

The Theoretical Turn in Architecture 1960-2000: Structuralism/Poststructuralism  
Postmodernism, Deconstructivism, Folding, Blobs, and Post-Theory  
A4374  
Fall 2016  
Mary McLeod

## Readings

Note: All students are encouraged to read all of the first week's readings before the first class meeting. We will begin the seminar discussions that week.

\*Books with an asterisk have been ordered at Book Culture.

## Section I: Semiology and Structuralism

### Week 1

Culler, Jonathan. Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975, pp. vii-x, pp. 3-31.

Broadbent, Geoffrey. "A Plain Man's Guide to the Theory of Signs in Architecture." Architectural Design, vol. 47 (July-August 1977), pp. 474-84.

\*Barthes, Roland. Elements of Semiology. Trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967. Definitely not easy reading, but in many respects still the classic introduction to the field.

### Recommended:

Guirand, Pierre. Semiology. Trans. George Gross. London, Henley, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975. A brief, easy primer, especially useful for summarizing Jakobson.

Hawkes, Terence. Structuralism and Semiotics. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977. Useful for a summary of structuralism in anthropology as well as literature.

Silverman, Kaja. The Subject of Semiotics. New York and Oxford: University Press, 1983. This is especially recommended for relating issues of subjectivity to semiotics.

Gandelsonas, Mario. "On Reading Architecture." Progressive Architecture, vol. 53 (March 1972), pp. 68-88; rpt. in Broadbent, Geoffrey, ed., Signs, Symbols, and Architecture. New York: Wiley, 1980, pp. 243-73.

\*If you have a limited theoretical background, you may find Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983) a useful general introduction.

For a comprehensive and fascinating history of French structuralism, see François Dross's two volume History of Structuralism. Trans. Deborah Glassman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

### Week 2

Barthes, Roland. "The Tour Eiffel." "Structures, Implicit and Explicit." Via, vol. 2 (1973), pp. 162-84; rpt. in \*Barthes, Roland. The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1979, pp. 3-22.

Barthes, Roland. "Semiology of Urbanism." "Structures Implicit and Explicit." Via, vol. 2 (1973), pp. 155-57.

Guillerme, Jacques. "The Idea of Architectural Language: A Critical Inquiry." Oppositions 10 (Fall 1977), pp. 21-29.

\*Colquhoun, Alan. "Historicism and the Limits of Semiology." Essays in Architectural Criticism. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981, pp. 129-38. Also rpt. in Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism. London: Black Dog, 2009, pp. 97-105.

Recommended:

de Saussure, Ferdinand. Course in General Linguistics. Eds. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye. Trans. Wade Baskin. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.

Eco, Umberto. "A Componential Analysis of the Architectural Sign/Column." Signs, Symbols, and Architecture, pp. 213-32.

Assignment I:

Students are to write either a semiological analysis of a recent public building or a critique of one or several of the assigned texts, focusing on a significant theme raised by the readings.

Section II: Postmodernism (historical styles, regionalism, contextualism)

Week 3

\*Venturi, Robert. Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977, pp. 3-32, 88-105.

\*Jencks, Charles. The Language of Post-Modern Architecture. 4th rev. ed. New York: Rizzoli, 1984. Compare ending to 3rd ed., 1981 and 1st ed. 1977. Parts of the book can be skimmed, but be sure to pay attention to use of semiology in his argument.

Eliot, T.S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Sacred Wood (1920).

Recommended:

Rogers, Ernesto. "The Responsibilities Towards Tradition," Casabella Continuità, no. 202 (August-September 1954), appendix pp. vii-viii (the original Italian with picture is pp. 1-3 of the same issue).

Week 4

"Beyond the Modern Movement." Harvard Architectural Review, no. 1 (Spring 1980), pp. 4-9.

Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." In The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture, ed. Hal Foster. Port Townsend, Wa.: Bay Press, pp. 16-30.

\*Rowe, Colin and Fred Koetter. Collage City. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978); or original article (which is shorter and more to the point).

Recommended:

Stern, Robert. "The Doubles of Post-Modern." Harvard Architectural Review, no. 1 (Spring 1980), pp. 75-87.

### Section III Typology

#### Week 5

Argan, Giulio Carlo. "On the Typology of Architecture." Trans. Joseph Rykwert.

Architectural Design (December 1963), p. 565.

\*Colquhoun, Alan. "Typology and the Design Method." Perspecta 12 (1969), pp. 71-74; rpt. in Colquhoun, Essays in Architectural Criticism, pp. 43-50 and Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism, pp. 45-51.

Moneo, Rafael. "On Typology." Oppositions 13 (Summer 1978), pp. 23-45.

