

AN INTERVIEW WITH G. BROADBENT ON MEANING IN ARCHITECTURE*

APRIL 19, 1980

**Editor's Note:*

-The Notes for this Interview have been prepared by the Editor with the assistance of S.Özkan and A.Yücel.
-The seminars Broadbent refers to in this Interview (unless otherwise specified) were held at the Faculty of Architecture, M.E.T.U. between April 10-19, 1980.

1. G. BROADBENT, *Creativity, The Design Method*, S. Gregory, ed., London: Butterworth, 1966, pp.111-119.

2. G. BROADBENT and A. WARD, eds. *Design Methods in Architecture*, London: Lund Humphries, 1969.

3. G. BROADBENT, *Design in Architecture*, New York: J. Wiley, 1973.

4. G. BROADBENT, C. JENCKS and D. BONT, *Signs, Symbols and Architecture*. London: J. Wiley, 1979.

JOURNAL:

When we observe the major points in the development of your interests and the areas of your contribution in architectural media you had a deep interest in psychology of creativity;¹ then, you became one of the pioneers in design methods;² following that you integrated methodology in the general context of the theory of design;³ later you concentrated mainly on semiology;⁴ and finally we hear that your forthcoming contributions will also include politics and ideology. What have been the major guiding motives in the development of your interests in the theory?

BROADBENT:

Well, I think I first became interested in theory as a result of being in architectural practice. I worked for a practice in Manchester, England and we did buildings for universities, for research laboratories and so on, in a kind of house style that was after Aalto, and when I look back at those buildings now I realise they were quite good. They have stood the test of time, they do not leak and people seem to like them quite a lot. But I thought there must be more to architecture than that. So, I looked around at what was going on in architecture world-wide and I realised that I could go and do Miesian office buildings or I could go and do Corbusier Brutalism; in Britain certainly I would have been encouraged to do prefabricated building systems of some kind. I didn't think any of those were good architecture, so probably, the best thing was to go into teaching and research, to try and think things through a little bit more deeply. I did that, I guess, around 1959; I went to Manchester University where I had been educated and one of my teachers had been Thornley, a pioneer of design methods

in Britain. He himself had gone into architectural practice, in fact to the same practice I was in, and increasingly he felt that the School was not really educating students properly for work in the office, so he tried to work out the first principles as to what one should do in making a design. He and Jones set up the first Conference on Design Methods in 1962.⁵

5. G. JONES and D. THORNLEY, eds. *A Conference on Design Methods*, Oxford: Pergamon, 1963.

Some of my colleagues at Manchester started teaching in that way but I was not too pleased with it. My own approach developed - when I look again at your question - out of influences from my parents. My mother was very concerned about people, about the psychology of human interactions. She read a great deal on the subject, whilst my father had an enormous range of interests. He had done painting, he had done photography, and there were lots of things he could do. I absorbed a great deal from both of them, and certainly my interest in the psychology of creativity developed from my mother's interests.

6. G. BROADBENT, *Creativity, The Design Method*, S. Gregory, ed., London: Butterworth, 1966, 111-119.

7. G. BROADBENT and A. WARD eds. *Design Methods in Architecture*. London: Lund Humphries, 1969.

8. G. BROADBENT, *Design in Architecture*, New York: J. Wiley, 1973.

Curiously enough, my elder son is reading psychology at University at the moment, so maybe it is something in the genes. So the very first contribution I ever made to any conference was about Creativity.⁶ But then there was the problem of trying to integrate that interest in Creativity with what was emerging in Design Methods at the time. Ward set up our Conference at Portsmouth in 1967 which became the first book on *Design Methods in Architecture*.⁷ That started the discussion, as far as I was concerned and that has continued ever since. The book on *Design in Architecture*⁸ which you mentioned is a record of my thinking up to about 1971. My interests in semiology arose in quite an interesting way. Bonta from Buenos Aires came to do research with us in Portsmouth into Design Methods. In Buenos Aires at the time there was already a flourishing school of semioticians with Janello, Gandelonas and various other people. Bonta was not really part of that, but when he came to Portsmouth from Buenos Aires he began to realise that this was the kind of work he wanted to do. So he started working on semiotics and convinced me that there was a great deal for architects to learn from it. About that time, also I gave a talk at the Architectural Association on another great interest of mine: the integration of science, art and architecture. Jencks heard it and he asked me to contribute to the book he was editing on *Meaning in Architecture*.⁹ I said, "I do not know anything at all about semiology, what is it, you tell me?" And he said, "That is no problem; if you read Barthes' *Elements of Semiology*¹⁰ and Saussure,¹¹ between them they contain all you need to know." So I read them, made some notes, and then wrote my piece for Jencks' book. I showed him my notes and he said, "That is interesting because no one actually has summarised semiology for the book; so we will publish your notes as part of your contribution." And, that is what happened. As for those other interests you mentioned, such as politics and ideology, it would be true to say that in the past I was not very interested in these subjects; they seemed to me very abstract, particularly as interpreted in the West. But I am trying

9. C. JENCKS and G. BAIRD, eds. *Meaning in Architecture*, London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1969.

10. R. BARTHES, *Elements of Semiology*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1967.

11. F. de SAUSSURE, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. W. Baskin, New York: McGraw Hill, 1966(1959).

12. K.R. POPPER, *Conjectures and Refutations*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969(1963).

13. T.S. KUHN, *The Architecture of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1970.

14. Forthcoming.

15. Interesting enough is the foot-note of the introductory essay by F. Choay to the book published by éditions du Seuil in 1969: *Le sens de la ville*, (which reproduces partly the French translations of the articles edited by Jencks and Baird in *Meaning in Architecture*). In this post-scriptum note Choay affirms her new option for a semiology in terms of "a language about the city", instead of the earlier and pure "language of the city". More clear is her position in the middle 70's when she begins to attest to be "a contre-courant". For this "post Castellefels" attitude, see her talks with Bruno Vayssière: "Le chant du signe - entretien avec Françoise Choay," in *Architecture Mouvement Continuité*, n.36, 1975. In this former development, Choay seems more interested in history than in semiotics for the discovery of the meaning in the built environment. (Attitude which raises interesting issues about synchrony/diachrony etc. again.)

16. See the interview of Vayssière with Guattari in the same issue of *Architecture Mouvement Continuité*: "Alléluia - entretien avec Félix Guattari," *AMC* n.36, 1975. This text raises the very fundamental issue about the political dimensions of the semiological research.

to finish off a book at the moment, an extension of the argument from *Design in Architecture*. For that book I had been looking at the philosophy of science, at Popper,¹² Kuhn¹³ and so on. In fact the title of this book is taken from Kuhn: I call it *The Nature of Architectural Revolutions*. But I was conscious for some years that in the middle of it there was a gap and the clue of course was there all the time in the title. If I were going to do a book about "revolutions" then there had to be something about politics in the book. The feedback from lectures and discussions in various places, especially in the Latin world, convinced me that I should do that. So I decided to write one chapter about the relationship of architecture to politics, but it became twenty chapters, a whole separate book which I call *The Architecture of Politics*, which has been summarised in *Architectural Design* in September 1979. So at the moment I'm taking that manuscript and reducing it down to the length of about two chapters to put it into the *Revolutions* book.¹⁴ So that is the progression of my interests so far.

The other thing I would like to say is that whilst things have to be published in sequence, my interests have been simultaneous. Apart from that political interest, I've been concerned for many years about art, science, philosophy, psychology, their relationships to architecture and their inter-reactions. I can remember thinking quite seriously, about the time I arrived in Portsmouth. I could write a book about art, science and architecture, I could write one on Design Methods. Which should I start with? You could see by the Conferences that had been set up and things that people were talking about, that design methods were an emerging interest, so I started with the *Design Methods* book. So, that is how it all happened.

