

# CULTURAL BASED PRECONCEPTIONS IN AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE OF ARCHITECTURE

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*On a broader scale, the aim of this paper is to examine theoretically the effects a cultural context has on the aesthetic experience of images existing in perceived reality. Minimalism in architecture, as direct subject of research, is a field of particularities in which we observe functioning of this correlation. Through the experiment with the similarity phenomenon, the paper follows specific manifestations of general formal principles and variability of meaning of minimalism in architecture in limited areas of cultural backgrounds of Serbia and Japan. The goal of the comparative analysis of the examples presented is to indicate the conditions that may lead to a possibly different aesthetic experience in two different cultural contexts. Attribution of different meanings to similar formal visual language of architecture raises questions concerning the system of values, which produces these meanings in their cultural and historical perspectives. The establishment of values can also be affected by preconceptions resulting from association of perceived similarities. Are the preconceptions in aesthetic reception of architecture conditionally affected by pragmatic needs, symbolic archetypes, cultural metaphors based on tradition or ideologically constructed dogmas? Confronting philosophical postulates of the Western and Eastern traditions with the transculturality theory of Wolfgang Iser, the answers may become more available.*

**Key words:** *similarity, minimalism, aesthetic experience, preconceptions, emptiness, transculturality.*

## INTRODUCTION

The starting point of this study is a conducted experiment - spatial installation in an underground passage underneath an overpass in Belgrade. The concept of the installation was developed on the basis of the idea of visual and material analogy to the existing apartment in the Japanese city of Oita. Transposition of physical spatial elements of the Japanese apartment is done by altering wall plastics and furniture disposition (pictures and chair designed by Arne Jacobsen) in the underground passage. The experiment produces a compositional identification of the Belgrade and Japanese sequences and for a short time simulates the change in function of the underground passage, virtually placing the apartment in it. Two represented images, two photographic sequences of interior space architecture make possible comparative analysis of perceptive qualities and aesthetic experience, based on similar formal visual aspects.

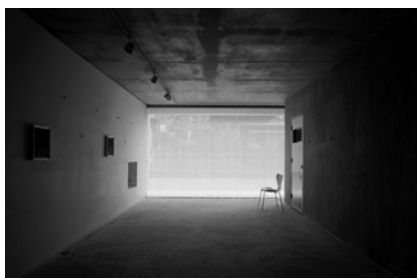


Fig. 1. Private home-gallery, Oita City, 2002., [http://www.shio-atl.com/work\\_06\\_ss.html](http://www.shio-atl.com/work_06_ss.html)



Fig. 2. Underground passage, Belgrade, 2010.,

Using elementary logical operations, the starting findings determine hypothetical postures:

(i) Rational dogmatism, assumption that our senses accurately inform us of reality and that what we see is what it really is, indicates similarity of the two sequences. If we treat architectural space as physical space, or pure represented space/ideal linear formation, according to Goldstein and Gelb (Cassirer, 1985: 213), similarity is shown through geometrical conceptualization of volumes.

(ii) If we concentrate on formal visual aspects, the sequences can be hypothetically classified within the concept of minimalism in architecture. The interior of the apartment is a specific architectural piece of *Takao Shiotsuka Atelier* authors, typical representatives of minimalism in Japanese architecture. Taking risk and arbitrariness of generalisation, the example of the underground passage interior can be, by means of analogy<sup>2</sup> with the Japanese example,

<sup>2</sup> When observing a work of art, we often do not know the name of the author and tendency or style it belongs to. In order to comprehend it, we can compare that work with some known work, similar to it. Probability of the right conclusion will be higher if the comparison is made with a typical representative of a certain tendency.

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unambiguously visually connected to the paradigm of minimalist architectural production. Japanese sequence represents a visual prototype<sup>3</sup> of characteristic type of minimalist form in architecture. Consciously separating ontological properties from the meaning carried, the notion of minimalism is for now exclusively treated as *aesthetic approach* (Vasiliski, 2010), accompanied by ideas of asceticism in architecture, simplicity, and formal reduction.

(iii) Having the knowledge of what the sequences represent, we can ascertain a different pragmatic manifestation (architectural function, practical value in use) of similar formal visual aspects existing in represented spaces, in two different cultures.

