

Semiotic Dimensions of Architecture in the light of the Factors that influence Understanding and Interpretation of Meanings

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Abstract

This research discusses how meanings are transmitted through architecture and how they are received and understood by users. The importance of this study stems from the fact that buildings surround human beings all the time, and communicate with them on conscious and unconscious levels, causing a great impact on the way people perceive and interact with them. This consequently affect the efficiency of buildings in performing their functions and achieving their roles, in addition to its influence on the minds and feelings of inhabitants in the long term. The research depends on the ideas and contributions of philosophers and thinkers in the fields of semiotics (the study of signs and symbols) and hermeneutics (the branch of knowledge that deals with understanding and interpretation) to extract general basics and principles that can be applied to the field of architectural design by deductive reasoning to explore the different factors related to the issue of meaning in buildings. The research concludes several results, the most important among them is a proposed model for expression of meaning in architecture, which is a graphical representation of the various methods and techniques that can be used by architects to convey appropriate meanings through their designs. The research also proposes another graphical model to clarify how meanings are transmitted through buildings and the various factors that affect their formulation, understanding and interpretation. Finally, the research ends with a suggested methodology to analyze meanings conveyed by buildings for the purposes of criticism, evaluation, and development of architectural projects.

Keywords

Semiotics - Understanding and interpretation of meaning in architecture - Metaphor and symbolism in buildings - Architectural criticism - Design philosophy.