JOURNAL:

We all know that there have been vast changes in attitudes among people involved in design methods in which the approaches have been radically changed in about twenty years' experience. Some of the pioneers of "exact methods" in architectural design have resigned and almost left the subject. Do you think the same phenomenon can be expected in the field of architectural semiology? We already have some examples as the new *prise de position* of a Choay¹⁵ or Guattari¹⁶ for instance. What do you think about this type of development?

BROADBENT:

I would say it is a psychological matter. Anyone who thinks that all design problems can be solved by exact methods obviously is taking an extreme attitude. People who take an extreme position on something like that are bound to get disillusioned with it, because it doesn't work. But being the kinds of people they are, they have to take an extreme position over something, so they take one in the opposite direction. This happens in politics and certainly happens in fields like design methods. The pioneers you mentioned who have made a great show of

17. G. BROADBENT, *Design in Architecture*, New York: J. Wiley, 1973.

resigning are people like Alexander, Jones and so on. Alexander says, for instance, that he thinks the whole thing was a terrible mistake and that all design methods did was to put people exactly in the frame of mind where they could not design anything. He then went on to say that the only way to develop design theory is to go out and make buildings. Well, he did that using devices I described in *Design in Architecture* which I called pragmatic design, analogic design and so on.¹⁷ In spite of himself he is still using design methods -in my terms- but perhaps not in his terms. There is a little bit more to it than that. There is another school of thought that says design methods were popular for a while, then the interest faded away. That is not true either, because, as I look around in various places I see widespread applications. The most dramatic of all is Disneyworld in Florida. What happened there is that people who had been working on the rocket programme at Cape Canaveral were made redundant. Once you have designed your rocket systems you do not have to keep redesigning them, or at least, you do not need so many people. About the same time Disney was thinking about doing the Florida Disneyworld and he bought their services in terms of deciding where to locate the site itself, how to buy the land, how to lay out the site, what to do about the ecological problems, how to design the transportation system, servicing systems, the queueing system, all those things. What they did was to apply exactly the techniques they had been in rocketry to the design of the built environment. The result of all that is the most sophisticated piece of urban design anywhere in the world, in terms of the working systems. The reason why people have not recognised it as such is because they expect, if you talk about methods and so on, that what will come out is simple, dull, rectangular buildings. The fact is that the reverse is true. If you really apply design methods properly, you get really interesting buildings.

Not long ago when we invited the City Architect of Portsmouth to come to talk to our first year students on the second day into their architectural careers they asked him to tell them just what it is like to be an architect and he brought along work from his office, all very good in quality and also drawings from the drawing boards, analytical diagrams, briefing documents and so on. The talk he gave to our first year students was almost exactly the kind of talk I would give to our second year students about Design Methods. In other words, Design Methods have been assimilated. Quite a few of the people working in that office have been through my school of architecture, we taught them design methods, they took them into the office and they are part of their regular office practice. It is true of Portsmouth City, of Hampshire County, of many other offices up and down the country. So what has happened to Design Methods is that they have got emerged with general practices of architecture and of architectural education, which is exactly what should have happened.

18. G. BROADBENT, C. JENCKS and D. BUNT, *Signs, Symbols and Architecture*, London: J. Wiley, 1979.

19. F. de SAUSSURE, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. W. Baskin, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966. For the Turkish edition: *Genel Dilbilim Dersleri I, II*, çev. B. Vardar, Ankara: TDK, 1978. Yet, the best modern commented edition of the "courses" is the de MAURO edition: F. de MAURO, *Cours de Linguistique Générale, édition Critique Préparée par Tullio de Mauro*, Paris: Payot, 1976.

20. C. HEARTSHORNE and P. WEISS, eds.; 8 vols.; *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974.

There are no dramatic conferences on the subject these days because we do not need them. You do not have to keep re-introducing a subject that has been assimilated so thoroughly. But it is still interesting, from time to time, to review progress in the field, so every two or three years it is nice to have a little get-together where people compare notes as to what has happened. But still there are those who say they have given up Design Methods, that they never really worked, that they never really existed, so it is hardly surprising that some people should be saying similar things about semiology. The first review I read of the book we published recently on *Signs, Symbols and Architecture*¹⁸ said: "What a pity that Broadbent, Bunt and Jencks have missed the boat. This is a subject that was fashionable about five years ago but nobody talks about it any more." I found that very strange, of course, because you had invited me to Turkey to talk about it; there was the first American Conference on the subject at San Antonio in Texas in that very same week and another is to follow in October. World-wide these days the most popular subject, I find in terms of the lectures I'm asked to give is semiology. The people you have mentioned like Choay and Guattari adopted a very particular position in the field and found out, rather like the extremists in design methods, that it did not work. So they too think that this whole field is a failure. Choay for instance, was very much part of that series of intellectual movements that converged in France after the war. To be French and to be intellectual after the war, first of all one had to be an Existentialist, then a Marxist, and finally a Structuralist.

Structuralism drew on only a tiny part of what Saussure introduced in his *Course in General Linguistics*:¹⁹ about one eighth of the whole book, Saussure was describing relationships between the words in terms of the part they play in the construction of a sentence. He called this their "syntagmatic function" concerned, that is, with the part they play and the way each word "reminds" us of other words which he calls their "associative" function. It was such a good idea that Strauss, Barthes, many other people -including Choay- could develop that enormous intellectual edifice of Structuralism out of it. But it is a very limited view. They took only one-eighth of what one of the two founding fathers of the subject had to say (the other was Peirce²⁰). So it is hardly surprising that after 30 years or so, that particular vein seems to be (temporarily) exhausted. But rather than withdraw from the field I think it will be very much more constructive for them to explore the rest of it, to find how very rich it can be. As for Guattari, I think his recantation really came after the Milan Congress of the International Association of Semiotic Studies in 1976. In that case, the inevitable happened. For the first time ever, six hundred semioticians got together, they came from thirty different fields, including architecture certainly, painting, sculpture, music, film, psychiatry, psychology, mathematics and so on. It was very exciting, the idea of having so many people from different disciplines brought

together by a common approach. I could talk to a psychiatrist, even though I know very little about psychiatry, because we were using the same intellectual framework. There were quite a few architects present, enough for there to be three architectural sessions, but it became very clear, shortly after the start, that there was going to be a linguistic split. Some of the French like Hammad obviously enjoyed their dialogue with the Anglo-Saxons, but many of the others did not. They believed that the French position was correct, everybody else therefore was wrong - it simply was not worth discussing things with us. That linguistic split, I believe accounts for Guattari's disillusionment.

21. For the Proceedings of the Castelldefels symposium see: T. LLORENS, ed., *Arquitectura, historia y teoría de los signos*, Barcelona: La Gaya Ciencia, 1974.

22. See the special issue of *AMC on Architectural Semiotics and the Milan Congress: Architecture Mouvement continuité*, n.36, 1975. The shortened Proceedings of the Congress are published by Mouton: The Hague, 1979.