(iv) Common features and degree of similarity make the sequences interchangeable. They can be observed and treated as a single image, unique visual content, producing polysemous aesthetic experience in different cultural contexts.

## SIMILARITY

Michael Foucault notes constructive role of similarity predominant in the knowledge of the Western culture until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, following Aristotle who considered similarity a property which creates mental associations, a memory condition which connects the past with the present. According to Aristotle, every type of perception can cause grouping in terms of similarity. Foucault (1971) distinguishes between four types of similarity: *convinientia*, *aemulatio*, *analogia*, *antipatia*. In addition to the fact that it was a scientific condition for comparison, association, disassociation and classification, similarity was desirable in the Arts, as well. In mimetic painting, pieces looking more like what they represented were declared beautiful.

Noticing the existence of visual formations that can be perceived as two completely different objects, Joseph Jastrow indicated a special nature of the problem which is the subject of this text. It is an ambiguous shape, a drawing, which, depending on the side from which one observes it, represents either a duck or a rabbit. The occurrence of different interpretations of similar formal language, can also be called polysemy, transnotation, evocation, multiple reference, seeing as, etc. Elementary spatial context was attributed to the studied

phenomenon by Robert Morris by means of the sculpture *Untitled-L beams*. Morris represented three identical objects, which, taking different positions in space, provoked different perceptual values.

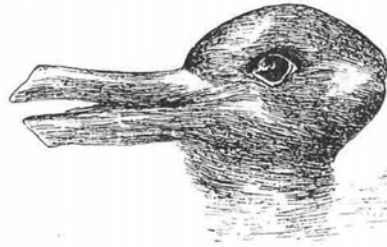


Fig. 3. Duck rabbit ambiguous shape from Jastrow, J. (1899) *The mind's eye*. *Popular Science Monthly*, No 54, pp. 299-312.

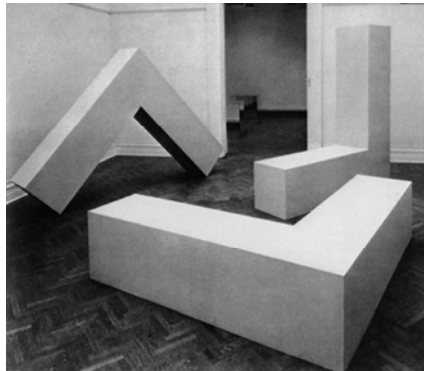


Fig. 4. Morris R. *Untitled- L beams* at the exhibition "Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculpture" (April 27 - June 12, 1966), <http://rsataiwan.blogspot.com/2010/04/3--beams-robert-morris-1965.html>

When we are in a position to perceive two or more similar phenomena, it questions not only our visual distinguishing, but aesthetic experience as well. Conflicting interpretations and evaluations expand their focus from ontological to gnoseological, semiotic and axiological aspects of relativism in aesthetics.

Aestheticians such as Nicolai Hartmann, Gerard Genette and Ivan Focht believe the act of reception directed towards an aesthetic object must correspond to the act of creation. However, it is clear that initial intentions by which the authors of the apartment and the underground passage installations communicate are totally opposite. Also, an intentional creative act of an author cannot be available to a recipient in every situation.

Considering similarity through the prism of originals and copies, attempting to determine authenticity and identity of a piece of art, Nelson Goodman introduces categories of autographic and alographic works. Autography comprises works that cannot be replicated, for

every difference between the original and the copy produces difference in identity, whilst when it comes to alographic works, this difference is irrelevant. In arts such as music and literature, performances and hard copies can be replicated in terms of scores or literary texts on the basis of Richard Wollheim's *type-token* logic model, while in painting that is not the case. The installation in the underground passage neither pretends to be a copy, nor to stand out as independent work of art, but to emphasise similarity with Japanese apartment, as the basis for further research.

