

THE RHETORIC OF ARCHITECTURE: A SEMIOTIC APPROACH

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Communication and rhetoric are inherent aspects of architecture. Architecture uses signs to communicate its function and meaning. This communication is rhetorical when it induces its perceiver to use or to understand the architecture—from a hot dog stand to a monument. Movements in architecture, such as the Gothic or the International Style, promote certain values and beliefs, and can be studied as rhetorical movements. Like linguistic communication, architecture consists of codes, meanings, semantic shifts, and syntactic units.

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Architecture not only communicates, but also communicates rhetorically. Churches and shopping malls, doors and stairs—these architectural items not only tell us their meaning and function, but also influence our behavior. Architecture is rhetorical because it induces us to do what others would have us do. Architecture, then, is a persuasive phenomenon, and therefore deserves to be studied by rhetorical critics.

Semiotics is one approach that rhetorical critics could take to architecture as rhetoric. Roland Barthes' (1972) seminal work applies semiotics to architecture, as well as to wine, myth, literature, wrestling, painting, and food. More recently, semiotics has promised to be a useful approach in rhetorical criticism. For example, John R. Lyne (1980, 1981a, 1981b) is among the first to apply semiotics to rhetorical criticism. Lyne follows one of the two main sources of sign theory, the work of American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. By contrast, I wish to emphasize here the other main source, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1960). Strictly speaking, the term "semiotics" denotes the sign theory that relies more on Peirce, while "semiology" denotes those ideas that have developed from the contributions of Saussure. However, scholars in this field generally use the term "semiotics" when speaking of the field of sign theory as a whole, and they generally use the term "semiology" when speaking just of Saussurian sign theory. Thus the term semiotics can be used to include or exclude Saussurian sign theory. In this essay, "semiotics" is used in its inclusive sense, except when otherwise noted. Semiotics has been fairly criticized for the excess of jargon attending it. This essay attempts to minimize the use of jargon, using only those terms that are absolutely necessary, and defining them for readers unfamiliar with semiotics.

First, this essay discusses the linguistic basis of semiology. Then it explains how architecture can be studied as a communicative artifact. After that, it shows how architecture acts rhetorically and how we might study architecture in terms of some of the

established methods of rhetorical criticism, such as fantasy analysis and movement studies.

Architecture as Language

Like its cousin, structuralism, semiotics can be thought of as "relationalism." That is, both hold that, contrary to empiricism, the meaning of a thing consists not in the thing itself but in its relation to other things. For example, the dots and dashes of Morse code are understandable only because of the way they are arranged, the way they are related. Likewise, a musical communication would not be understandable if you scrambled all the notes and arranged those notes randomly. To cite another example, speech sounds (phones) have no meaning by themselves. They have meaning only by their arrangement. Thus the three sounds in the word "dog" have meaning if arranged as "god" but not as "dgo" or "ogd" or "gdo" or "odg." Applying this relationalism to architecture, architectural historian Juan Bonta shows that a building might seem to emphasize horizontal line, but such an emphasis appears only if the building is compared to another building. Compared to Frank Lloyd Wright's Wainwright Building, Louis Sullivan's Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co. Building seems to emphasize horizontal line, since the CPS Building's wide, short windows make horizontal lines stand out. But Eric Mendelsohn's Schocken Department Store Building in Stuttgart accentuates each floor of its several stories, creating an extreme horizontality against which Sullivan's building would appear not to emphasize horizontality (Bonta, 1979, pp. 91-117). Semiotics holds that all communication and cognition, from the phonemic to theoretical, are built upon such oppositions as horizontal and vertical, dark and light, hot and cold.

Moreover, semiotics holds that communication is not just one of many cultural systems; communication does not co-exist juxtaposed to economics, religion, kinship, education, government, literature, art, and technology. Rather, communication is inher-

ent in all such cultural systems. Communication allows not only each system to interact with the others, but also allows each system's parts to interact. Thus in the semiotic view, communication is the common denominator between and within cultural systems and artifacts. For example, Levi-Strauss (1966) found that kinship systems, with their widely varying practices and yet near universal proscription against incest, all have communication in common. When families exchange members with other families in marriage, they also exchange signs that indicate their affirmation of attitudes and beliefs. Trade with others works much the same way. The trader's intent may be to exchange goods, but one of the effects is to exchange information through a dramatized, symbolic agreement upon rules of the community's ethos and world view. Semioticians contend that semiotics is a method for studying all cultural phenomena. In this view, sign theory helps to explain all things cultural because all cultural phenomena are systems of signs. Further, because signs are building blocks of communication, semiotics regards culture as communication. Thus communication studies, including speech and rhetorical criticism, may find in semiotics a new method for going beyond a text into its historical and social-psychological surroundings. But before we suggest how such ambitiousness might be attempted, we need to look at the linguistic or semiological side of semiotics.

