Temporal Landmarks of Space

Elena Abrudan

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Introduction

SPACE BEING the place of our memory,[1] the sad age of communism can be remembered as a period of destruction of the space in times of peace and of senseless reconstruction, without any interest for the architectonical heritage. After 1989, the Romanian society, still under construction, started to rethink the old existing spaces with the clear purpose of introducing them in the circuit of spaces destined for cultural consumption. The traditional cultural spaces are museums, libraries, churches, memorial houses or theaters. However, the last decades have favored the public space as the environment of an ephemeral art, like graffiti, posters, advertising panels. The old industrial buildings became common venues for the cultural manifestations and meetings of the young generation. This clearly shows a deliberate effort of surpassing the communist constraints, a tendency towards freedom of expression in unconventional spaces. Along with the evolution of the artistic movements, this transformation is determined also by the rapid changes of the environ-

ment we live in, especially of the urban one. Unfortunately, the large cities do not posses the art of developing horizontally while preserving the memory of the past. The urban space is continuously changing, influenced by the erosion of time and the action of man, which is often a destructive one, like in the communist age. The landscape the viewer perceives is a texture in which the old deteriorated buildings and the new blocks appear together in a space in continuous expansion.[2]

Many buildings were demolished as they were dilapidated, without any preoccupation for their patrimonial value or for their purpose as elements of visual identity of the towns. The brutal disappearance of certain urban landmarks increases the feeling of loneliness and despair of the being in an unknown, hostile or even aggressive space. The memory of space helps man recover the temporal dimension of the urban space through a reconsideration of the old landmarks: churches, towers, palaces and industrial buildings of the 19th century. The involvement of the people as architects, constructors or consumers in transforming the old structures favors the configuration of a group identity in connection with the cultural space.

Theoretical Approaches

TALKING ABOUT narrative space in his volume dedicated to the language of new media, Lev Manovich[3] reviews the theories of space formulated by some critics. He mentions the observations of Paul Virilio[4] according to whom, while space was the main category of the nineteenth century, the main category of the twentieth was *time*. In the post-cold war era, due to the fact that the two world superpowers could strike at each other from anywhere at any moment, every point on earth was considered to be simultaneously accessible, so that a fundamental new stage was achieved in culture, with real time triumphing over space.

With reference to the notion of postmodern space, French anthropologist Marc Augé[5] argued that, traditionally, the concept of place was characterized by stable identities, relations and history, and architecture, by its very definition, was associated to order, society and rules. But in the postmodern society there was a change of perspective. Augé believed that postmodernity was responsible for producing non-places "meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which, unlike Baudelairean modernity, do not integrate the earlier places."[6]

Anyway, Manovich reminds us that a distinction between place and space had been previously suggested by Michel de Certeau, according to whom *space*

is a frequented, or animated *place*, an intersection of moving bodies: it is the pedestrians who transform a street (designed as a place by town planners) into a space. According to Augé, instead, movement and trajectories through a place constituted not a space but a *non-place*. Augé also tried to demonstrate that in supermodernity traditional places were increasingly replaced by equally institutionalized non-places—whose architecture is marked by transit and impermanence—such as hotels, holiday clubs, refugee camps, supermarkets, airports and highways. The influence of this non-traditional place on everyday life was enormous. Non-places were becoming the new norm, the new way of living. Also according to de Certeau, many architects had started to focus their attention on the activities of individuals whose practices expropriated the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production. They had come to accept that the structures they designed would be modified by users' activities and that these modifications would represent an essential part of the architecture. So, they took up this challenge, putting their imagination into the creation of non-places such as airports, train terminals or highway control stations. Examples could be found among Santiago Calatrava's recent architectural works: Sondika Airport in Bilbao, Spain (inaugurated in November 2000), or the new bridge in Venice, Italy (inaugurated in September 2008). Lev Manovich gives us another example of typical non-place architecture when he cites Rem Koolhaas's Euralille project (1994), which redefined the city of Lille, France, as a transit zone between the continent and the UK. The Center Euralille, in particular, realized by Jean Nouvel, contains a shopping center, a school, a hotel, and several apartments next to the train terminal, and it is fundamentally centred around the entrance to the Channel, with its underground tunnel for cars, connecting the continent and London, and its terminal for high speed trains travelling between Lille, London, Brussels and Paris. From an anthropological point of view, as Manovich says: "Euralille is a space of navigation par excellence and a mega-non-place."[7]