Arthur C. Danto in ready-made context examines transforming factors which separate a work of art from an everyday object, when visually they cannot be distinguished one from another. He explains transfiguration as relocation of the product from one context to another, whereupon the act of dislocation leads towards the new meaning and sensory appearance of the product. On the example of Marcel Duchamp *Fontain* from the year 1917, Danto indicates that objects become different works, depending on their interpretation. Introducing the concept of *World of Art*, he distinguishes between the status and aesthetic value of a single object. That induced George Dickie's *Institutional Theory of Art*, in which he leaves the decision of whether something is a work of art to the institutions of the artistic world (critics, historians, curators).



Fig. 5. Andy Warhol in New York, 1964 with "Brillo Boxes",

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/aug/21/warhol-brillo-boxes-scandal-fraud>

For example, Andy Warhol's Brillo Box was created in 1964 with a different intention from the one of its original author – James Harvey three years earlier. In addition to the context of creation, these two objects of same physiognomy took on different status in the art world. Here Danto's thesis can establish a relation: specific living space/artistic installation similar to it, with no pretense of defining what is artistic in them or declaring the installation in the underground passage a ready-made work of art.

<sup>3</sup> Prototype as mental image, cognitive reference point, which allows, in comparison to itself in different contexts, recognizing what is typical or atypical for a determined category.

## MINIMALISM

To begin, we need to formulate a unique concept connecting architecture and minimalism. Historically speaking, the term minimalism in the context of arts was used for the first time by the critic David Burlyuk in the exhibition catalogue of John Graham in 1929. There he defined minimalism as reduction of image to a minimum of components in order to discover ultimate, logical outcome in the process of its abstraction. This notion reappears in the end of the 1950's and 1960's, in the texts of Wollheim<sup>4</sup> and Barbara Rose<sup>5</sup> and it refers to criticism of the then ongoing American post avant-garde abstract art. Beside the term *minimal art*, in this period the critics actualize the denominations: *primary structures*, *ABC art*, *negative art*, *literalism* and *nihilist art*.

In the early 1990's the notion *minimalism* often appears in architectural publications and exhibitions. In foreign literature we can find several terms which differ one from another both syntactically and in the word order. Those are the neologisms: *architecture of minimum* (Pawson, 1996), *architecture of minimalism*, (Cerver, 1997), *architectural minimalism* (Zabalbeascoa and Marcos, 2000) and *minimalist architecture* (Bertoni, 2002). Dragana Vasiliski is one of the few authors who are thoroughly engaged in these issues in our country. Therefore, in further course of this paper we will use the term *minimalism in architecture* (Vasiliski, 2008), established in her theoretical debates. We believe the original notion of *minimalism* in that way remains unaltered, whilst disciplinary identity of architecture is respected and prominent. The phenomenon of minimalism in architecture in Serbia is discussed by Slobodan Maldini. Maldini finds that it is not possible to follow minimalism in Serbia in its development form, rather only partially in certain authors' works. He alleges that this tendency has never been subject of research in Serbia, nor was it accepted by any establishment or group of architects. His observations are significant for the examination of the meaning and status this aesthetic approach adopts in Serbia.

All efforts to integrate the concept of minimalism in architecture into one theoretical frame have been based on analyses of common formal qualities of observed works. Within the catalogue of the exhibition *Less is More*, which took place in Barcelona in 1996,

curators Vittorio E Savi and Josep Maria Montaner gave a list of eight characteristics that can be found in the buildings pertaining to this trend. Those are: a taste for pared down, simple and traditional forms; geometric rigour; the ethics of repetition; technical precision combined with a love of matter; the search for unity and simplicity; a leap in scale; the formal predominance of structure; a pure expression that renounces historical expressive allusions (Prestinenya, 2008: 86). Zabalbeascoa and Marcos (2000: 18) also state general characteristics related to the concept of minimalism: geometric purity, technical precision, structural essentiality, repetition of elements and materials, abstraction and ornamental purification. These are the identical positions of various contemporary authors in the context of defining this phenomenon.