#### Recommended:

Vidler, Anthony. "The Third Typology." Oppositions 7 (Fall 1976), pp. 1-4.

McLeod, Mary. Letter to the Editor. Oppositions 13 (Summer 1978), pp. 127-30.

Anderson, Stanford. "Types and Conventions in Time: Toward a History for the Duration and Change of Artifacts." Perspecta 18 (1982), pp. 109-17.

Bandini, Micha. "Typology as a Form of Convention." AA Files, no. 6 (May 1984), pp. 73-82.

#### Week 6

\*Rossi, Aldo. The Architecture of the City. Trans. Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman.

Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, Oppositions Books, 1982, parts I and II (if possible read more).

Moneo, Rafael. "Aldo Rossi: The Idea of Architecture and the Modena Cemetery."

Oppositions 5 (Summer 1976), pp. 1-21.

Olmo, Carlo. "Across the Texts." Assemblage, no. 5 (February 1988), pp. 91-120. (For doctoral students required; for others, highly recommended.)

#### Recommended:

McLeod, Mary. "Aldo Rossi, The Architecture of the City." Design Book Review, 3 (Fall 1983), pp. 49-55.

Assignment II A critical analysis comparing Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter's Collage City and Aldo Rossi's The Architecture of the City.

or

A critical analysis comparing Aldo Rossi's position in The Architecture of the City and that in A Scientific Autobiography.

or

A critical analysis of either Kenneth Frampton's "Towards a Critical Regionalism" or Robert Venturi's Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (might reflect on literary sources or notions of complexity in the 1960s)

or

A critical review of the MoMA conference on Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (can hand in after the conference)

or

A critical review of Emmanuel Petit's reading of Venturi in Irony: Or, the Self-Critical Opacity of Postmodern Architecture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

## Section IV Poststructuralism and Other Interpretations of Postmodernism

### Week 7

Habermas, Jürgen. "Modernity versus Postmodernity." New German Critique, no. 22 (Winter 1981), pp. 3-14; rpt. in Foster, Hal, ed. The Anti-Aesthetic, pp. 3-15.

\*Lyotard, Jean François, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979.

Burger, Peter. "Avant-garde and Contemporary Aesthetics: A Reply to Jürgen Habermas." New German Critique, no. 22 (Winter 1981), pp. 19-22.

### Recommended:

Rorty, Richard. "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity." In Habermas and Modernity, ed. Richard J. Bernstein. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985, pp. 161-75.

### Week 8

\*Huyssen, Andrea. "Mapping the Postmodern." New German Critique, no. 33 (Fall 1984), pp. 5-52; rpt. in Huyssen, After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism.

Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986, pp. 178-221.

McLeod, Mary. "Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism." Assemblage 8 (February 1989), pp. 22-59.

### Recommended:

Jameson, Fredric. "Ideological Positions in the Postmodern Debate." New German Critique, no. 33 (Fall 1984), pp. 53-66; rpt. "The Politics of Theory: Ideological Positions in the

Postmodernism Debate." In Jameson, Fredric. The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971-1986. Vol. 2. Syntax of History. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, pp. 103-13.

Jameson, Fredric. "Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." New Left Review, no. 146 (July-August 1984), pp. 53-92. A fragment of this essay appears in The Anti-Aesthetic.

### Week 9

\*Norris, Christopher. Deconstruction: Theory and Practice. London and New York: Methuen, 1982. This is one of the easiest and shortest introductions to deconstruction.

Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (1966). In Writing and Difference. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, pp. 278-93.

Derrida, Jacques. Interview (with Eva Meyer), Domus, no. 671 (April 1986), pp. 17-24.

### Recommended:

Derrida, Jacques. "Jacques Derrida in Discussion with Christopher Norris." In Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume, ed. by Andreas Papadakis et al. New York: Rizzoli, 1989, pp. 71-75.

Searle, John R. "On Deconstruction by Jonathan Culler." New York Review of Books, October 27, 1983, pp. 74-78.

"An Exchange on Deconstruction." New York Review of Books, February 2, 1984, pp. 47, 78.

\*Culler, Jonathan. On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Leitch, Vincent B. Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

## Section V Poststructuralism and Architecture Deconstructivism

### Week 10

Johnson, Philip and Mark Wigley. Deconstructivist Architecture. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1988.

Wigley, Mark. "The Translation of Architecture, the Production of Babel." Assemblage, no. 8 (February 1989), pp. 7-21.

or

\*Wigley, Mark. The Architecture of Deconstruction. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993 (This is required for doctoral students.)