JOURNAL:

We think it's the right time to talk about the-state-of-the-art in the subject. Will you please make an outline of the actual panorama of architectural semiology? The main area of interest, different orientations, the basic themes of discussion etc. especially after the two major congresses: Castelldefels²¹ and Milan.²²

BROADBENT:

Well, the Castelldefels Conference was set up in an extraordinary way. I met Llorens a lawyer, philosopher and aesthetician by education at a Conference in Madrid on computer-aided design. We discovered we had a common interest in this whole area of meaning in architecture. We held a meeting at 10 o'clock one night outside the programme of the conference and something like 100 people turned up. We simply described our interests in the subject and asked if people would be interested in a further conference on the subject of meaning in architecture. They said they would and that's how Castelldefels got going. Llorens got the Colegio di Arquitectura in Barcelona to find the money; we discussed who the speakers should be, including Eisenman, Krampen and Bonta. There were Spanish Architects like Bohigas and the philosopher de Ventos, not to mention several people from Britain including Jencks, Colquhoun and myself.

And it really was an interesting exploration of the subject. For instance, Eisenman and I were put into the same part of the programme, because in the titles of our papers we had both used the words "deep structures." Eisenman described his own work, based, as he said, on Chomsky as he'd done several times in the journals, whereas I was trying to explore the kinds of deep structures that could exist behind architecture. Well, the Castelldefels symposium was published shortly afterwards in Spanish and Jencks, Bunt and I included several papers from it on our *Signs, Symbols and Architecture*.

The Milan conference was rather different; that was the first major conference of the International Association for Semiotic Studies, motivated very much by Eco. He attracted something like 600 people in something like 30 fields, from cinema to psychiatry. One crucial contribution was made by the grand old man of the subject,

Jacobsen, who said that the time had come for semiotic to be taken a stage further, beyond linguistic analysis, that other fields of study should be brought in to see what could be learned from them. He said he had in mind one particular field and some of us thought he was going to say "architecture" but he said "music" instead. I love music and it is an interesting field, but architecture seems to me so much richer in the way it "carries" meanings to all the senses. The congress ended with several resolutions. One was that the subject area itself should be called "semiotic" and not semiology which, of course, did not please the French very much. Another was that the orientation should shift towards Peirce and away from Saussure, whilst the third one was that we should take these other areas as Jacobsen had suggested and feed back from them what they had to contribute into the field. Since the Milan congress a number of people have worked in that spirit, taking Peirce as the source rather than Saussure and taking other areas of interest, certainly including architecture, to see what they could feed back into general semiotic.

There was a further conference last year in Vienna, five years after Milan, but of a slightly different kind. The organisers decided that Milan was too much of a splitting between subjects: architecture sessions, music sessions, film sessions, and so on. So they tried very hard to mix everybody up; you found yourself sitting in the session with a musician speaking for half an hour, then a historian, an architect, a linguist and so on. But while that was going on five other architects were speaking in five different rooms, and, of course, we all wanted to hear each other. So we announced an architecture session, again quite outside the programme and something like 50 people turned up, so at least we exchanged addresses. But there were also a series of general threads: one, for instance, was a whole day devoted to Peirce which included some very serious work that had been done in the five years since Milan. Another, to which I contributed, was on semiotics and ideology. That was interesting because it included a whole range of subjects from advertising to politics, of course, including architecture. Of course, it is difficult to pick out from 600 people those who are doing the most interesting work, especially when you could only hear a few of them. But the fact is that a great deal is going on in various places. One or two new people emerged at Vienna in the field of architectural semiotics, such as Preziosi from Cornell who had two books on the subject which he had just published.²³ And, of course, there were the familiar faces, Hammad from Paris, Widowsen from Cincinnati coming together and comparing notes once more.

23. D. PREZIOSI, *The Semiotics of the Built Environment*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978; and D. PREZIOSI, *Architecture, Language and Meaning*, The Hague: Mouton, 1979.

JOURNAL:

Despite some valuable Anglo-Saxon contributions such as the works of Baird, Jencks and yourself, there is a very strong Latin accent in the development of the theory -or theories- on architectural semiology. Most of the contributors are Italian, Spanish and French scholars.

Obviously, all three countries have very influential background on the present architectural theory. And their approaches are radically different than what we have been experiencing in Anglo-Saxon media. Will you please comment on the differences of approaches?

BROADBENT:

Oh those differences! I'd put it this way: The French got locked in their Marxist-Existentialist mode with its right/wrong, good/bad two-value logic approach. So naturally Saussure appealed to them with his two-value logic: language and speech, synchronic and diachronic linguistics, syntagmatic and associative relations within his diachronic dimensions. I think that he would have been appalled at the way they took one of his two dimensions - the synchronic one (concerned with the structure of a language at a particular moment in time) whilst ignoring his diachronic dimension (concerned with changes over time) and fabricated the whole of Structuralism from it. He'd have been appalled also at the way that within this single dimension they stressed his syntagmatic relations (concerned with the ways in which words are related in the structure or syntax of a sentence) whilst playing down his associative ones (concerned with the ways in which each word "reminds" us of others, by meanings, associations or whatever).

It's hardly surprising that these fragments of Saussure taken and used in isolation, resulted in a "discipline" which has run out of steam. But imagine what might happen if you take the whole of Saussure and cross it with those parts of Peirce which have emerged so far from the quarry. For reading Peirce is quarrying ideas. You have to work at it and it would be impossible for a single person to quarry it all in a life time. But there are a lot of people extracting various bits and what's emerged so far has proved to be very fruitful. So if you take Peirce and Saussure, recognise they were both working out of language, which in itself has many limitations, but recognise also that there are people now in these other fields such as architecture, discovering other aspects of semiotic which Peirce and Saussure could not even have known about, then the concept they both had, in their different ways of a general theory of sign is proving to be a very powerful one.

JOURNAL:

We would like to hear more about the differences. Do you think different theoretical approaches and orientations have their basis on different linguistic schools, or they be explained by the personal differentiation of the people involved: architect or non-architect, intellectual and cultural traditions according to nationality and so on. One can mention many names: Koenig,²⁴ Eco,²⁵ Scalvini,²⁶ Gandelonas,²⁷ Krampen,²⁸ Panerai,²⁹ Jencks,³⁰ Bense,³¹ Choay,³² yourself and many others.

24. The pioneering ideas of G.Klaus-Koenig are first exposed in his *Analisi del linguaggio architettonico*, Firenze, 1964. For the development of his theoretical approach, see: *Architettura e comunicazione*, Firenze: Fiorentina, 1970.

25. Among various and well known works of U.Eco, see particularly his two main publications: *La struttura assente* (1968) and *Le Forme del contenuto* (1971), both published by Bompiani: Milan.

26. The best example of the work of K.L. Scalvini is her latest book: *L'architettura come semiotica connotativa*, Milano: Bompiani, 1975.

27. Two articles of M.Gandelonas are consulted; On reading architecture, (with D.Morton) appeared in *Progressive Architecture*, n.3, pp.68-88, 1972, and *Critical Remarks on Semiology and Architecture best*: (with D.Agrest), published in *Semiotica*, v.9, n.3, 1973.

28. The last book of M.Krampen illustrates his approach best: *M.KRAMPEN, Meaning in the Urban Environment*, London: Pion, 1979.

29. For the best examples of the theoretical principles and methodology of Panerai and the Groupe Syntaxe, see: J.CASTEX et Ph. PANERAI, *Structure de l'espace architectural, Notes Méthodologiques en architecture et en urbanisme*, n.3-4, 1972, and J.CASTEX, J.C.DÉPAULX et Ph. PANERAI (Groupe Syntaxe), *Essai sur les structures syntaxiques de l'espace architectural, Notes Méthodologiques en architecture et en urbanisme*, n.7, 1978.

30. One can mention his two articles: *Semiology and Architecture*, published in *Meaning in Architecture*, eds. C.Jencks and G.Baird, London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1969; and *The Architectural Sign*, published in *Signs, Symbols and Architecture*, eds. G.Broadbent, R.Bunt and C.Jencks, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980, as his largest theoretical texts.