It seems that sober and pure forms ongoing nowadays and unified within the concept of minimalism in architecture do not derive directly from the concept of American minimal art whose name they share. In the works of architects, followers of the minimalist concept, one can notice the influence of architectural modern movement from the beginnings of the 20th century. Even though the modern movement is a complex phenomenon in its origins and development, a repertoire of its forms unambiguously corresponds to the minimalism which appeared afterwards. Many procedures, proposed and put in practice by the architects of the modern movement (Adolf Loss, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier) were also adopted by the minimalist artists from the 1960's and architects from the 1990's. This relation is based on architectural abstraction<sup>6</sup>, techniques of industrial production, literal use of materials and ornamental purity, which are the key features of the modern movement, as well. Common characteristics in ideology of modern architecture and American minimal art are not only of formal visual nature. In both cases renunciation of references denoting whichever notion outside of the work alone is emphasized. In the modern movement this is manifested through renunciation of historical references, as deviation from historic styles and establishment of a new – modern course. The difference somewhat making a gap between disciplinary concepts of minimalism is associated with the relation of form and

function. One piece – a sculpture, aspires to absolute abstraction and pure form, negating symbols and function. On the other hand, architectural work is defined by its function, without stylistic compromise.

## SELECTION AND ASSOCIATION, AND INFLUENCE ON TRANSFORMING VISUAL INFORMATION INTO CONCEPTS

The basis of this research is in perceptive analysis (which is an integral part of gnoseologic theories) of represented sequences. Ernst Cassirer studies relations of constitutive moments of cognition, emphasizing impossibility of existence of an isolated sensory conscience which, as independent fact, would keep out of a definition by means of theoretical functions of meaning. Cassirer relies on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's gradation *looking – observation – reflection – association* which indicates that with each closer look into the world, we are theorizing. Gombrich believes perceiving is interpreting by means of classification (Genette, 1996).

The juncture of intuitive and rational knowledge forms the set general knowledge in relation to which registered empirical data are selected and interpreted when perceived. Since each visual sensation is located in the context of time and space, what we see now is in part what we have seen in the past. Nevertheless, previous knowledge can contain preconceptions, dogmatic assumptions based on generally accepted ideas. Then again, a course of human thought comprehending the reality is selective and associative, and aesthetic experience is inseparable from the process of perception and interpretation.

Rudolf Arnheim links psychological aspect of research in visual arts and phenomenon of visual perception to Gestalt theory. Arnheim (1991) defines the beginning of perception process as the abstraction of prominent structural qualities, which determine the identity of perceived object as complete, integral formation, and common qualities of which concepts are formed. The concepts are equivalent to the model – mental image which reflects basic information on the phenomenon perceived. Mihailo Marković (1996) defines concept as figuration of identical elements of experience of different people under different circumstances, which are constantly related to one term. Therefore, having one concept supposes knowing how to use the term properly in different situations. For these reasons we don't observe and experimentally verify perceptions themselves, but linguistic

<sup>6</sup> Although the word minimalism was established later on, the concept comprised by this notion crystallised slowly through aspiration towards abstraction, present in almost all artistic tendencies from the beginning of 20th century (Russian avant-garde, especially suprematism of Kazimir Malevich, Dutch neoplasticism, German Bauhaus). For that reason roots of inspiration for the protagonists of American minimal art are connected to the cited tendencies.

<sup>4</sup> Wollheim, R. (1965) *Minimal Art*, Arts Magazine, January 1965, pp 26-32.

<sup>5</sup> Rose, B. (1969) *The Politics of Art*, Artforum, January 1969, pp 44-49.

forms expressing and denominating those perceptions, as well.

On the basis of Immanuel Kant's disinterested judgment we can state that judgment is aesthetical if referred to appearance of an object regardless of what the object really is. It is necessary to adopt a disinterested point of view and observe only form, not usefulness. In architecture it is not always easy to separate the aesthetic function from the practical one, because the first often results from the proper fulfillment of the second (Genette, 1996: 26). For aesthetic experience of architecture it's important to know what the work represents. Arnheim claims visual form of certain architectural style cannot be understood unless linked to its function, while Bernard Tschumi defines sensation of space by interaction of spaces and events happening in it. James J. Gibson believes objects are perceived in relation to their *affordance*<sup>7</sup>, what they enable us to do.

Architectural manifestation adopts nominal meaning in relation to the function, pragmatic value of the space it comprises, i.e. event that can happen in it. It is a denotative function expressed through linguistic form. Nevertheless, function of signification, which provides language with contents and character, is not always in compliance with the function of meaning, expressed in concepts. Empirical similarity is not the same as qualitative similarity.