If we consider different places as various images of the space which surrounds us, we are confronted with the notion of *specialized narrative* that Lev Manovich brings to our attention together with the discussion of its role in European visual culture. He argues that the fictional space of a painting was formerly presented as a multitude of separate events within a single space, and that its physical space was formed by numerous colour points, shapes, and shadows giving the viewer the possibility to take in everything at the same time. He gives us the example of Giotto's paintings, where each narrative event was framed separately but could be seen at a single glance. Painters like Hieronymus Bosch or Peter Bruegel, then, used a number of micro-narratives as the subject of their paintings. Thus Manovich concludes that even when all the fragments in a specialized narrative were separated in time, they were accessible to the viewer simultaneously. This

technique of representation continued to exist in the twentieth century but was relegated to minor forms such as comics or technical illustrations.[8]

Anyway, in the last decades of the twentieth century, specialized narrative became a significant subject of analysis following the new postmodern theories of space. An excellent analysis of the category in the postmodern era belongs to Jean Baudrillard,[9] who noticed that the environment of everyday life was composed of isolated objects, each one with its own separate function, and that only the individual was able to make them coexist in a functional context according to his/her own needs. The real dimension in which people live is thus dependent on the moral environment he/she must create through the connections existing between people and objects. The search for depth and authenticity and for the evocative character of objects is dependent on the affective relations and permanent connotations they incorporate. Starting from this assumption we can say that the old monuments, objects belonging to the urban space, testify to the persistence of traditional meaningful structures within modern society, while the new ones, nearly identical in appearance and in functionality to the old ones, are nothing else than mere objects: there is no connection between them and people as long as they only serve their function. As Baudrillard says: "space exists only when it is opened up, animated, invested with rhythm and expanded by a correlation between objects and a transcendence of their functions in this new structure,"[10] and this action is performed by the modern subject, who governs and controls things, puts them in order and organizes space as a network of mutual relations, in order to build a spatially balanced whole. Obsessed with the absolute circulation of communication, the modern subject organizes daily messages by combining them with the absolute functionality of the new comfortable buildings; he/she defines space by bringing into the functional environment that surrounds him/her fragments of an absolute reality, symbolized by ancient monument-objects. Baudrillard thinks that by referring to the past, old objects are not purely mythological; they also have the role of signifying time. Even if they do not lack functionality and are not purely decorative, they are meant to signify time.

That is why the modern subject strives to recover this temporal dimension by reintegrating old monuments, even though it is not the real time that he/she revives through them, but the cultural signs of it (Baudrillard). He/She can recover fragments of walls, pillars, stones in order to integrate them into his/her new home, or can restore ancient monuments giving them a different destination. The psychological impact of an atmosphere full of historical connotations on everyday life and activity is huge. The uprooting and the alienation felt by a great part of city dwellers are alleviated by the feel of authenticity, of a return to the origins, inspiring, as only old objects can do, an impression of safety and durability.

L'Invention du quotidien by Michel de Certeau contains many ideas that can be applied to the study of the spatial and temporal dimensions in contemporary society. The theory according to which pedestrians—the users and *animators* of urban space—create their own routes through a space geometrically defined by others can be useful in understanding how the members of a community can discover and recreate their own urban space, according to some landmarks that can function as a guide through the space and time of memory. The places of transience that Marc Augé called non-places and that reflect the continuous Brownian motion of the postmodern world can be built by exploiting ancient or old architectural monuments that, restored and reconverted, can become part of a tourist circuit or of a contemporary cultural center.

Deconstruction Versus Architectural Reconversion

IN MANY European and American countries it has become customary for the former industrial areas tobe reconverted into tourist, cultural or residential destinations. Reconversion has become a common practice in the UK and in other industrial countries in the world. New York factories have been transformed into cultural centres or workshops for artists. In London, lots of former butcher's shops and slaughterhouses have now the look of modern art galleries. In Vienna and Budapest a part of the former industrial areas have become office buildings.

In Romania, there are very few examples of industrial spaces reconversions. A brief historical overview shows us that between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Bucharest became the main industrial center of the country, with the appearance of dozens of industrial areas, such as the Malaxa Plants, the Rahova (historically called Bragadiru) brewery, located in the Rahova neighbourhood, Filaret Railway Station, Obor Railway Station, and Assan's Mill. During the communist period these and other spaces were taken over by the regime and given a different function. Unfortunately, the forced industrialization which took place during the socialist period transformed in an uninspired way many of these red brick buildings, whose original style has not been restored yet. After the revolution, with the worsening of the economic situation,[11] some of these buildings were demolished and others were sold to investors looking for large areas convertible into real estate or shopping centers. Often in a limited space they have built more buildings because of the benefits of agglomeration which leads to population and employment density. Despite their profitability,[12] the new look of these buildings shows a lack of harmony and aes-

thetic principles when compared to the old, beautiful architectural monuments of Bucharest. The expropriation of these monuments in order to use them as buildings of public utility could integrate them in a public cultural circuit. They can recreate in the new, modern urban areas of the city special landmarks of a temporal itinerary for the old and young inhabitants of Bucharest.