The primary concept in semiology is Saussure's notion of the sign. In Saussure's view, the sign consists of a signifier and a signified. The two occur together and are separable only abstractly. The signifier is that which conveys meaning. The meaning is the signified. The signifier is the form; the signified is the message. Thus as a sign, the Christian cross consists of its signifier, the horizontal and vertical axes, as well as its signified, all of the meanings associated with the crucifixion and redemption. To return to our linguistic example, the sound of the utterance "dog" is a signifier, while the four-legged animal that the sound refers to is the signified.

Now in order to know a meaning, what a signifier signifies, the receiver must know the code. One does not understand a communication in Morse code if one does not know which arrangement of dots and dashes signifies which letters and words. Sometimes an emitter's signifier has a code different from the receiver's code. For example, often non-architects don't understand modern architecture because non-architects don't know modern architecture's code; the non-architects don't understand what modern architecture means to say. Modern architects often try to encode rationality, efficiency, and functionalism in their skeletal, glass-sheeted skyscrapers. But those who don't know that code can read such structures only as analogies to other structures that they know. They find that modern architecture looks like a lavatory, or a clinic, or a body and fender shop, or a factory, or a

space ship. Such readings are metaphorical; in trying to figure out a form that we don't understand, we first try to decide what it resembles.

If architecture uses metaphor, it also uses two other linguistic principles. The two aspects of an architectural signified (the meaning of a building or building part) consist of a denotation and a connotation. The denotation refers to the building or building part's use. Thus a ramp, stairway, escalator, or elevator denote the possibility of going up. Connotations include associated meanings. For some people, an escalator might connote fun, but to others, danger. But someone who didn't know the escalator's code wouldn't know the escalator's use. To use an architectural form, you must first decode it. Although primitives who had never seen a ramp or stairs could figure out their use quickly, they would be slower to decode an escalator. With an elevator, primitives would spend some time in figuring out the cause and effect relationship between various buttons and various functions. The simple function of rising to higher stories would be mystifying and frightening (Eco, 1980b, p. 21).

Maybe the clearest examples of what architectural signifiers connote is exemplified in ceremonial and monumental architecture. A church or commemorative statue suggests many meanings. So do the White House, the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial. Less immediately identifiable in connotation would be, perhaps, Jefferson's Monticello and University of Virginia, although these too promote their own ethos and world view as surely as does a primitive tribe's location of its shaman's quarters, governmental activities, eating spots, and initiation areas.

Past connotations influence present ones. Formerly, the tallest buildings were sacred. This signified was intentional, but it isn't in modern architecture. Yet the signified remains. Our tallest buildings are our most noted and celebrated. Such buildings often have the most ritualized surroundings and entrances. Formerly, it was churches and state houses that had the grand plazas, entry halls, and ornate doors. Now, commercial buildings attract the most effort, expense, and attention. In New York, for example, the World Trade Center and the Seagram Building are invested with the kind of attention formerly reserved primarily for St. Patrick's Cathedral, which is now dwarfed by commercial buildings. Similarly, late nineteenth-century libraries are formalized structures, but these days libraries are beginning to look more like warehouses—appropriately so in an age when education is confused with information, and information is "stored" in retrieval systems.

A further comparison with language obtains in the notion of a semantic shift. Over time, words change meanings, and so do buildings and building parts. The meaning of the Gothic has had several modifications in meaning. The Gothic has been understood as a holdover of druidical religiosity, as an analogy to the forest, as a refractor of light to

suggest the influence of the divinity above, and as an exercise in verticality rising to the heavens. The Parthenon is a more specific example of a semantic shift. Originally, the Parthenon signified a place of worship. Now it is primarily a symbol of the Greek sensibility (Eco, 1980b, p. 28). Because of semantic shift, it is impossible for us to reconstruct completely what an architectural form signified for its originators. To do so, we must reconstruct much of their ethos and world view, a process that rhetorical critics know is crucial but seldom perfect.