If we analyze the term *underground passage*, it is hard to imagine the first association to be *living apartment*. But if we perceive the image of an *underground passage*, we can easily link it to the image of an *apartment*. The problem arises when one visual content, image, or sequence has two articulations, two meanings, i.e. two linguistic forms – terms denoting perception: *apartment* and *underground passage*. Perceived content of the Belgrade sequence can be linked to the form *underground passage*. Then, later, possibility of connection with the *apartment* becomes excluded, even though the two forms contain similar empirical content. Conceptual connection with experience in this case results unexpectedly. For someone who formulated certain aspects of the underground passage perception through that specific term, reiterated appearance of the same aspects using the term *living space* could be confusing. Both sequences can suddenly change their

form when we are informed of what they really represent, especially if they are represented in photographic medium.

Proper interpretation and sensation of ontic specificity of a work of art by elimination of association is hardly maintainable in case of architectural works. Arnheim (1991) notices that one architectural form looks different depending on whether we believe it can be lived in or not. In that way, material human needs and biological adaptation are first on the list of values forming state of spirit of an individual.

## PRECONCEPTIONS

Result of our logic experiment is the fact that concepts, which define something in one culture, are not the ones used for similar or identical image in another culture. Until now, it has been determined that pragmatic manifestation of certain formal visual aspects in a particular cultural background leads to preconceptions, when we come across them again, which significantly affects aesthetic experience. However, preconceptions are not always of pragmatic nature.

Carl Gustav Jung in his psychological analysis develops a theory of collective unconscious. He not only talks about personal reminiscence, but of manifestations of deeper levels of unconscious, carrying with themselves universally human, primordial images he designated as archetypes. Archetype is a kind of promptitude to always reproduce identical or similar mythical ideas. Tatjana Stratimirović defines experience of space as one of the most complex experiences to which people through history learned to attribute paradigmatic – a priori defined meanings. In her opinion, understanding of images we see is most often in significant degree conditioned by our total cultural experience, i.e. our collective conscience.

It is useful to expose how preconceptions give different meanings to architectural works of modern movement (here significant for representing formal precursor of the works of minimalism in architecture). From the caricature (Fig. 6) emphasising similarity of Adolf Loss building *Goldman and Salatch* built in 1911 and the manhole, we can read social-historical position of Vienna from those days and secessionist tradition as cultural metaphor causing unwillingness to accept achievements of modern movement in architecture. The example (Fig. 7) representing Bedouins and camels put ex post facto into the photograph of residential area *Weisenhoff* in Weimar built in 1927, indicate the way the form of this complex resembles the context of Middle East

rather than Germany. In a particular historical moment and general mobilisation in the quest for German national style in architecture, this preconception can be characterised as ideologically construed.

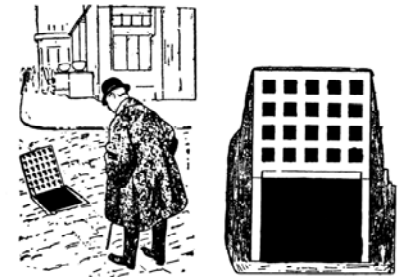


Fig. 6. Frampton K. (2004) *Moderna arhitektura, kritička istorija*. Beograd. OrionArt. p 91.



Fig. 7. <http://nseuropa.org/English/Art/art0.htm>

Regardless of in which line of meaning preconceptions act (practical value, ideological construction, cultural metaphor, or symbolic archetype), one thing they have in common is functioning by means of association through similarity. This paper emphasises similarity as a catalyst for associative course of mind which can create preconceptions.

Architectural discipline is part of a wider cultural discourse. Positioned that way, it operates as a sign in direct connection with cultural phenomena. Perceiving certain architecture, we can notice its belonging to certain background, tradition and way of thinking. People have a tendency to reject categorically the things they cannot understand. This is stressed in generally recognised, self-explanatory belief reigning our culture, specifically referring to the impossibility to interpret formal visual aspects of an underground passage as identical manifestation as a living space. Preconceptions do not emerge in response to form only, but to the way of its use as well. In Serbia, one would wonder how someone could live in such a space, which in their country manifests itself as an underground passage, since they are used to observe and interpret reality in their own culture in a certain way.