Unfortunately in Cluj-Napoca, the second largest city in Romania, after the 1989 Revolution, a number of industrial buildings were destroyed or lost there initial function. In these cases, the communist regime had not changed the destination of these places. Sometimes they built new buildings, or fixed the old ones using new materials which changed the original style of the buildings. From our perspective this is not severe damage, as compared with the destruction of all these after 1989. For example, Clujana Factory, an old shoe factory, was divided into small parts, which received different functions: small factories, storage areas. Another important knitting factory, Someşul, was destroyed in 2008 in order to build a big shopping center. It is a shame, because it was a beautiful red brick building on a metallic structure with a high potential for reconversion. During the communist regime, Libertatea Factory was a big producer of Romanian furniture. This factory kept only a small part for its traditional activity and destroyed its water tower by implosion. They are in the process of reconverting two buildings, once used for drying furniture wood pieces, into buildings with small apartments. They also have big empty spaces, waiting for a reconversion project. Fortunately, this part of the industrial area of Cluj-Napoca still has the tower of the Armătura steel mill, situated near Libertatea. It is an industrial tower with a simple and modern architecture functioning as a vertical landmark for the western part of the city.

The Water Towers

PERHAPS ONE of the most spectacular examples of urban space reconversion in Romania is represented by the water towers. They have old and graceful shapes, giddy height, and successfully impose themselves in the urban landscape by introducing a temporal dimension into the horizontality of the daily urban routes. The recovery of the memory of spaces obtained by reintroducing them as historical vertical landmarks can be one of the purposes of their restoration. As part of the city's industrial architecture, the water towers served the city's water supply network, but they were also visible landmarks for orientation in space. Despite their imposing stature, the water towers soberly marked the place where they were situated.

The Foişorul de Foc (Fire Watch Tower) in Bucharest is a forty-two meters-high building. In the past it was used as a watch tower against fires. This tower was built around 1890, on the grounds of the former Colţea Tower, which had been built in 1715 and then demolished. Although it was initially designed as a water tower, there were no pumps powerful enough to fill it with water, so its purpose was changed and it became a vantage point for firemen. In 1963, it was transformed into the National Firemen's Museum. The museum exhibits documents and photos showing firemen in training or the great fires which affected the country. It also hosts several pieces of equipment used by firemen along time: pumps of various types and ages, flags of different fire units and, most important of all, the asbestos suits used by firemen. Another interesting element present in the building is the collection of paintings and of other art objects that illustrates man's fight against fire. What is important here is that Bucharest's towers became extremely interesting for all young people concerned with town planning and with the recovery of the urban space's vertical landmarks.

The Fortified Churches in Transylvania

THE OLD churches, real fortresses with defence towers, enrich the country's heritage of vertical space landmarks and give time dimension the depth needed for the recovery of the old and more recent history.

The old fortified church in Dealul Frumos (Schönberg, Beautiful Hill) was recorded in a document dated 1321. Initially it was a Romanesque basilica with three aisles and raw stone pillars and arches, without a bell tower, but with a square space for the choir and a semicircular apse. Around 1500 the Romanesque basilica was surrounded by fortifications, the lateral aisles were given a Gothic style hall shape, and the altar apse was demolished. Then the bell-tower was built. Being a defence tower, its walls were up to two meters thick and almost twenty-three meters high, and it was provided with holes for shooting (battlements). A similar defence tower was built above the choir, but a floor lower. Both towers were completed with a patchwork-style (timber-framed decoration) protection gallery and a pyramidal roof. In the same period, the church was surrounded by a four and a half meters-high fortification wall, with defensive towers on its four corners, equipped with firing slits. Later, in the southeast corner of the larger court a pentagonal defence tower was built. Close to the north-east tower an entrance turret was realized on two floors. After 1600, the north fortification wall was moved five feet forward and a square turret was added. In 1914 a church community house was built in the pentagonal tower. During the communist period, due to the massive emigration, there was a dramatic decrease in the number of believers, which made the fortress maintenance

work impossible. Basically, it had lost its religious function. In 2003 the fortification of Dealul Frumos went under the authority of the Bucharest Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism, which was to protect it and to develop inside it a center for the study of vernacular architecture, a project funded by the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Denominations.