Eisenman, Peter. "Architecture and the Problem of the Rhetorical Figure," Architecture and Urbanism 7, no. 202 (July 1987): 17-22.

### Recommended:

Eisenman, Peter. "En Terror Firma: In Trails of Grotexes." Pratt Journal of Architecture, no. 2 (Spring 1988), pp. 111-26. Rpt. in Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume. New York: Rizzoli, 1989, pp. 152-53.

\*Bédard, Jean-François, ed. Cities of Artificial Excavation: The Work of Peter Eisenman. Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, and Rizzoli International Publications, 1994.

### Week 11

\*Tschumi, Bernard. Cinégramme Folie: Le Parc de la Villette. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988. A significantly rewritten version of this essay appears in \*Tschumi, Bernard. Architecture and Disjunction. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994, pp. 191-213.

Tschumi, Bernard. "Six Concepts," in D 2. New York: Columbia University, 1992.

Reprinted in \*Architecture and Disjunction, pp. 227-59.

Derrida, Jacques. "Point de Folie--Maintenant l'Architecture, Bernard Tschumi: La Case Vide--La Villette, 1985." AA Files, no. 12 (Summer 1986), pp. 65-75.

### Recommended:

Martin, Louis. "Trans-Positions: On the Intellectual Origins of Tschumi's Architectural Theory." Assemblage 11 (April 1990), pp. 22-35.

\*Tschumi, Bernard. Events-Cities. Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press, 1994.

## Part VI Folding, Organicism, and Post-theory?

### Week 12

\*Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pp. 3-25, 501-14; recommended 149-66, 351-423.

\*Deleuze, Gilles. The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, pp. 3-14.

\*Eisenman, Peter. "Folding in Time: The Singularity of Rebstock," Folding in Time. Architectural Design (1993), pp. 23-35.

Lynn, Greg. "Architectural Curvilinearity: The Folded, the Pliant and the Supple in Architecture." Ibid.. Reprinted in Greg Lynn, Folds, Bodies and Blobs: Collected Essays.

Recommended:

Sub Stance, nos. 44/45, special issue devoted to Gilles Deleuze. Alice Jardine's article is especially interesting in its feminist critique.

Eisenman, Peter, "Visions Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media," Domus, no. 734 (January 1992), pp. 21-24.

Week 13

\*Lynn, Greg. "Animate Form." Animate Form. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999, pp. 9-41.

Knapp, Steven and Walter Benn Michael. "Against Theory." Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism. Ed. W.J.T. Mitchell. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985, pp. 11-30.

Ockman, Joan. "Theory without history is hubris. . ." Assemblage, no. 41, p. 61.

McLeod, Mary. "Theory and Practice." Ibid., p. 51.

Allen, Stan. "Pragmatism in Practice." unpublished manuscript. Pragmatism Conference, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fall 2000.

Recommended:

Baird, George. "'Criticality and Its Discontents.'" Harvard Design Magazine, no. 21 (Fall 2005/Winter 2005), pp. 16-21.

Martin, Reinhold. "Critical of What? Toward a Utopian Realism." Harvard Design Magazine, no. 22 (Fall 2005/Winter 2005), pp. 1-5; available on-line.

Somol, Robert. "12 Reasons to Get Back in Shape." In Koolhaas, Rem and OMA, eds. Content. Köhl: Taschen, 2004, pp. 86-67.

Somol, R[obert]. E. and Sarah Whiting. "Okay, Here's the Plan." Log, no. 5 (Spring/Summer 2005), pp. 5-7 and other articles.

Somol, R. "12 Reasons to Get Back in Shape." In Koolhaas, Rem and OMA, eds. Content (Cologne: Taschen, 2004).

Speaks, Michael. "After Theory," Architectural Record (June 2005), pp. 72-75.

Eagleton, Terry. After Theory. New York: Basic Books, 2003.

Assignment III: This last essay should be approximately 5-7 pages. An analytical critique of Wigley's book (either in comparison to the MOMA catalogue or not) or one of the assigned essays. The essay should, in some respect, deal with the social or political implications of the author's interpretation of poststructuralist currents of postmodernism.

or

A critique of notions of folding in architecture (may focus on one essay or building) relative to Deleuze's or Deleuze and Guattari's ideas. Here, one might address the issue of formalism relative to D. and G.'s social/cultural/ biological agenda.

or

A critical reflection on the last issue of Assemblage or The State of Architecture.

or

A critique of recent texts proposing post-theory in architecture (Somol, Whiting, Speaks) and/or the exchange between proponents and critics

Note: Students are free to adapt the proposed topics or write on another topic, as long as the essay addresses issues directly raised by the readings. Students should, however, consult with the professor about topics that are not listed above.