

Hierarchy of Human Values in Architecture

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Abstract – This article shows correlation between individual and architecture through values. Interdisciplinary analysis of the “values” concept provides deep insight into the understanding of the architecture axiology.

Key words – architecture axiology, values, integrality, hierarchy of needs, physical, social values in architecture, self-realization.

I. Introduction

Firstly, an individual embodies values into an architecture, and then the architecture reminds the individual of those values. The majority of human emotions, feeling of pleasure, mindset, and motivation depend on values. Architectural environment, as a data medium, bears responsibility for the axiological background of a human life.

II. Axiology

Axiology is a science about values that determine orientation and motivation of the human action [1, 2, 3, 4], and their reflection in reality, as well as about the structure of axiological world. The concept of “value” embraces the following meanings:

- an item that generates value and can fill some need;
- an ideal a human strives for;
- a standard necessary to adhere to;
- significance of something for an individual or a group;
- a state of mind during the experience of a need [1,2,3,4].

The German philosopher and Doctor R.H. Lotze introduced the concept of “value” to the science in 1960s of the 20th century. Moreover, French philosopher P. Lapie used the term “axiology” for the first time in 1902 [5,6]. However, the value and the theory of value, under different names, were studied much earlier. Starting from the ancient philosophers (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle) [7] the concept of “value” appears in the philosophy of Middle Ages, Renaissance (L.B. Alberti, L. Valla, N. Machiavelli, Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola) [8], Enlightenment (R. Descartes, B. Pascal, I. Kant, G.W.F. Hegel) [9]. This concept actively evolves in the early 20th century during the period of Neo-Kantianism, where it divides into the variety of directions (Neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, naturalism, antinaturalism, dielectric, etc.), particularly, goes through the Soviet philosophy (K. Marx, F. Engels), and works of Ukrainian writers and philosophers (T. Shevchenko, I. Franko, L. Ukrainka, G. Skovoroda, I. Kotliarevsky, Ye. Grebinka) [10].

The values may be divided into: material, social, and spiritual [according to V. P. Tugarin]; by expansion: fundamental, cultural (national), civil, family, and

personal [N.O. Tkachova]; by learning style: theoretical, economical, aesthetic, social, political, and religious (V. Dil’tei, E. Shpranger).

The values exist in the following philosophical dichotomies: an object – attribute to the object, a real object or an abstract entity, individual or overindividual formation, conscious or unconscious inclusion into a structure of a personality, norm (standard) or ideal (sense), subjectivity of objectivity of a value [11].

As is evident from the foregoing, axiological approaches usually contradict to each other. The question at issue is not to recognize some of them right, and the others wrong, but to conciliate them into unified hierarchy that would include all aspects of human life. American scientist A. Maslow provides such hierarchy in his pyramid of a person’s needs. In his opinion, needs (states of deficit) and values (the scientist considers them equal) derive from an individual’s abilities (physical, mental, etc.) [12]. He is followed by D.M. Uznadze: values produce prejudices (unconscious action readiness) [13] and axiological orientations (connections between an individual and values, that are being formed in the process of realization). The latter three form the motivation of behavior. According to Maslow, the superior value for an individual is the need for self-realization – the manifestation of his/her true nature, which is an essence of all religions and teachings. Nevertheless, the higher values are based on the lower values, and we should not set the spirituality against the materiality [12].

III. Architectural Axiology

Axiology of architecture is the science about the nature of values of architectural works and connections between different values of architectural objects, as well as their dependence on social-cultural and personal factors [14, p. 35]. As the separate direction of architecture, axiology is not developed enough as a structure. Typically, it is used in the restoration and protection of architectural landmarks, culturology, and aesthetics. Also, it exists at the intersection of other sciences, such as gnoseology, semiotics, phenomenology, psychology, sociology, ecology, eniology, ergonomics, and other directions that ensure function, safety, etc.

The values are attributable to a certain need at a certain moment of time. If an individual needs to warm up, aesthetic properties will not be the main criterion. Also, values may appear in different “roles” simultaneously: at different levels of needs (e.g. ecological value at a physical level – harmless materials, at a social level – space management, at a self-actuating level – responsibility for nature and environment), be material (object) and nonmaterial (respect, love), subjective and objective. Alternatively, values can possess one of the opposite qualities (a value may be conscious or unconscious, norm or ideal, comfort or risk).

Here is one more classification of the architectural values: subject (feeling, understanding), commitment to the subject (need, ideal, norm, which may be both material and nonmaterial), objects and subjects as bearers

of the value (natural-spatial, social-spatial, dimensional-spatial values).

According to Vitruvius, the trinity “strength – usability – beauty” should develop evenly [15]. The idea of the fact that it may be considered as a set of isolated qualities, which may be managed separately, comes from architectural eclecticism of the late 19th century [16]. Decorative fixtures, that were valuable from aesthetic and artistic points of view, had no practical functions and were not dependent on the building’s constructional solution. The decorations were put onto the building as a makeup [17, p. 118]. Starting from the early 20th century the functionalism continues this idea, and demonstrates the domination of usability. This vision led to the crisis in different areas, but it was balanced by integrative attitude and understanding of correlation.

Architectural values are divided into groups according to the main areas of human life (physical (body, individual), social (personal), and spiritual (self-realization):

Physical/body level:

Cheapness – degree of “affordability, usage and possession of an architectural object or its part”. From one hand, it represents availability, but from the other hand lowers the quality of other parameters and the level of consumer’s claims[16]. Ecological architecture denies the statement that the quality should depend on price[18].