Architecture as Rhetoric

The metaphor of architecture as language brings us to consider further aspects of architecture as communication before we explore architecture as rhetoric. This next consideration will lead us to revise Louis Sullivan's dictum that in modern architecture "form follows function" (Noble, 1970, pp. 116-123). First of all, function follows communication: one must understand the meaning of an architectural signifier before one can use it. One must know what the elevator is for before one can operate it. And for designers to make changes in function, they must first conceive of the change—they must operate in the realm of meaning and signified before they can create or modify or even use the signifier. For example, designers can paint convincing building parts on a blank wall. They can paint a stairway or a complete facade that at first does not appear to be a sham. As one approaches the stairway and then realizes it is a fake, one demonstrates that connotation and meaning are prior to use. The case of false stairways shows that communication precedes function (Eco, 1980a, p. 213). In other words, function follows meaning.

Accordingly, the symbolic meaning is sometimes more important than the actual use. Courtrooms are still often designed with retainer fence railings, a form originated to segregate and restrain witnesses and the accused. Today these railings are functionally anachronistic—they've undergone a semantic shift—but they signify "courtroom." The railing, however, is still functional, but in a new way. Its function is merely to underscore that the room is a courtroom and one should behave accordingly. So the symbolic quality of a building part can be that building part's main function (and without the symbol's signified, it has no function). For example, a throne is used more to communicate status than as a comfortable place to sit (Eco, 1980b, p. 15). So we see not only that function follows meaning, but also that form follows meaning. We retain vestigial accoutrements even when their original function is gone. For example, we put false beams in ceilings and install fireplaces that give off little heat because we want to retain the meaning, and in so doing we retain the form.

To see how architecture communicates rhetorically, we need to review some of the points made so far. Primary among these points is that for architec-

ture to function, it must communicate what its function is. Some obvious examples are a barber pole, indicating that you can get your hair shortened; a red cross, indicating that you can get medical attention; a bridge, indicating a crossing; a steeple, indicating a church; a dome, indicating a kind of church or perhaps a sports arena; and a skyscraper skyline, indicating the downtown financial district. Architect Charles Jencks uses the example of Antonio Gaudi's Casa Batllo in Barcelona to show how a building communicates meaning. Casa Batllo is several stories high and about seventy feet wide, I would judge. Its balconies have not rails but sheets with two eye-like holes. These sheets resemble masks, thus connoting death masks as well as eighteenth-century party masks that covered the face from mid-forehead to mid-nose. The blue and green colors and rough texture of the exterior walls remind many local people of the sea and kelp. These associations to blue and green are predictable, given Barcelona's seaport qualities. One of the building's most striking features is that it has biomorphic pillars that resemble bony legs or a skeleton. When finished in 1906, the building was at first called "the house of bones." A second striking feature of the house is that its tile roof looks like the scaly skin of some mythical beast, such as a dragon. In Jencks' (1980a) reading, this building "represents the dragon of Spain being slain by Barcelona's saint, while the bones and masks refer to the dead martyrs who have previously been victimized in the struggle" (p. 95). Obviously such a building is designed to give several readings, multiple meanings. Like other great art works, this building can provide different readings to different succeeding generations because its form signifies not simple, one-to-one signifieds, but many possible signifieds.

But architecture's communications are not totally subjective and open-ended. Rather, architects can predict what behavior their designs will induce. Commercial architecture contains the clearest examples of such rhetorical manipulation. Windows, printed words, and building style announce the kind of goods to be had. Easy access is made, both for drivers and pedestrians. The view of the establishment should be unobstructed so one can easily find it. And the view from the establishment can also contribute to its financial success. External colors must attract and stimulate; internal colors must satisfy; spaces and planes and textures must be inviting and rewarding. Thus architects and interior designers, like advertisers, elicit behavior: driving, walking, eating, looking, waiting, cooperating, stopping, listening, talking, drinking, spending.

Restaurants, especially the fast-food variety, have found that one of the best ways to convince people to stop and come in is to appeal to their fantasies. Fantasy analysis could explore the implications of the following kinds of shared fantasies encouraged at various restaurants. A pizza parlor can offer an Italian setting and call itself "the Leaning Tower of Pizza." Some chicken outlets

want you to entertain the notion that there is a hoary southern Santa Claus in the kitchen who is saving his secret recipe just for you. Other restaurants can be a giant fish tank, a ship, or a railroad car. Still others encourage you to imagine that you are a fireman, a policeman, a baseball player, a pirate. One of the perennial themes in America is the Indian. For example, the Thunderbird Hotel in Minneapolis is replete with bogus Indian icons: styrofoam totem poles, bricks and planks that are really fiberglass, candles shaped like teepees, even cocktail waitresses in ersatz deerskin miniskirts with a plastic feather in their naugahyde headbands. The reality of Indian life is as completely masked here as Italian life is at Shakey's Pizza Parlors. In a society where Hollywood Indians are mirrored in restaurants, perhaps the cute, bumbling Nazis of "Hogan's Heroes" will someday be replicated in a Nazi steak house.

