means to an end.

In this perspective, the notion of project is part of a production control, of construction; and in its conception, it is the result of a knowledge synthesis based on social and economic sciences, building materials, urban planning and disciplinary, instrumental and operative rules leaving, after all, a variable degree of creativity and invention. In the dramatic space, gesture, light, movement, body and emotion create space and only express their aesthetics in this emotion's overall objective.

The history of the theatre types has shown the existence of situations that promote the coincidence of the real with the imaginary place. However, the evolution of drama, especially in the West, shows us that there was a need to set the dramatic place - the mystery.

Originally, drama is a liturgical rite and can be seen as an extension of the connection between theatre and mythic imagery. Its social and psychological similarity is what the representation unfolds "outside the space-time coordinates within which they tend to be used and anchored." (Dörfler, 1988)

In the ancient liturgical acts, the manifestation of the sacred place was marked by physical and symbolic separation between profane and sacred spaces in which the iconostasis in certain types of churches (pre-Romantic Peninsular) was assumed as the "Sipario" (cloth in the mouth) between the two worlds. According to Dorfler, Sipario "symbolizes the special relationship between spectator and actor, between the world of appearance and the world of existence." And in this sense, the "separation of the public and the scene, the actors, the fictional world where the drama unfolds, comedy, lyric opera, ballet – does not come from today or from yesterday but has always existed." (Dörfler, 1988)

The separation between these two spaces - the imaginary world, of tricks, virtual spatiality and temporality and its unique atmosphere and the space for a group of individuals connected in the same time, to the same sensations, to the identical perceptions that are not diverted from the theatrical fact - is needed to the realization of the phenomenon of the theatre, built between these dichotomies and contradictions about the art of word and gesture, colour and light, sound and space, to be seen and to be used and also for the separation which also has a distinctly theatrical function: to convince us that the cloth itself is almost the symbol, "not only of theatrical language, but also of what can be considered the conflict between image and reality, between fiction and the creation, between nature and artifice." (Dörfler, 1988 )

Despite the importance of spatial separation, the scenographic and the architectural proposals are not separate worlds – they intersect themselves.

Thus, one cannot consider that there is a scenic spatial space on the theatrical phenomenon on one side and, on the other, an architectural space and a series of experiential subjects that perceive it, but a single act of its own architectural thinking that complements and intersects the spaces before interpreting them as opposites. Scenery and architecture are driven by the same principle of poetry and fiction - the action of human life under the light is what is sought.

Therefore, Alain et Guitteux D. Rouillard (1987) tell us that "It is poetry, music and dance's role to present the image of human actions and passions to us; but it is architecture, painting and sculpture's role to prepare the places and scenarios of a spectacle. And they must do so in accordance to the dignity of the actors and the quality of the topics presented. The gods live in the Olympus, the kings in palaces, the citizen in his home, the shepherd is sat in the shade of the trees of the forest. Architecture must create these places and make them beautiful . For that, it can have the help of painting and sculpture. (...) "Any" household should be the image of its inhabitants, their dignity, their power, their taste. This is the rule that should guide the arts in the construction and decoration of the various places."

However, the conceptual confrontation between the stage space and architectonic space results in a space notion with other conception purposes. The space is not representation and it allows simulation, experimentation of a spatial and temporal phenomenon very close to the category of living space.

Simulation describes the world and its representations in a mobile posture of action-reaction – a continuous process of inner searching- it "speaks" of space "with" space, but "outside" space. Simulation is a symbolic "intermediate" space - this concept is twofold – and it involves mediation and hybridization. "(P. Quéau, 1987)

From the separation in different disciplines results, in the architectural space, its representation, which makes itself known through shapes, scenarios or images that produce other images, which will fix the design of contemporary space defining the spectacle and the successive rehearsals as a nonexistent character - the man.

"Fragmentation, interpretation, allusion, quotation, fiction and performance are perhaps the key words" (Claude Even, 1987) or slogans, of the new operability for both architecture and

scenery. These two concepts are increasingly more identical and closer to the world of things and the representation of its shapes.

“Although solving the problem of architecture involves a crucial process of humanization, it will have to face, as usual, the old problems of the monumentalism and form. All attempts to eliminate them would be as pointless as trying to exclude the concept of paradise when we talk about religion. Although we know that, despite all efforts, it is very likely that man does not save himself, the main task of the architect is to humanize the age of the machine. However, it should be done without neglecting the form. Form is a mystery that eludes definition, but it is better to man than welfare. “ (Alvar Aalto, 1955)

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