31. For M.Bense on design, see: M.BENSE, *Zeichen und Design*, Baden-Baden: Agis, 1971, and M.Bense, *Sémiotique, esthétique et design* (text presented to Milan Congress), in: *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, n.178, pp.107-113, 1975. However, it is worth mentioning his basic *Aesthetica* series (I to IV), Krefeld, 1954/1960.

32. For the work of F.Choay, see footnote 15; and also her article *Notes préliminaires a une sémiologie du discours sur la ville, Notes Méthodologiques en Architecture et en Urbanisme*, n.3-4, 1972.

BROADBENT:

The best way to describe fundamental differences I always think is in philosophical terms. I still find that 18th Century split between Rationalism and Empiricism to be highly relevant in describing present-day splits. We even have architects these days - such as Rossi, the Kriers or whatever who actually *call* themselves Rationalists and we certainly have others who *think* empirically, such as Moore, Stern, the Venturis. The Rationalists from Descartes onwards have believed that the sources of all our knowledge lie deep down inside ourselves that we *know* what is true, from first principles, from which we develop, by logical deductive methods, the whole of our structure of truth. Shape and Colour are true, the most relevant examples for architecture which Descartes gives of course are the basic geometric forms. According to Descartes, we don't have to have seen a triangle to recognise the existence of three-sided figures, and once we know that such figures can exist, we can imagine 4 sided figures, 5 sided, 6 sided, a whole range of different kinds of figures and we can do the same thing for 3-dimensional forms. There has been a direct connection, historically between the philosophy of rationalism and rationalism in architecture, especially in that French tradition represented by Boullée, Ledoux and so on,³³ who literally worked out from Descartes a programme for geometric architecture, using the sphere, the cone, the cylinder, the cube, that kind of thing. The English developments of the time were quite different in kind, based as they were on the philosophy of empiricism which, of course, is concerned with human senses. The Empiricist holds that the basis of our experience lies in the things we see, the things we hear, the things we receive information about through the inputs to our various senses. We then begin to think about them, to order them, to associate them in our minds and that -for the Empiricist- is how knowledge grows. It was out of this philosophy that the aesthetics of empiricism developed leading towards what is generally called the picturesque in British architectural theory, designed quite specifically to give pleasure to the eye, pleasure to the sense of hearing, pleasure to the sense of smell. The First built examples were the great landscape gardens like Stourhead, I think that although you cannot typecast everyone like that, (we have after all, our Norman Fosters,) but in a very general sense the Anglo-Saxons are still Empiricists, whilst the French, the Italians and the Luxemburgers are still Rationalists. The Spanish look at both of us and draw from us what they want. So the Spanish seem to be nicely eclectic about these things. And that's perhaps why some of the Spanish developments are particularly interesting. If we take two of the major divisions of 'Semiotics' as we have been discussing them at the Seminars: pragmatics and semantics, then it is hardly surprising that the major research into the pragmatics of meaning, in other words, the application of empirical psychology into the area, has been done by Anglo-Saxons, the British and the Americans particularly whilst the major contributions to syntax - in terms of

33. E. KAUFMANN, *Architecture in the Age of Reason*, New York: Dover, 1955.

developing and analysing the abstract structures of architecture - have been done by the French and the Italians, with a few Anglo-Saxons like Hillier. But then he is a two-value Marxist. The major developments in the semantics of semiotics I guess have been done in a rather non-theoretical way by Americans like Moore, Stern, Venturi. My own view is that we need all these approaches and what's best of all is when we talk to each other and compare ideas.

So, the differences are a conjunction of all these two things. There are the linguistic traditions, linguistic schools, Peirce and Saussure we have talked about, there are others as well, of course. Also there are personalities and cultural traditions. I have said a bit already about the differences between the Anglo-Saxons tradition and the French-based tradition. So when you take all the permutations of the linguistic traditions, the philosophical traditions and personality types as well, then I think you have the differences you are exploring in your question. You can put together the Italians for instance Koenig, de Fusco and Scalvini. There are certain similarities in the things they do and certain differences as well. But they are more like each other than they are like Krampen or Bense, for instance. Panerai is one of the people who has been doing the kind of syntactic work you would expect the French to do whilst Choay has been doing linguistic analyses of texts about cities. Jencks is very much an American pragmatist, he takes little bits and pieces of the terminology from Saussure and Peirce and uses them for his own purposes in a very interesting way. He is not at all concerned with French logic, for instance. So I think it is a combination of personality and tradition that leads to the differences you mentioned.

As for the fundamental difference between those who take a theoretical approach and those who take an empirical approach, that seems to me important, I have just written a paper about it, "A Semiotic Programme for Architectural Psychology". What I am arguing is that nowhere in the literature of the empirical approach can I find a coherent discussion of theory in environmental psychology. Lee has approached it on several occasions, Bechtel has approached it on several occasions, but they draw together for the flimsiest things and call them theories. So what I'm doing in that paper is to try and establish with some rigour what a theory actually is. For me the fundamental theories are those from astronomy, physics, chemistry that deal with inanimate matter. Popper agrees with that, I guess, and Kuhn. That is what they take as the *paradigm* of a theory. So one of the points I'm making is this: if we observe planets in action and plot their courses, record them, develop concepts as to how they move, with ways of predicting what they will do next, that is theory building in the strictest of scientific senses. A theory of that sort gives you two things: it gives you a description of how a part of the world works - or part of

the universe - and it also gives you very great powers of prediction. That is why we can send rockets to the moon and to Mars, Venus and so on, because our models of how the planets move, and our calculations of where they are going to be in the future, are so exact that, literally, you can arrange for your rocket to pass Mars at a certain distance, in two years time. That's real theory.

The more you move from that towards observing animate objects, the more difficult it is. You put your rats into your maze as a psychologist and you cannot predict the rats' behaviour, or anything like that, with the same precision. Also the fact of putting a little rat into a box or a maze is going to change the rat's behaviour. It's not normal rat behaviour at all. And the same thing is true for people. When you put them into an experimental situation, or even when you observe them, if people know you are watching them, their behaviour is going to change. Even attempts to do rigorous scientific research of human physiology have similar problems. One of the key examples is lighting research, for instance, where because of different cultural standards, because of different experimental situations, the lighting requirements established by various countries in the last twenty years or so, were incredibly different, with the United States suggesting much higher levels than any other country, and the Soviet Union suggesting much lower levels than most other countries. But if you cannot even get accurate theories on physiological issues, how can you expect to get accurate theories on psychological issues, sociological issues? I don't think you can. There is a further problem: even if you could, once you've written down your theory on human behaviour, people will read it, it will influence them, they will either react with it or against it and their behaviour will change. That's a fundamental difference from the theories about planetary motion, how the atom works, how the planets work and that kind of thing.