Even church architecture has been influenced by the necessity of reaching a wider audience. Xavier Rubert de Ventos (1980), a Spanish architect, argues that the salesmanship of the Counter-Reformation influenced Baroque styles. In the Baroque, he claims, the Church

promotes eternal salvation and *sells* spirituality. The first known case of a systematic *marketing* of something is that of the baroque commercialization of Faith. It was not by chance, in fact, that it was then when the expression *propaganda fide* was made up and used. The will or necessity of *propagating* a message transforms it immediately into propaganda. From these it is a short step to the verbosity of baroque facades and the theatricality of their images that must carry the message of Redemption rapidly and to the most remote places. (p. 189)

Similarly, the built environment of educational institutions influences behavior. Informal spaces with portable seating are good for discussions and some kinds of laboratories. For lectures, however, such a room is not conducive to attentiveness.

The design of prisons also has a rhetorical dimension. High electric barbed-wire fences with armed guards persuade inmates to stay put. In addition, prison officials, as introductory communications texts point out, often try to paint interiors with relaxing colors to reduce the frequency of violence.

The ways in which architecture acts rhetorically are not only obvious and coercive but subtle and passive. Architecture represents the receivers' ethos and world view and thereby encourages the receivers either to change or reaffirm their behavior and beliefs. On the collective level, these myths can appear in urban planning, monuments, government buildings, ceremonial buildings, religious buildings, and homes. As cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) puts it, "the built environment clarifies social roles and relations." "A planned city, a monument, or even a simple dwelling can be a symbol of the cosmos" (p. 102).

Architecture that represents values and beliefs is

rhetorical because it induces ritual behavior. By ritual I mean our rhythmic, repetitive behaviors that dramatize meanings. Thus commercial and biological acts can be rituals, reminding us of our identity and place in the cosmos, community, family, and workplace. But perhaps the clearest example takes place in religious architecture, as for example in the Gothic cathedral. The figural scenes in the stained glass windows are visual texts symbolizing the Bible's word. All about are signs of Christian belief and practice: icons such as statues of saints, the cross, holy water, flickering light. Of course, read in the Puritan code, these artifacts signify idolatry and corruption.

Drama, like the secular rituals of modern society, is the rhythmic repetition that reminds us of what our behavior should be. By giving consent to architecture, we dramatize our attitudes and convictions. The various theatres of human acts, such as stadiums, bedrooms, churches, classrooms, bars, and banks, allow us to question or re-affirm our personal and collective values and to inculcate them in others. Insofar as ritual is dramatized and linguistic, it is rhetorical, for architecture is partly a store of rhetorical conventions. Further, like sermons or directives on the job, architecture is a system of rhetorical conventions communicating the messages the audience—the building's users—has come to expect (Eco, 1980b, pp. 40-41). In this capacity of reminding and reaffirming, then, architecture is another form of mass communication. We respond to architecture in ways analogous to our response to pictures of movie stars, news about sports heroes, albums by pop singers, and television shows with celebrities. Advertisers, realizing how convincing such people can be, use them in commercials because such people are convincing no matter how imperfect their delivery might be.

It is difficult to define where non-oratorical communication becomes rhetorical. Apart from an artwork's message (what I would call its rhetoric) art has its form (what I would call its poetic). When an art form influences ethos or behavior (and by necessity it must) it is rhetorical. Thomas W. Benson (1975) puts it this way: "formal commitments become rhetorical when and insofar as they take on moral force" (p. 32). In other words, the structures arranged by humans into communicative forms become rhetorical when their signifieds influence behavior.

And, as we have implied earlier, architecture is rhetorical not only in its effect, but in the way it is put together. Like an oratorical discourse, architecture is structured for maximum rhetorical effectiveness: to communicate the denotation clearly and the connotation agreeably. Speaking of this analogy between oratorical and architectural composition, Eco (1980b) states that "architectural discourse . . . starts with accepted premises, builds upon them well-known or readily acceptable 'arguments,' and thereby elicits a certain type of consent" (p. 41).