One of the most interesting architectural monuments of the thirteenth century is represented by Câlnic (Kelling) Fortress. This building occupies a special place among the fortifications built by Transylvanian Saxons along time, especially in the medieval era. Such churches were also built in the western region of the country, in Banat, by a part of the population, also of German origin. Originally built as a noble residence, Câlnic Fortress, which is on the UNESCO heritage list, was conceived as a keep but was used as a house, surrounded by massive walls, which formed an oval enclosure with two turrets. One is defending its south side and one towers over its north gate. Its defence system was completed by the moat surrounding the castle. After 1430, the castle was sold by the last descendants of the noble family to the Saxon peasants of Câlnic who, in the first half of the sixteenth century, started to build a new wall and fortified the gate tower, while in the courtyard, on the ruins of an older building, they built a chapel. The building of a second enclosure in the sixteenth century made it necessary to raise the keep by two levels, in order to make it reach a height of over twenty meters and ensure the efficiency of firearms beyond the exterior wall.

In the village of Câlnic, not far from the castle, an Evangelical church called Biserica din Deal (The church on the hill), was built in the center of the cemetery by the Saxon community in the fifteenth century, but it was radically transformed in the nineteenth century and now it has a neo-Gothic look. This new look of the monument came with the modernization of Transylvania in the second half of the 19th century.[13]

In the first twenty years of the communist government, the old castles and churches were ignored or demolished. Their rapid decline was favoured by the lack of the maintenance funds and by the disappearance of the local community. However, in the years 1961–1964, Câlnic Fortress was restored by the Office of the Historical Monuments of Romania following a project designed by the architect Ştefan Balş. The project, aimed at restoring the entire medieval complex, started in 1995. The fortress, along with other historical monuments, is now part of the International Scientific Cultural Center owned by the Institute of Archaeology and Art History of the Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca and by the Association Ars Transsilvaniae. Some spaces of the fortress have been organized to host art and documentation exhibitions, and the chapel has been transformed into a hall where symposia, colloquia and conferences are held. The space allows also the organization of concerts and auditions of medieval, Renaissance or Baroque music.

The Medieval Towers in Cluj-Napoca

THE TAILORS' Bastion is one of Cluj's ancient watch and defence towers. Each bastion was built and maintained by a guild, such as the tailors, the shoemakers, the carpenters, the soap makers, the wheelwrights, the potters, the masons, or the belt makers.

The Tailors' Bastion is in the upper southeast corner of the medieval fortification which was built from the fifteenth century onwards. Between the years 1627 and 1629, the bastion was rebuilt and gained its present shape. It is made of hewn stone, and its massive walls still have shooting holes. On its northern side, a piece of the fortress stone wall with its battlements is still preserved, as well as the wall walk. This tower took its name from the Tailors' Guild of Cluj, being the only bastion of the old castle which has been fully preserved. The bastion was restored in 1924 and was transformed into a museum by the Commission for the Historical Monuments of Romania. A restoration of its exterior was undertaken during the communist period in 1959, but its interior stayed untouched. It has been recently restored by the architect Adrian Borda and made to host the Center for Urban Culture, with a library and an exhibition space.

Within the perimeter of old medieval Cluj, among other constructions built on the grounds of the fortress walls, it is possible to see the Fire Tower. This old medieval tower was used to signal the presence of fires, and after losing its function it became the Firemen's Museum. After 1989 the tower was restored according to the project of the architect Gheorghe Vais and was turned into an exhibition space. The two towers, the Tailors' Bastion and the Fire Tower, along with the remnants of the old walls, clearly mark the perimeter of the old medieval fortress, built on the Roman foundations dating from the period that followed the conquest of Dacia. The memory of space restored by these buildings revives the ages of glory and decadence of the city and the stormy life of Cluj fortress.

After fifty years of communism, which interrupted the history of the city, and with the fast proliferation of spaces that lack cultural meaning, but that are so necessary to the modern subject, the recovery of space verticality and temporal depth is particularly needed. It is not merely a matter of recovering the authenticity and rigour of traditional architecture, but of revitalizing, now more than ever, the culture of areas that give an identity to the urban space. The fluid dynamics of the postmodern space is interrupted by vertical landmarks, cultural signs of the past that create a feeling of stability and authenticity in individuals who are allowed to enrich their identity as city dwellers with one of consumers of cultural products.

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Notes

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Abstract
Temporal Landmarks of Space

The paper offers a perspective on space and on a time vector that allows the visualization of space in a determined period of time. Our paper reviews the theories of space formulated by some critics, introducing notions of *space*, *place*, *non-place*, followed by some examples of the destruction and reconstruction of industrial buildings as cultural spaces. Thus, after discussing the way in which a number of contemporary thinkers (Augé, Baudrillard, Manovich, de Certeau) approach the mechanism whereby space is invested with meaning in the postmodern context, we turn our attention to a few examples of reconversion or redefinition of spaces in the Romanian context, from water towers to old fortified churches and various other landmarks.