



## Translate Spaces: Heurist and Intersemiotic Approach on Architecture's Creative Process

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### Abstract

*This paper suggests a creative process' methodology approaching semiotics and heuristics studies, particularly in architecture. Understanding creative process as a forming-activity [formatività, it.] a concept coined by Luigi Pareyson (1918-1991) in the Aesthetics field, this approach can be amplified to every knowledge area because it puts creation in a non-normative place, conceptualizing thought in a perspective of discovery and invention. In the contemporary context, it's important to conceive architecture as a multiple system in which several languages, not always belonging to architecture's exclusive domain, allow the conformation of hybrid languages and introduce to other spatiality conceptions.*

*This "crossing borders" process as an intermedia concept finds a way in intersemiotic translation studies, especially developed by Julio Plaza (1938-2003) in the late 70s in Brazil. Plaza's theories state that the process of moving one language into another language modifies the system's structure and the work grows in quality (firstness, in Peirce's categories). The intersemiotic approach as a method allows a synchronic thought where there is no separation between seeing, reading and translating forms and objects. Therefore it reduces the gap between thinking and doing by stimulating students to reflect about their own learning process (perceptive knowledge). At the same time, this work perspective leads to a discussion about genius, talent and authorship in architecture towards an idea of constant experimentation in the making/doing process [operare, it.], freedom, autonomy and multiple possibilities to work with other media. This argument rests on a concept of architecture as a collaborative process between different disciplines and as an open field.*

### 1. Creative process in architecture: places to invent

This paper proposes a reflection on creative process in architecture from a discovery and invention's perspective. Therefore, this paper proposes a reflection on the insertion of creation into an architectonic dynamic movement in which learners would be capable of developing methods more conformed to their abilities and sensibilities as they experiment and reflect on their own processes.

As we support the creation process in architecture as being a wide field of experimentation that comprises many different languages and meanings, this leads us to the translator's thought. To investigate the translation processes in architectonic context widens the debate on multiple and hybrid methodologies as they give up the linear logic and turn to a reflex of the relational thought that passes through viewing, interpreting and translating simultaneously.

Based on the contexts and approaches presented in this paper, we intend to widen the debate on critique and creative potential of experimentation processes in architecture in order to reflect on their own methods. This makes one reflect on the autonomous thought development on architecture. Therefore, we reinforce the idea supported by the architect John Rejduk (1929-2000) that advocates as being necessary to take time in thought and experimentation processes. To understand the inseparability between this pair of thought and shape and of aesthetic and poetics opens room for architecture to mix with other languages, codes and channels of architectonic production, thus overcoming the idea of a static and functional space to a dynamic and diagrammatic approach.

### 2. Heuristic methods and the Formativity Theory

"Form is not only the final result but the entire process is the form."  
(CORDEIRO, Waldemar)

In scientific tradition the methodological issue refers to the course an individual takes through thought and formal actions in order to reach his desired result. This course is not always outlined by something pre-determined, being, in this way, vulnerable to issues that can arise and alter the way. Heuristics processes demand attention and availability to games of chance. For this reason, heuristic is a science that studies the methodology of discovery in order to understand the way of one's own thought, resorting to documents and records about those processes. In this way, it is a multiple methodology suitable to the contemporary mode of work.

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The Italian philosopher Luigi Pareyson (1918-1991) in his book *Estetica, Teoria della formatività* [1] observes the paradigm changing from contemplative art to the art of making, that, in his opinion, leads to an *aesthetic of production or formativity*. Thus, he assumes the concept of “form” as a live dynamic and autonomous organism that participates in the movement of a work production. For him, the idea of art as “making/doing” is different from art as a simple technique, as this fosters the investigation of compositive and constructive, as well as concrete and speculative character of the artistic activity simultaneously. This approach results in inseparability between experience and reflection. Therefore, the concept of forming-activity [*formatività, it.*] created by Pareyson makes the relation between invention and production inseparable, as “forming”, to the philosopher, means “making”, “*but in a way that when he is making he ‘invents the way of making it at the same time’*”. It means making without determining and imposing the way of making beforehand, in a way that it is sufficient to apply oneself to make it well: it is necessary to find him making and only if he makes it, it is possible to discover it” [2].

When Pareyson considers the artistic-making as a reflection object he underlines that the making-doing concept [*operare, it.*] of this theory acts as a regulation and guiding principle of the artistic experience at the same time that it opens a field of action possibilities that leads to what he defines as “ontology of freedom” [3]. For him, there are three aspects that affect and modify this process: *content, matter and rules*. *Content* refers to personal knowledge that the artist or the architect amasses during his entire life, his particular way of seeing the world and his personal approach. *Matter* refers to the physical matter that is, this way, inseparable from the plastic and technical ability of the individual that creates its transformation. As for the *rules*, the architecture is different from art because its rule system works within an institutionalized social code and, if that is lacking, communication is lost, whereas art universe is autonomous and based on individual rules. This does not mean that the architect cannot modify the rules; this paper intends to deal with this issue. However, it is necessary to be more careful with these new articulations so that architecture does not deviate of its social and public function.