But the rhetoric of architecture can also fail to

gain our consent. Some commercial buildings, no matter how the variables are changed—new goods offered, new management, new prices—always fail until they are remodeled. Likewise, a lot of public housing is ineffective at creating a sense of home and belonging. High rise projects in the austere modern style do not appeal to people even though they might have been raised around such architecture and are used to it. Such styles are even more repugnant to ethnic groups whose traditional architecture is quite different. As a result, whole projects, within a short time of their construction, have had to be torn down. Even whole cities have failed. The most notable example of such failure is Brasilia. Aimed at convincing individuals and groups to frequent certain areas and live in certain ways deemed desirable by the designers, Brasilia has assured the kinds of things it was designed to avoid: status areas and ghettos. Attempting to inculcate egalitarianism, this city exacerbated classism.

It isn't just minorities and the poor who are repulsed by the thought of living in modern architecture. In Houston, most of which sprang up after World War Two, the modern style is ubiquitous in commercial, governmental, and service buildings, as for example in the NASA Space Center. Yet when a developer built homes in the same style, middle-class youths broke out all the windows because, they explained, the housing seemed un-American (Jencks, 1980a, p. 99).

Modern architecture even fails to convince those who promote it. Many architects prefer to live in old, traditional buildings (Jencks, 1980a, pp. 111-112). Even though these architects know the code of modern architecture, they don't convince themselves. We will have more to say about the failures of modern architecture shortly, but before we do we need to suggest more explicitly how rhetorical critics might approach architecture's rhetoric.

Architecture as Movement and Fantasy

Rhetorical critics could approach a study of the rhetoric of architecture by using the methods of both movement studies and fantasy analysis. Drawing from historical studies, rhetorical critics could approach each period and establish, for example, what communicative needs were satisfied in the Gothic, how the Gothic form articulated new meanings that arose in the late medieval age, how the Gothic was persuasive and dissuasive, why its rhetorical power was succeeded by the Baroque, and so on. To answer these questions, rhetorical criticism could examine not only the speeches and writings of Gothic architects and their co-workers, but also examine the actual form of the buildings as they would the form of written or oral discourses. And, as I have suggested, semiotics in general and semiology in particular offer the method for approaching architecture as language.

The nature of architecture as a movement is perhaps clearest in our own century. The Twentieth

Century has been dominated by the Modern Movement in general and the International Style in particular. The Modern Movement started simultaneously in Europe and America during the last Nineteenth Century. The Modern Movement was at first strongest in America, where Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright developed the Chicago school. By the 1920s and 1930s, the Europeans, perhaps eclipsing the Americans, rapidly developed the Modern Movement into its quintessential form, the International Style. After World War Two, the Modern Movement and the International Style continued their prominence, although with fewer breakthroughs in design and more nay sayers. In the 1950s, the opponents were led by the Italians, but by the 1960s opposition was strongly international. Currently, the shortcomings of the Modern Movement are widely discussed. One book in this vein, Tom Wolfe's *From Bauhaus to Our House* (1981) is a best-seller. It shows how the International Style has dominated architecture even to the design of homes.

What is the International Style, which forms the core of the Modern Movement? First of all, the International Style attempts to be ahistorical, to exclude styles drawn from previous movements. Believing that the Twentieth Century would bring inevitable progress, proponents of the International Style believed that historical styles would be superfluous in a modern society that had rid itself of premodern irrationality. As architect Geoffrey Broadbent (1980a) points out, the buildings that proponents of the International Style designed were to be "free of any reference to foreign, exotic or native historical styles" lest these "prevent its efficient functioning" (p. 235). Even modernists of the present still believe that architecture can achieve a built environment that will be perfect and therefore timeless, resistant to change—witness Brasilia.

Along with the grudge against history went the idolatry of form. Modernists believed that they would find universal forms that were beyond cultural relativity. They believed that their structures would mirror natural laws, not block them with cultural conventions.

Along with the anti-historicism and formalism went functionalism. By functional, the International Style's major theorists, Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Mies Van der Rohe, thought their forms were reflections of rationality, productivity, order, economy, impersonality, abstraction, precision, and mechanism. Such architects, Jencks (1980a) shows, believed their forms would "naturally grow out of the laws of function, structure and perception, . . . would be transcultural and not dependent on learning, history or symbolism, . . . that architecture was evolving towards 'unchanging forms based on structural universals'" (p. 104).

