

Summary

The Ground and the Horizon: The Interpretations of Modern Architecture and Art

The notions of “ground” and “horizon” in the title of the book, borrowed from phenomenological reflection, are perceived as the borders of the area where new edifices are erected: from laying foundations in the ground to framing the line of the horizon in the windows of the building. The book is divided into four parts, which guide the reader from the theory of modern architecture, through modern fascinations with atmospheres and moods occupying formless space between the ground and the horizon, to the interpretations of the selected works of modern architecture and art.

In the first part, I attempt to specify the sources and phenomenological trends in architectural reflexion. The starting point is an “intuitional-artistic attitude” highlighted by Polish architect Juliusz Żórawski: the attitude that is full of doubt, as it opens on such architectural categories as harmony or monumentality that cannot be measured mathematically. *The Field of Visual Forces in Architecture* is a chapter devoted to Rudolf Arnheim’s *The Dynamics of Architectural Forms*, in which I develop the ideas of density of space, its verticality and horizontality and the differences between the architectural field of action and the visual field of painting. In *The Transparency of the Painting and the Dematerialisation of Architecture*, the last chapter of this part, I reflect on the history of juxtaposing *L’Arlésienne* by Pablo Picasso with a glass corner of the Bauhaus building in Dessau.

The second part starts with a chapter devoted to the modern aesthetics of atmospheres and its 18th-century sensual sources, which permeates theoretical and practical architecture. Chapter 5, *The Uncanny as Stimmung*, is a contribution to discussion about architectural connotations of *Unheimlichkeit* in the works of Martin Heidegger and Sigmund Freud. In the chapter *Atmospheres as Architectural Patterns*,

I suggest reflecting on the designing methods, described in Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language*, a famous architecture handbook, which until now, has not been a subject of interest of modern "atmospherology." Part two is concluded with a chapter on the relationships between architecture and music, where their Pythagorean-mathematical provenance as well as their modern interpretation, i.e. reflections on *Stimmungen*, moods, which exist in formless space as recognised by Hermann Schmitz in his *New Phenomenology*, are discussed.

The Dialectics of the Ground and the Horizon is a chapter introducing the reader into the subject of the third part of the book. Levelling the ground and defining the horizon are considered two basic architectural gestures, whose meaning I interpret referring to *Other City*, a series of photographs by Elżbieta Janicka and Wojciech Wilczyk, which have shown the centre of Warsaw since 2011. The ground and the horizon of the Holocaust, which are the subject of their artistic inquiries, return in the next chapter, *Planning and Hygiene*, a commentary on hygiene as modernist architectural demand, which in the 1940s reached terrible orders of "progress" and "functionality." Two topics: leaving the ground and the hermetization of the atmosphere are discussed in chapter 11 of the book. Some political-social moods influenced experimental architecture in the late 1950s and 1960s, such as a fear of being alienated from the Earth (as analysed by Hannah Arendt) and an elusive euphoria over conquering the space during the Cold War, fuelled by Russian Cosmism, that is faith in technological possibilities of raising the dead. One of the concepts discussed in this chapter is "spacesuit-isation", which, on the one hand, helps us survive in a harsh environment but, on the other hand, alienates us from sensual experiences on Earth.

In chapter 12, in the last part of the book, I return to the notion of ground, "circulating" around a tree as the centre of the dwelling, described by Homer in the 23rd book of *The Odyssey* and a tree saved from being cut-down at the building site of the Pavilion "L'Esprit Nouveau" (1925). Music of architecture, discussed in part two, returns in chapter 13, *The Rhythms of Space*, which is a study of Krystian Burda's *A Road to Żelazowa Wola* diploma work (1961), devoted to Frederic Chopin. *The Horizon of Touch* is dedicated to a famous blue tape of Edward Krasiński, which traverses his flat/studio in a gesture of mourning, especially noticeable in the times, when due to hygienic safety we limit our tactile and haptic experiences. The interpretations of Jacek Damiński's installations, *Warsaw XXX* (1974) and *Cloud* (1994), presented in the last chapter, take us back to the Homeric beginnings of architecture, i.e. the relationship between architecture and shipbuilding / raising sails in the wind.

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