As for architecture, you're even further removed from the possibility of real theory. The built environment is the result of human action. You cannot develop a theory of how architecture should be with powers to predict what architecture will be like in the future. It is logically impossible. So the basis of my argument in the paper I mentioned is that you cannot have theories of truly scientific kind in any of the human sciences. So why not accept the fact that the conceptual structures are the best things we can have. That is a genuinely scientific approach. In other words, the various descriptions through history of how the planets worked have become increasingly precise. But, according to Popper, we will never get to the truth: our "theory" will always need some modification in the future. Popper's view, as I am sure you know, is that you put forward your theory, you then test it and you try to destroy it, and if you cannot destroy it, you keep it for a while until a better theory comes along. My view is that we do the same thing with

human behaviour and human response. It seems to me that semiotics and semiology between them offer us many interesting constructs as to how human beings work in the areas of meaning and symbolism. They have not been refuted so far, so we might as well keep them. And I am suggesting if only the psychologists and the sociologists would relax a little and use structures of this kind, they would not get so hung up on being "truly" scientific, and the kind of thing that emerges when they are trying to be like that. I have certainly experienced it in the EDRA Conferences for instance, I can remember one fairly heated interchange in which Bechtel, I think, accused us architects of having an "edifice complex": he thought that buildings were not very interesting, not compared with empirical work on how people behave. But for reasons I have just mentioned, I think there are very strong limits to the usefulness of empirical work on human beings. They teach us a few things, but not all that much, which is why I like Morris's division of the field into pragmatics, syntactics, semantics. Given that pragmatics represent only one part of the field, and that empirical work only represents a fragment of pragmatics, the architectural psychologists can tell us certain things but even they do not make any sense unless they are related to the other areas.

34. M. BENSE, *Zeichen und Design*, Baden-Baden: Agis, 1971.

35. M. Kiemle is well known with his doctoral dissertation: *Aesthetische Probleme der Architektur unter dem Aspekt der Informationsästhetik*, Quickborn bei Hamburg: Verlag Schnelle, 1967, which reflects the continuation of the Birkhoffian methodology.

36. For the general analysis of this line of research and discourse, see: P. PANERAI, "Typologies," Paris: Corda (revised by the author and translated by A. Yücel, published in Turkish in *Çevre* n.3, 1979; and also the Turkish text by A. YÜCEL, *Mekan okuma aracı olarak tipolojik çözümleme, Çevre, yapı ve Tasarım*, ed. H. Puitar, Ankara: Çembil, 1979.

37. M. REBECCHINI, *Il fondamento tipologico dell'architettura*, Roma: Bulzoni, 1978.

38. G. CANIGGIA, *Strutture dello spazio antropico*, Firenze: Uniedit, 1976; and also the recent book by the same author, *Composizione architettonica e tipologia edilizia*, Padova: Marsilio, 1979.

JOURNAL:

Although no book collects all the material on orientations and approaches, one can observe that some important subjects are left out in the book you have recently edited, i.e. *Signs, Symbols and Architecture*. We would mention specifically the works of some, mostly German scholars like Bense³⁴ or Kiemle³⁵ on informational aesthetics and all the Italian discourse on typological and morphological analysis: the Muratorian or Rossian discourse followed by Aymonino,³⁶ Rebecchini,³⁷ Caniggia³⁸ and others. Do you consider they are in some way out of the subject, or have you other more practical and simpler reasons for the omission of these people from your book?

BROADBENT:

Well, first of all, I think you've got to have boundaries somewhere, otherwise every book is going to become an *Encyclopedia Britannica* only bigger and we wanted to concentrate on semiotic approaches to architecture. Obviously information-theory based aesthetics is a related subject, so are the writings on typology, written by the Italian Rationalists, but actually they aren't semiotics. But the history of the book is probably the explanation. It really started over lunch one day at the Milan Semiotics Congress when Jencks, I and other people were comparing ideas. We said would it not be a bad idea if we could publish another collection of papers to show those who knew Jencks' *Meaning in Architecture* of 1969 that the field has developed since then. Some decided to get some of the classic European texts that had not been published in English, by people like Eco for instance. Also we ought to take the most relevant material from the two major Congresses that had been held so far, Castelfelfels

and Milan. We decided that the book should be grouped into various sections. If we were doing it again, I'd use Morris's division of the field into Pragmatics (the effects that Sign-systems have on the people who use them) Syntactics (the "grammatical" structures of sign-systems) and Semantics (what most people think of as "meaning"). We very much wanted a section on Syntax, or in your terms, the morphological approach, actually we approached various people at the Congress and asked them for papers in this area; also people in London like Hillier, they all said yes, super idea. But none of that material arrived, so really there is a section missing from that book. However, the publishers are very pleased with the way it has come together and already there is a second collection with the printers called *Meaning and Behaviour in the Built Environment* edited by Llorens, Bunt and me which concentrates rather more on the empirical approach. Several of the classic papers in that area are going to be in the book and also the essay I have mentioned called, "A Semiotic Programme for Architectural Psychology". The publishers are pleased with the way this book is coming together and they have already asked us to do a third one. So, Bunt and I have been having discussions with Preziosi on the content of that third volume.

So your question has drawn my attention to some people we should consider for that third volume. There might even be a fourth one after that!

JOURNAL:

One trend in architectural semiology is quite well known in Turkey, and it is due to the fact that the main figure of this approach to architectural semiology, Krampen, has lectured in a Turkish university. You know his empirical approach about recognition of buildings' functions, visual preferences, etc. Do you think it is a new and sophisticated form of approach such as "form follows function" or a good way of speaking about the "transparency of the form" in more semiological terms? What importance do you attribute to that kind of more psychologically founded approaches within a theory mostly based on structural linguistics?

BROADBENT:

I first met Krampen at the Castelldefels conference where he presented his paper on Type-Token Ratios where he looks at facades, counts the number of windows and the number of window types, and then works out an index of complexity. Since then he has expanded that work in some interesting directions, including the characterisation of architecture as used for political expression. In particular, he and some of his students have been trying to establish - empirically - what people identify as the architecture of Adolf Hitler. This comes, of course, within the pragmatic dimension. It is a valuable contribution but like all pragmatic approaches and, in fact, like all three approaches, it is not enough on its own. It needs to be expanded and compared with

conclusions one draws from the syntactic approach and also the semantic approach. In other words, Krampen is trying to do a kind of pragmatic-semantics and that is a nice idea. I am not sure what you mean in your question by asking if this is a more sophisticated form of "form follows function". Can you elaborate on that?

JOURNAL:

Actually what is meant is that there is more of an architecture speaking for its own *architecture parlante*³⁹ where every building, function or use reflects itself in concrete form which is semantically appropriate for the particular function.

BROADBENT:

Architecture parlante - in the French 18th century sense - is an architecture of visual semiology, where the building looks like or expresses the function it serves. I am not sure that Krampen is actually measuring that because, in a sense, it does not need measuring. If a building looks like a piano, or Venturi's famous duck, then of course that is *architecture parlante* of a rather naive kind. I suppose you could measure how many people see it as a duck (100%?), the degree of "duckness" that it contains, and so on, but I don't see that as connected to Krampen's approach.

But still one thing that intrigues me very much - I mentioned during the seminars - is the relation of meaning to "functionalism". The villas of the 1920s as built by Mies, Le Corbusier and so on were described as "machines for living in," as the "architecture of the machine age." The top deck of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye looks like the top deck of an Atlantic liner. He, Taut and others, published pictures of ships to show parallels with their architecture. In that case, they wanted their architecture to look as if it had the efficiency of machines. A building looks like a ship; a ship is a kind of machine; so a building which looks like a machine, must therefore be efficient, which, of course, is absolute non-sense. On the contrary, these attempts to make buildings look efficient, and Mies is the extreme example, are some of the worst buildings in history in terms of actual performance: thermal and acoustic comfort, fit of space to activities, maintenance costs and so on. But they are most efficient symbols of certain 1920s' attitudes.