<sup>7</sup> For more information on this notion, see: Krampen, M. (1995): *Semiotics in Architecture and Industrial / Product Design*, in Margolin, V. and Buchanan, R. (eds.) *The Idea of Design - A Design Issues Reader*. London: The MIT Press. pp 89-103.; Korać, Ž. (1985) *Razvoj psihologije opažanja*. Beograd: Nolit. pp.155-166.

One-sided associations place our experience of an object in confrontation with familiar reality, in accordance with the everyday life experience.



Fig. 8. MVRDV roof housing  
<http://www.reinierdejong.com/2011/05/mvrdv-roof/>



Fig. 9. Roof housing, Beograd from Perović, M. (2003) *Srpska arhitektura XX veka, od istoricizma do drugog modernizma*. Beograd. Arhitektonski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu. p. 215.

Personal competence, whether institutional or defined by knowledge and assurance, is not the factor reducing susceptibility to preconceptions. Layman position is no different from the position of an expert – aesthetician if both transcend scientific postulates, entering limitations of their own cultural interpretations. Underlining introductory sentence of Hartmann Aesthetics: “Aesthetics is written neither for the creator, nor beholder of the beauty, but for the thinker to whom actions and behaviour of these two represent an enigma”, Sreten Petrović (1972) emphasises inclusion of the extra-theoretical into the process of thinking even when the thinker is not aware of it. Petrović considers these set of beliefs and standpoints ideology, controlling cognition, which can create preconceptions.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS - SERBIA AND JAPAN/ MANIFESTATION OF PICTORIAL ASPECTS OF MINIMALISM IN ARCHITECTURE

Different qualities of certain forms require for their way of existence and appearance to be studied through the relation of manifestations of minimalism in architecture in Serbia and Japan. In Belgrade, there are places and buildings belonging to the minimalism in architecture according to their formal visual aspects. However, these phenomena in our background are not recognised, accepted, and defined as such. For the most part it is friable, neglected and inconspicuous architecture represented by hovel facades, underground passages, and passages within the city blocks. On the other hand, similar sequences can be identified in Japan, where they represent typical examples of aesthetic figuration of formal characteristics of minimalism in architecture. Dualism in manifestation produces a situation in which a certain type of architectural form is ignored in one cultural background, while in another it is highly aesthetically appreciated.



Fig. 10. Rectangular shaped house with one opening, AH architects, Japan 2005  
<http://www.a-h-architects.com/photo/akb/akb.html>



Fig. 11. Rectangular shaped house with one opening, Hercegovačka street, Belgrade

If we comprehend tradition in architecture through the form and not the idea, considered formal visual aspects of minimalism in architecture can become symbols for the things expressing them (underground passages, ruins, hovels). There is an interchange of symbolic and pragmatic meaning. Formal visual aspects remain unexpressed, because of predominance of function, status, physical state and materialisation quality, which significantly influence aesthetic experience. Perhaps these are the reasons for minimalism not being used enough as approach to architectural articulation of living space in Serbia.

Because of that, selection of architecture in cultural backgrounds of Serbia and Japan represents potential for comparative analysis. They are backgrounds for which one could say they don't have common values. They are untouchable – limit points, not only in a sense of collective visual conscience, but in a sense of mentality, life philosophy and tradition, as well. Through the cultural spheres of Serbia and Japan we will examine two conceptual systems. The first is the Western (Europe and North America) thought formed on the basis of Greek rationalism and Judeo-Christian tradition. The second are original Japanese standpoints defined in relation to Chinese and Buddhist origins. Anthropological definitions of culture are not the subject of this study. The concept of culture is applied in terms of defining relatively autonomous and complex social entities and symbol, sign and signification systems, which are the same for one or more communities in their historical dimensions.

## EMPTINESS

Apart from simplicity and formal reduction, as aspects stylistically and typologically classified as starting sequences within the conceptual frame of minimalism in architecture, it's important to notice emptiness as constitutive potential of these sequences. After examining the way architectural forms manifest themselves, attitude towards emptiness is another significant criteria in comparative analysis of minimalism in Serbia and Japan. The notion of emptiness does not have universal character and, as value, it takes different places in philosophical postulates of Western and Eastern tradition.