In the beginning, the architects of the International Style tried to derive its forms from industrial architecture, such as factories and warehouses, because they believed industrialism was a natural

development. Later they used these industrial forms in offices, shops, homes, schools, courthouses, even churches. However, the people who used these buildings read them according to cultural conventions; not sharing the architects' code, they saw not natural forms but cold, alienating ones. But such forms persist, and so do such readings. James Stirling's New Training Center for Olivetti at Haslemere, England, borrows forms, particularly windows, from train cars (Jencks, 1980b, p. 235). This attempt to recreate a functional form has been greeted by some with the most suitable metaphor: the building looks like a cold, clanking train. And most people don't want to work in a place that makes them feel like sheep in a train car.

The International Style's notion that form follows function was itself a cultural convention, the expression in form of a preconceived concept. The forms of the International Style did not represent given, natural, objective function. Rather, the International Style represented what its proponents imagined functionalism to be. For one thing, the International Style is often not functional. Broadbent (1980a) shows that the International Style's glass-skinned skeletal buildings overheat in direct sun, lose heat rapidly in the cold, create glare, and add to noise pollution (p. 122).

A leading architectural critic, Nikolas Pevsner, typifies those who ostensibly applaud a building for its functionality, but who are really applauding the connotation or appearance of functionality. For example, Pevsner endorses the Arts Tower at Sheffield University as a prime example of functionalism. But those who work in the building find that the design causes the building to be overheated in some areas, cold in others, noisy throughout, unable to transport people with sufficient stairs and elevators, and generally unpleasant. Broadbent (1980a) explains how Pevsner came to his judgment: "It was rectilinear in form and glass curtain-walled, it looked machine made; so, for Pevsner, it must be 'functional.'" "So Pevsner's 'reality' was actually an illusion of what he wanted . . . architecture to be like" (pp. 120-121).

If the imagination has played such a large and ironic role in most of the built environment around us, then rhetorical critics could approach modern architecture not only with the method of movement studies, but also with the method of fantasy analysis. Pevsner's notion of functionality is a fantasy he shares with others in the Modern Movement. In its struggle for an ahistorical, functional formalism, the International Style tried to exclude all semantic content, all connotation. For example, two die-hard modernists, Alison and Peter Smithson (1974), have published their architectural prescriptions, which spin-off from modernism into the school with the revealing moniker of "Brutalism," in a book entitled *Without Rhetoric: An Architectural Aesthetic, 1955-72*. And Peter Eisenman, as we saw, tries to follow Chomsky by making his design an exercise in syntax. That is, this architectural rhetor's poesis

attempts to eliminate rhetoric. But no signifier, as we have seen, is without its signified. The attempt to build dumb buildings is readily identifiable as modernism. As Broadbent (1980b) puts it, "the architecture of columns, white walls and large windows inevitably 'reads' as post-Le Corbusian International Style" (p. 209). This shared fantasy of escaping signification is one of the most important meanings of our time.

Since the hope for a timeless, eternal architecture has proven illusory, some architects now call for denotations and connotations so that buildings can be readily adaptable to changes in use and meaning. To that end, some have called for a post-modern architecture that will revive historical forms as well as regional and ethnic vernacular, such as adobe and earth-sheltered buildings. Such post-modern form is to be readable and comfortable for those who use it, not just the priesthood of architects. Rhetorical critics could also study this new style as a movement.

In a larger sense, the Modern Movement in architecture is part of modernism in general. To study the Modern Movement, then, is to open the door to a vast field of rhetorical forms. The rhetoric of timelessness, functionality, and rationality that informs modern architecture permeates the rhetoric of other fields. In historical writing, as David Noble (1965) shows, each generation of historians in America has attempted to read corporate, technocratic, industrial urbanization as natural, scientific progress, and has tried to disclaim the traditional, rural, and vernacular. In literary studies, the New Criticism tried to minimize the importance of history and emphasize the primacy of form. And in the social sciences, new formalistic methods were developed that were supposed to lift the social sciences out of tradition and convention and into timeless, universal, scientific form. Thus if rhetorical criticism can be used to criticize not only the form but also the ideology of communications, then rhetorical criticism can be used to criticize not only architecture, but the rest of the arts. Thus where we are accustomed to seeing rhetorical critics assess, say, Daniel Webster in the historical context of sectionalism, or as he figured in the abolition movement, or as he represents fantasies of manifest destiny, we may come to see rhetorical critics do much the same not only with architecture and architects, but with other arts and artists as well.

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