There are architects still who are trying to work in that way. Take the Centre Beaubourg in Paris for instance, that is *architecture parlante* of a highly contrived kind. Piano and Rogers wanted to express the fact that you move up the building by building escalators on the exterior, which makes them difficult to use; they also wanted to express the fact again that the building has services by sticking pipes on the outside, which of course is a stupid place to put them - think of the maintenance! Happold, the structural engineer on that project, tells me the main structure is good for about 400 years; the secondary structure of the floor beams is good for about 200

³⁹ E. KAUFMANN, *Architecture in the Age of Reason*, New York: Dover, 1955.

years; and the pipes will drop off in twenty. He is wrong about that, because they are dropping off already. The whole reason for developing semiotics is to get people to think more deeply about these things. Rodgers actually said: "We put the components of the building together as you put the words together in a sentence," which suggests he's read a bit of semiotics. But he then went on to argue that just as in the Middle Ages, architects expressed the structure of their buildings by showing columns, the arches, the buttresses, and so on, because 20th century buildings are heavily serviced, you have to express the services; which, if I may say so, is a complete semiotic non-sequitur.

Of course, you could elaborate Krampen's semiotic approach - or Bense's informational one - to look more deeply into such things as complexity, diversity and richness. It is intriguing, to find that Venturi for instance uses the same words: complexity, contradiction and ambiguity. What Krampen is doing is trying to find devices for measuring these characteristics. I have never heard him comment on Venturi; I suspect he might like his complexities! But if you apply Krampen's Type-Token ratio⁴⁰ say to the Beaubourg, then of course you find enormous complexity. Perhaps that's the secret of its appeal. It is making decoration out of "functional" elements, and therefore making them less functional. But, millions of people, obviously, find that complexity more appealing than the plain glass Miesian box.

But I'd like to comment further on this relationship between theory and practice.

Architectural developments, "territory," is occupied, in my view, by a kind of two-pronged attack. Renaissance architects like Alberti and Palladio built buildings and wrote books; and that on the whole has been how things were ever since. The great 19th century theorists built their buildings, wrote their books; people like Viollet-le-Duc for instance, even Ruksin had some involvement in buildings in addition to writing about them. This whole thing exploded in the 20th century: Le Corbusier wrote an enormous number of books, Wright and Gropius wrote quite a few, Mies wrote very little apart from short aphorisms, but he got Johnson to do the writing for him. The Modern Movement itself developed by this two-pronged attack and the literature of semiology is one prong in the attack which is taking place to occupy some further architectural territory. The books explain what the buildings are about, whilst the buildings demonstrate the "theories" contained in the books.

If people do funny buildings, like Venturi does, quite in isolation, people just think he is being stupid. If he explains them in a book, they think that perhaps he had reasons after all for doing them. If someone else writes a more theoretical book, arguing that the whole concept of meaning in architecture is interesting and important,

40. For the deeper understanding of the type-token ratio concept applied to architectural semiology, see: M. KRAMPEN, *Meaning in the Urban Environment*, London: Pion, 1979, pp.245-318, and K.L. SCALVINI, *L'architettura come semiotica connotativa*, Milano: Bompiani, 1975, pp.44-48.

41. J.N.COOK and H.KLOTZ, *Conversations with Architects*, New York: Praeger, 1973.

then that helps put Venturi into a context and helps other people to take him more seriously than otherwise they might have done. Venturi himself says that. In an interview he gave to Cook and Klotz for their *Conversation With Architects*,⁴¹ he says that he had been reading the work of some English semioticians (*Meaning in Architecture*) and found it was telling him things about his own approach that even he had not realised. From his own pragmatic point of view he was finding that "theory" supported him.

If theory and practice are coming together in this way, then we can relax about some things. Even five years ago, any student who tried deliberately to design buildings with meaning would have been heavily criticised by his tutors. But those tutors now are well aware that world-wide people are talking about this subject, writing books about it, having conferences, and so, even if they are not personally familiar with the material, they can't be quite so dismissive of the intention. It's a further aspect of the way in which practice makes theory more acceptable at the same time as practice leads into and enriches theory. This will all help us to develop the architectural component of semiotics and semiology and to help it expand away from the dominance of literature.

JOURNAL:

If we want to come to more practical implications of the theory, what influence or impact can the discourse on architectural semiology have, first on architectural education and then on the quality of our future environment?

BROADBENT:

On the quality of future environment, I have no doubt at all that this interest in semiotics is going to make it more humane, more interesting, more exciting, richer, more complex, more ambiguous. That is really what most people, I guess, are looking for these days as a relief from the grey, rigid tedium of so much recent architecture. In fact, one of the reasons why this whole approach has been developing is because there has been too much of the simple, plain, cubic, rectangular architecture. A little bit of that in every city is fine; it gives us contrast; but whole cities of it are so tedious. It's the same problem as London had in the 1840s when Pugin was trying to introduce Gothic revival. He said, "London is so boring, it is full of all those Georgian terraces, we need variety and contrast, let us have some Gothic." A great deal of Georgian London has been destroyed and we think what is left is beautiful; in fact we now want to preserve it all. But I can see Pugin's point, when it was all like that it must have been very boring.

JOURNAL:

In this frame of reference, and relating to the preceding question, what is your appreciation about the works of an Eisenman or a Venturi which seem to be derived from some syntactic or semantic concerns and which are totally different from each other? Also, do you think their links with the apparently inherent theory (or theories) are well-established?

BROADBENT:

You are quite right to describe Eisenman as related to the syntactic dimension and Venturi to the semantic. I am very glad that work is going on in those areas. On the whole I do not very much like the houses which result from Eisenman's approach. House VI, for instance, is actually hostile to human comfort and convenience because the abstract geometry literally gets in the way of the functions of human living. There's even a column that serves no structural purpose, but Eisenman needed it for his geometry. So it comes down from the ceiling, not quite touching the floor, in the only decent place for the dining table! But architectural history needs such extremes as reference points for the rest of us. So just as I'm glad that Farnsworth commissioned and paid for that appalling Mies house, so I am glad Eisenman's clients are prepared to pay for his architectural experiments. But Eisenman misses a fundamental point. He wants to make an architecture of "pure" syntax, with no semantic component at all, the kind of neutral, non-expressive architecture that Tafuri writes about. Which, of course, is quite impossible. For just as you can't put words together semantically without meaning *something*, so you can't put forms together either without their being fraught with meaning which is why Eisenman's houses whatever he says, insist on "looking like" International Villas of the 20s.

Eisenman says he derives his ideas from his reading of Chomsky. Of course, he misunderstands, but that does not worry me at all. Misunderstandings can be just as fruitful as understandings. The Cubists, for instance, talked about relativity but they got it wrong, which helped Cubism to develop as a most interesting form of art. I think the same thing is happening with Eisenman and his applications of Chomsky.

Venturi, in his rather intuitive way, has developed concepts which come very close to Saussure, although he does not use Saussurean terminology. But his buildings are signs in the Saussurean sense; sometimes they have that arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified which concerned Saussure so much.

Other people, like Stern and Moore, have taken this approach even further and they certainly are getting more interesting buildings from it.

What interests me about all these people is, first of all, that they design deliberately with meanings and whilst they would not claim to have read all the theory, they tackle in their buildings some of the most difficult problems that theory raises. It's marvellous when theory and practice raise similar problems, which suggests that these are of fundamental importance.

JOURNAL:

Coming back to your recent interest on ideology in participation or of the Choay's one which argues for the need of investigating into sociology or also the left-wing oriented investigations of a Lagopoulos for example, is an a-historical, a-political, and a non-engaged "prise de position" of the pure structuralist approach compatible with socially, culturally and politically goal oriented interpretations? In other words, how can the symbiosis of syntactics and semantics be realised?

BROADBENT:

We are talking about two things: political engagement, and the social, economic or other pressures which actually affect what people do. On the one hand there are the things that actually got done: what was built, what was designed; who commissioned it, who built it, who paid for it, and so on. And on the other hand, there are the ways we look at things.