Features of Japanese architecture that evoked most admiration are its aesthetic qualities, harmonious beauty, pure lines and simplicity (Bronen-Bauer, 2001) related to metaphysical Buddhist idea of emptiness. Japanese home traditionally includes a small number of furniture pieces. Visual silence is saturated with a sense of simplicity and emptiness. Empty space and the ideal of emptiness are of key importance in designing a Japanese home and its minimalist interior.



Pasqualotto (2007) states that in linguistic and Western philosophy codes, words and concepts *essence* and *empty* could not stand together, except as opposites. In ontological traditions from Aristotle onwards, essence always stood for the smallest and realest core of an entity, whilst emptiness in Western metaphysical tradition always pointed to something non-existent and contradictory (Pasqualotto, 2007). Pythagoreans used emptiness to refer to darkness in which souls of the dead reside, assimilating it with the term nothingness. In contemporary psychological analysis of influence of environment on development of children, Žarko Korać studies adequacy of uniformly white walls in rooms. He stresses that visual restriction in spatial ambience poor in stimuli is harmful to the development.

On the other hand, Pasqualotto notices strong connection between essence and emptiness in Eastern Buddhism, reaching the level of identification. Eastern dialectical thought treats emptiness as something impossible to imagine without connection to its complementary opposite – fullness. Emptiness cannot be manifested and cannot act without medium of the full. In order to experience fullness it is necessary that we understand emptiness as its integral part.

Attitude towards emptiness illustrates value-defined and culturally conditioned selective nature of perception – the subject of this essay. Ability to comprehend the necessity of emptiness in order to create anything represents supreme ideal according to Japanese understanding. Materialistically oriented Western culture interprets the ideal of emptiness as absence, or even poverty, of expression. The emptiness is treated as something the presence of which is easily noticeable, and overlooked.

Analogous to Wollheim's claim that all could not exist in every point in time (Danto, 1997), one could say that all could not exist in every place. The same as Duchamp's *Fontain* could not be accepted as art prior to 1917, perhaps formal visual aspects forming one minimalist architectural composition cannot be adequately used in every culture.

## TRANSCULTURALITY

Being accustomed to manifestation of certain architectural forms constitutes identity as the resource for psychological, social and ideological inclusion in cognition, while philosophical systems integrate relations of symbolic archetypes, tradition and dogmas in cultural frames.

In the aesthetic evaluation of reality the terms and meanings related to culture from which we come from and belong to were always used. Cultural identity determined by belonging, gained by birth,

was founded on traditional structures. The system of cultural values not finding references outside the local raises questions regarding ethics of this system.

Introducing the term transculturality, Welsch opposes former cultural frame in which the origin and belonging are the key elements of evaluating perceived reality. Application of transculturality liberates individuals from the obligation to develop cultural identity in local milieu thus increasing the possibility of choice between different identities, comprised of different values, behaviours and lifestyles. Affinity towards other cultures annuls selection between one's own and foreign culture.

## CONCLUSION

If we apply transculturality, a possibility opens to recognise aesthetic values in architectural work originating from another culture. This study does not treat foreign architecture specifically, but the existent one, similar to typical Japanese examples of formal conceptualisation of minimalism in architecture.

Recognising minimalism in architecture as different architectural concept can restructure our idea of world and affect overall mentality transformation, used to approach achievements of other cultures as incomprehensible and irrational. Inclination for the pragmatic use of different way of thinking allows common understanding and establishes communication.

Through the contact with different lifestyles arise not only differences, but possibilities for connection as well, and they can be developed and extended in order to form a lifestyle, including even reserves whose adoption never before could have been imagined (Welsch, 2001:82). Overcoming the incomprehensible from the point of our adopted habits creates potential to prevail over limited, defining monocultural positions.

Transcultural approach can liberate understanding of architecture from associative constraints. What we can learn from other cultures is not only the way certain things are done in architecture, rather we can conceive different possibilities of understanding the meaning of human life.

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