Based on this approach, Pareyson defines two different terms that approximate to the translation process and act in a synchronic way: *formed* [*formata, it.*] and *forming* [*formante, it.*]. Both of them reveal two movements that are present in language philosophy, the first one is upward (paradigmatic) and seeks quality in thought as this is the result of meditation on our concrete experience; and the second one is downward (syntagmatic), since it uses these results to interpret experience and solve problems. Therefore, we conclude that all cognitive process emanates of an interpretation in which the relation between seeing, interpreting and representing creatively (translate) is closely linked to the concrete and speculative character that exists in the root of philosophical thought. Creation being a reflection of aesthetic nature always projects in order to increase and overcome the original and, in this way, translation processes, mainly the ones of semiotics nature, can contribute to this debate.

### 3. Intersemiotic translation

Intersemiotic translation concept was introduced for the first time by Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) and, due to the strong relation between linguistics and structuralist theory with the intellectual and artistic Brazilian production in the 60s [4] his work was widened to the visual arts field by the artist, professor and theorist Julio Plaza (1938-2003). Julio Plaza highlights in his book *Intersemiotic Translation* [5] the transforming characteristic of translation as being thought by signs and in which the attempt to overcome the original seeks to project as a difference by a new form, “*translation as practice, at once critical and creative in the historicity of means of production and re-production, as reading, as metacreation, as action over structures and events, as sign dialogue, as synthesis and rewriting of history. That is: as thought in signs, as passage among meanings, as transcreation of forms in historicity*” [6].

Again the relationship between aesthetics and poetics, thought and language manifests as inseparable and coordinated by simultaneous processes of selection and combination. Following Peirce’s triad [7], there are three aspects in languages: 1) its material quality that arises some feelings in a person; 2) its denotative application or connection with the real, in the case of architecture, the formal and material aspects of the object; 3) its representative function, that is, its correspondence with rules and systems of representation, as the graphic representation and laws. Thought in all virtuality of its concept holds the highest degree of quality because this is sheer feeling. However, adapting itself to laws and rules forces this thought transformed into object from the concrete world to lose quality. Based on these characteristics and understanding them by the principle of “dominance” [8], Julio Plaza defines three types of translation: one of iconic root (transcreation), one of index root (transposition) and one of symbolic root (transcoding).

Signs are in continuous movement passing from one level to another and leading to thought restructuring and concrete action. The challenging of a creative mind is to concretize the quality of thought into languages as they are the model of translation. According to Lucia Santaella [9], all



languages and signs processes are created by three basic logical matrices: the sonorous, the visual and the verbal ones (respectively, of iconic root, index and symbolic). Those basic matrices can be expanded through processes of combination and mixture into an infinity number of supports, means and channels in which languages are materialized and disseminated. The idea of web thought, hybridism, convergence, saturation, among other terms that exist in contemporarity are a reflex of those processes that work as propeller to an infinite expansion of languages.

Following this, as Intersemiotic Translation work with saturation of codes and channel changing it promotes a qualitative leap of the work by its own syntactic structure that leads to the discovery of new realities, according to Décio Pignatary, “*creating a new language is not only about another representation of realities or pre-existent contents into other languages, but also the creation of new realities, of new forms and contents.*” [10].

#### 4. Processes’ sketchbooks and the importance of experimentation in architecture

Referring to the translation processes as being new approaches and languages development possibilities, teaching architecture means to value students’ varied visions and proposals in their learning process. The sketchbooks would be, thus, a possibility for testing, organizing and reinterpreting ideias using multiple platforms and codes, as nowadays we do not speak only about paper sketchbooks but also about tablets and other digital multiplatform that mix text, image and sound. Following Michael Foucault, we would have process files working as a kind of experimental diagnostic without undefined time [11].

Developing a methodology of thought in progress linked to the production of sketchbooks would allow to understand the nature of links between languages and the learner’s sensitization to the development and awareness of personal abilities. This diagrammatic possibility of organizing thought is a frequent debate in architecture schools nowadays all over the world and this could lead to looser and more dynamic process of analysis, reflection and project. The sketchbook as a process platform would work as an architectonic thought diagrammatic method, thus generating multiple possibilities, activating spaces of imagination and allowing “another possible moment” in the architectonic production. Therefore, the translation idea, critique and analysis working simultaneously into those processes platforms would lead to other spatial ideias and would enhance student’s autonomy.

Supporting the architecture idea as a compounding, we could widen the field of action of the very own subject by transforming texts, films, art and multimedia works, among other hybrid narration, into objects that are the result of an architectonic creation. We do believe that the project intelligence is not only in its representative quality (symbolic), but also and mainly in its iconic quality that allows it to take a qualitative leap and to conceive architecture as an open field.

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