One of Popper's great criticisms of Marxism, which I agree with, is that as a theory it is all embracing, you can use it to "explain" anything.

There is no denying that, on the whole, the buildings we call architecture, have been built by the powerful, the élite, the exploiters, the bourgeoisie, for the purposes of symbolising their power. That was certainly true of the Egyptian Pharaohs, the Greek politicians like Pericles, the Roman Emperors, the Byzantine and Romanesque Emperors, Bishops, and so on, your Sultans, the Renaissance Princes, our 18th century gentlemen. It was certainly true of our 19th century Capitalists, who built factories, ware-houses, shops, worker housing and the houses they built for themselves. It is equally true of their 20th century equivalents who have Miesian towers on the island of Manhattan and Eisenman, Meier, Moore, Stern or Venturi houses for their week-end retreats. But it is also true of those grey bureaucracies which build filing-cabinet housing "for" the workers of Moscow, Warsaw, Bucharest or Peking. Those who claim to hold different political views build equally sterile housing "for" the workers of Hong-Kong or Singapore. In fact no political system has a monopoly of such housing, for you find the same thing in our so-called "social democracies" around London, or Paris, Stockholm or Copenhagen.

The "people", left to themselves, would never dream of building such things. Indeed the architecture which we tend to call "vernacular" has usually been built by the

people for their own use. It is the true proletarian architecture. And so I find it quite useful to draw Marx's distinction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and to apply these concepts into architecture. Marx himself was on the point of defining some further classes when he lay down his pen leaving Capital unfinished, and these other classes, too, have their architecture. But all kinds of concepts from Marx the division of labour, surplus value and so on, certainly have their uses in the analysis of architecture.

The cult figure in this field is Tafuri. Tafuri seems to think that all these things started with the Industrial Revolution, but I should have thought that the pyramid-builders knew a great deal about the division of labour! Tafuri seems to think that the Industrial Revolution took away from architecture all power to symbolise anything. He argues in one of his essays that the development of the city has been distorted in the last 100 years or so by the rise of capitalist values. For instance, the multi-national corporations are welcome everywhere because of the revenue they bring. So they are allowed to disregard the city's zoning laws and build their factories, their office buildings exactly where they please. I find it incredibly naive that he should think this a 20th century phenomenon. It certainly shows his ignorance of how civilisation developed in history, or rather prehistory; Turkey is rich in examples. Çatalhöyük shows exactly those things he complains of as phenomena of the last 200 years: the stratification of society, dominance by a power élite, the division of labour, private ownership of the means of production. Why, there are even trinkets, obviously used by a leisured class.

It was just the same in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, the Nile valley, the Indus valley. Someone designed the irrigation systems, organised the labour to build them and therefore gained despotic powers of a kind we would find horrific today. Civilisation literally couldn't have started without entrepreneurship, the division of labour, exploitation, and so on. Thus were the irrigation systems developed, the productivity of the land increased, allowing for large concentrations of population, the beginnings of trading, the production of consumer goods and so on. The first capitalists emerged and they have been with us ever since; without them we would still be aboriginals.

Civilisation started that way, has continued that way and always will; no other system has ever been known to work on anything but the tiniest scale. Human beings can live in the kind of peaceful, collaborative symbiosis that Marx dreamed about, and they do in Kibbutzim, Chinese village communes, and so on. But it does not, and cannot work at urban scale, and certainly not at the scale of a state. The village commune and the Kibbutz obviously can build their own vernacular, at the scale of individual houses, or even assembly buildings. But for anything

bigger in scale it is still the rich and powerful who commission architecture and I guess it always will be. Any competent architect ought to be able to serve the needs of an individual client; the real problems occur when the proletariat are herded together in large masses of building called apartments, flats, housing, or whatever that is into "architecture". Then the real tensions arise between the people and the architectural profession. It started in the middle of the 19th century; it has continued ever since. Marxism is supposed to free man from the tyranny of the machine, from the alienation and the reification which arise from his being treated as a "unit of production" in a factory. So I find it vastly intriguing that the socialist countries, most particularly the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, even Mao's China have "solved" their housing problems with grey, factory-produced concrete-slab housing. You alienate your worker by turning him into a "unit of production" in the factory, then reify him by treating him as a "unit to be housed" in such a block. Marx would have turned in his grave. Conversely, the country which symbolises capitalist exploitation, the United States, has hardly done any housing of that kind. The "free market economy" encourages people to build for themselves; it even is reflected in things like building construction. You can design and nail together a house for yourself in the United States in a way that is easier than any other part of the world, apart from which you call the *Gecekondu* and others call *favelas*, *ranchos*, *kampungs*, or whatever. I find it supremely ironical that my Marxist friends all seem to think it essential that, to encourage them to build in this way, the shanty-dwellers should be given the most capitalist thing of all, that is the ownership of "their" land!

So given the extraordinary confusion of their ideas, it hardly surprises me that so many of those who immediately after the war committed themselves to a left wing, Marxist view have now become extremely disillusioned. I can well understand that people who came to maturity in the years of Adolf Hitler, Mussolini or even Franco should react with some conviction against the bureaucratized horrors of the Fascist police state; and I can also understand that in the Latin world to say "I am Marxist" really means "anti-Fascist". But I am extremely critical of what Jencks calls the *Lamborghini* Marxist of Italy or someone like Barthes, a *flanneur* in Baudelaire's terms, who disported himself in the *salons* of Paris whilst calling himself a Marxist. I despise the hypocrisy of it and Marx himself, I am sure, would have been greatly saddened by those who have turned his warm concern for humanity into an abstract, sterile and aggressive exercise requiring the redesign of people so that they will fit into a logically perfect society.

JOURNAL:

A question which is interesting, here, in our national context in Turkey: Do you think semiology can help us for the betterment of our environment in means of its

systematic critique or its some further methodological implications on design? What can these implications be related to the quality and meaning of the new environment apparently created by architects but mostly determined by capitalism and speculation on land? And on the other hand what can it be for the problems related to the conservation of existing environment (architectural heritage and so on) which is full of meanings?

BROADBENT:

You'll have gathered that in my view you don't actually get architecture - or even civilisation - unless it's motivated by some kind of entrepreneurial spirit, but entrepreneurs by definition, are liable to abuse their privileges. I think a lot of things - including city development, the design process, conservation and semiotics - are put into context by a Karl Popper model of how it all works, as a matter of *Conjectures and Refutations*. Someone, anyone, proposes to do something then others give them good reasons why they shouldn't. So only the good ideas get through whilst the bad ones are blocked on the way. I still find it useful to apply four basic texts - Hillier's "four function model" to any problem of buildings: does it contain the right number, size and arrangement of rooms to house and agreed range of activities on that site? Is it effective as a "filter" of the physical environment in thermal, acoustic and (day) lighting terms? Is the symbolism appropriate and properly legible? Can we expect an appropriate economic performance in terms of land costs, running costs, maintenance costs? And sometimes I like to add a fifth question: Given that it is bound to have some impact on the environment, will that be a positive enhancement? If someone shows me a building proposition from an individual *gecekondu* to say, a high-rise office block for the city centre, I'd test it against these five points. If it survives, then I'd let it go ahead *whoever was making the proposal*, whether it be an individual *gecekondu* builder, a political party concerned with *gecekondu* development *whatever their political complexities*, the Government, a Turkish capitalist, a multi-national corporation, or even the CIA. I'd apply those tests to *any new building proposal within the context also of conservation*. From that point of view, the existing is the "norm" and you'll have to convince me that your new building is so much better in all the ways I have mentioned that you *should* be given the privilege of building new. I suggested recently in an article for the RIBA that architecture will become more like dentistry: a good dentist conserves one's existing teeth until they get past the point of being any use. Then he does some extractions and gives you false ones instead, I think it's the same with cities.

JOURNAL:

A final question: Does any of your ideas about a subject such as architectural semiology change after visiting a different cultural environment? A new country? A new architecture? Do you attribute new meanings to them? Has your visit to Turkey, for example, added something new to your formulations about architectural semiology?

BROADBENT:

There are two aspects to that. One, is seeing a new physical environment. In other words, to arrive in a city like Istanbul is a tremendous thrill, something I've wanted to do for years. As a student, I had to draw the plan of Hagia Sophia to pass an examination. Going to that place twenty years after really was a moving experience. I simply hadn't realised, from drawings and photographs, just how big it was and, when you see the real thing, you begin to think much more about how old it is, what it meant to the people who built it, what it has meant to hundreds of generations since, and so on. And because of its particular features, you also begin to think new thoughts about the relationship of structure to space, space to reflect, to think out again what it is that makes such a building Architecture.

I began to have further thoughts about design process, semiotic and so on. Take the design process, for instance. I guess Hagia Sophia started as a much enlarged version of an established type, developed pragmatically in the first place. I know it collapsed several times and was re-constructed several times and if that is not pragmatic design then I do not know what is. And to see that by the addition of *mihrab*, a *mimber*, some minarets, or whatever you converted a Christian church into a mosque, you changed the meaning of that building from one thing to another, by the addition of just a few features which, compared with the grandeur of the concept as a whole were almost insignificant. Then, of course, there are the Ottoman mosques which in terms of overall form, although certainly not in detail, obviously repeat the type of Hagia Sophia although Sinan's Selimiye and Süleymaniye obviously are much better integrated than Hagia Sophia itself. And the mosque as a type obviously symbolises Islam although your mosques are different from other people's. I'd seen mosques in Marakesch, Cairo, Jeddah and so on but now I could add a new kind of mosque. So what are the qualities of "mosqueness" that make such different buildings all recognisable as actually being mosques? Obviously I was testing my own semiotic concepts, against these new building forms to see if they still worked. I'm glad to say that they did.

Then, at the level of "proletarian" architecture there was the vernacular of Istanbul, the wooden houses and so on. Same kind of thing. I tested these against the things I always test buildings against: How are they as living accommodation? How are they environmentally? What do they symbolise? What are their economic implications? But of course the vernacular changes from street to street. Same thing happened when we came to Ankara, obviously a different kind of city. Going up to the Citadel, for instance, I learned many more things about the semiotic interpretations of the vernacular. Seeing the *gecekondu* at a distance, I made another kind of comparison. I've seen lots of shanty town housing in South America, around the Caribbean, in India, south-east Asia and so on. In comparison with these, *gecekondu* are

amazingly sophisticated; so sound and so firm compared to their equivalents in the milder climates of the places I've mentioned. Of course, they share certain problems - services like water, sewage, electricity, etc; obviously these are world-wide. But their construction is quite a different matter. I wonder what it is about the Turkish economic situation, about the repetition of the typology, about the people themselves which make the *gecekondus* so sophisticated. This raises semiotic issues. Then there's the point that the different parts of the *gecekondus* are developed by, and affiliated to, different political parties. That also happens in Chile, but not in some of the other places I've mentioned. Why, or why not?

Then, of course, there was Cappadocia: incomparable, unique and extremely interesting from a semiotic point of view - not to mention the social, political, religious, economic and aesthetic points of view. My guide-book tells me that one particular cave is a refectory. There is a table carved into the stone and seats carved around it with, at one end, a special seat for the Abbot. How far is that a semiotic interpretation and how far is it based on historical record? I think the interpretation is correct. There is a table, there are seats. In the next room there are some cooking devices and a blackened ceiling, suggesting that fire had been used. It must have been a kitchen, so the bigger room must have been some kind of refectory. You can do all this with semiotics, indices, for the forms carved in stone indicate what they were for. You don't need any written record to tell what those places were hundreds of years ago, nor can you do any empirical surveys of the users - they are all dead - but you *still* know what went on by semiotic analysis.

The other great joy, of course, is meeting people. That certainly was a great pleasure on this trip. In Istanbul we saw some familiar faces and some unfamiliar faces. We learned a great deal about the Turkish educational system; how tough it is, for instance, to get promotion. We got up to date with our old friends, and met a number of others who will be our friends next time we go. And the same thing happened in Ankara. Again, I recognised some six or eight faces from previous encounters on previous happy occasions. As for the seminars themselves, I cannot think of any other place in the world where I have discussed such a range of issues in quite such depth, for such a sustained period, with so many different kinds of people. I was amazed at the variety of people at METU and at the way they all contributed in so many different ways. That was tremendously rewarding. Having dissected semiotics into its various components, pragmatics, syntactics and semantics, the exploration in the seminar was very profound and I came away having been forced by them all to think about things in a way which has greatly enriched my ideas.

G.BROADBENT İLE BİR SÖYLEŞİ

ÖZET

Geoffrey Broadbent mimarlık ve tasarım kuramının önemli çağdaş kişilerinden biri. Kuramsal akademik çevreye 1965 yılında mimarlıkta yaratıcılığın ruhbilimi ile giren Broadbent, geçtiğimiz 15 yıl süresinde önce sınırlı olarak "tasarım yöntemleri" sonra daha genel ölçekte "mimarlıkta tasarım" konularına eğildi ve bu konularda seçkin yapıtlar verdi. Son yıllarda Broadbent'in "göstergebilim" konularına odaklaştığını izlemekteyiz. Mimarlıkta göstergebilime 1969'dan bu yana katkıda bulunan Broadbent, söyleşide bu konudaki düşüncelerini açıklamaktadır.

Büro kılıfında genellikle sivri uçlardan kaçan bir meslek yaşamı sürecinde "iyi mimarlığın arayışı" içinde olduğunu belirten Broadbent, bu arayış sonucu kendini kuramsal çalışmalar ortamında bulduğunu ve böylece büyüyen bir ilgi ile konuya katkılarda bulunduğunu belirtmekte; değişen ilgi ve katkı alanlarının evrimini anlatmaktadır. Böylece, Broadbent yaratıcılığın ruhbilimi ile başlayan ilginin nasıl "politika ve mimarlık" ortamına geldiğini anlatmakta ve gelişen katkı ortamı içinde eğildiği konuların amaçlandığından daha kapsamlı ürünlere dönüştüğünden söz etmektedir.

Tasarım yöntemlerinin uygulamalarına değinen Broadbent, bu alanın sanılanın tersine soğuk anlamlı çevreler yerine daha iyi işleyen, değişik çevreler yaratabileceğinden ve bunun uygulamalarından söz etmektedir. Uluslararası ortamda göstergebilim alanında yapılan çalışmalar ve toplantılar hakkındaki görüşlerini açıklayarak, yerel dilbilim alanından mimarlık göstergebiliminin nasıl oluştuğunu anlatmakta ve özellikle Milano ve Castelldefels toplantılarını tartışmaktadır. Onsekizinci yüzyılın "konuşan mimarlık" (*architecture parlante*) kavramı üzerindeki görüşlerini göstergebilim açısından açıklayan Broadbent, bu kavramı bir dizi çağdaş mimarlık yapıtı ile sergilemektedir. Broadbent mimarlık ve politika üzerindeki görüşlerini sunduktan sonra konuyu son Türkiye yolculuğu içinde izlediği mimarlık ürünleri ile örneklemektedir.