Comfort – state of the passive balance, when the basic survival needs are fulfilled: air, water, food, sleep, warmth. The more detailed explanation includes functionality, safety, and warm relationships[19].

Functionality – from one hand, it is a fulfillment of basic body needs – maximum profit for minimum energy consumption. From the other hand it is tribute to Descartes’ philosophy – “consider only evident as true” [20, p. 260], thus crossing out all “unscientific” and sensual. In the theory of functionalism, the beauty is the pleasure from usability[21].

Safety – corresponds to the reproductive instinct, the necessity to keep and carry what an individual possesses. An architecture provides archetypal protection - an ability to conquer the fear of the nature, its unexpectedness and complexity[22]. Physiological safety: fire and sanitary safety, labor protection, property protection, harmless materials[16]. Psychological safety is a confidence in good future – ecological and economical values, social safety – moral values, territorial behavior[23].

Social/personal level:

Identification with environment is one of the aspects of identification with a group (nation, family) and with with suchlike. It is represented by a need for love. It is typical of people to feel a spontaneous need for animating and self-identifying themselves with the environment around. An individual unconsciously transfers to oneself an environment’s attitude [16, 33]. If the values of objective-spatial environment coincide with the values of an individual, this arise the feelings of belonging to that environment, comfort, empathy, responsibility. This is represented by the attribute – axiological items (national, family) [24]. Anthropomorphic and human-scaled forms also cause the effect of similarity. Sympathy to the environment, which may be identified with, motivates an individual to model oneself on it and meet its requirements. Impossibility to identify oneself with something leads to estrangement and apathy towards the environment [35,36].

Ownership of space (personalization) - “adoption of space is not only a privilege of separate gifted people, but also a

biological function” L. Moholy-Nagy [23]. “To gain possession of a space is the primary intention of every living thing” Le Corbusier [23]. We tend to consider some space around our bodies as continuation of ourselves[24]. Therefore, we separate our inner space from an overall area. We consider invasion into our space as an attack on our physical or psychological freedom. In such situations, an individual becomes aggressive or “goes into shell”[25,26]. Here belong also visibility (what I see belongs to me), sounds (determines the territory of “possession”), spreading of personal belongings (self-projection). Initially the ownership of space was necessary to protect vulnerable functions (food, sleep, sexual act, giving birth and bringing up children). The ownership of space in the group looks like the demonstration of power and provides the possibilities of space management and seclusion (privacy)[27].

Information contact – sensor and semantic diversity of an environment. Information contact is necessary for orientation and perception. Information load should balance between these two needs – to be understandable enough and complicated enough[23].

Orientation – handling of existing data and using it as a basis for new similar mental structures. We can separate orientation in space, in the production process, in the understanding of your place in society and world[23]. Regularity, simplicity, and structuredness enable easy understanding, as well as provide relaxation and safety. Impossibility to reveal the trends and understand the system leads to the syndrome of acquired helplessness.

Need to cognize – handling of opposite qualities – complexity and newness. We feel positive when reality coincides with our expectations, but still partially differs from them. Ideal correlation is approximately 80% of usual and predictable things and 20% of new. Complexity of environment, combined with organization, may be called an “intellectual pleasure”. In addition, a special pleasure can be derived from perception of complex objects, which gradually reveal the deepness of their diversity[23].

Recognition/respect – a discernible advantage – betterness (depends on the cultural values), highness, central or higher position in a city structure or possession of the premises that provide more control (visibility) and safety. Desire to distinguish - apartness, uncommon solutions – “I am better, then, I am different”, accuracy, decoration – all of these elements increase personal significance.

Sophistication (accuracy, nuances) is straight in approaching human personality. The feeling of committed efforts increases self-esteem (an individual takes it personally), expresses the value of existence. Rough, low-quality work indicates an individual’s inferiority complex[16].

Level of self-actualization/soul:

Architectural catharsis is traditionally implemented by arrhythm and contrast of space-light influence (exit from dark into light, from narrow into broad), as well as by sharp compositional aspects (obelisk). Catharsis is a transformation of negative feelings into positive through liberation. Tension and discomfort lead to ecstasy[28]. One of its variations – the *need for conscious risk* – the wish to achieve something new, even if something previously achieved may be lost, the need to explore, the need to overcome obstacles[12]. After taking the conscious risk, an individual becomes stronger. Functionally this can be implemented by gyms, climbing, and amusement arcades with visible dangers.

Ecological performance is a wish not to do any harm and the feeling of responsibility, which comes from realization of unity with the world, nature, and people. Considering the world as the unified system results in architecture, which avoids harming environment and depleting the Earth's resources during the production of materials, building, usage, and after the buildings' demolishing[18].

Truth is a part of another axiological trinity "truth – goodness – beauty". Truth - authenticity, nonbuttafory, honesty – when a building really is what it pretends to be (materials, quality of work, and atmosphere). Architecture that imitates, creates an impression of affectation, nongenuinity, irresponsibility. In order for the information to be perceived accurately and convey its deep core, inner and outer should strengthen each other, and not be set against.

"Goodness" is a feeling of caring, friendly attitude of the architecture; it is coziness, safety; it is a similarity to a human (form, human-scalability); natural diversity, in contrast to monotonous aggressiveness; reaching out to important values. "Beauty" is aesthetical and artistic values that refer to our feelings and emotions[29].

Aesthetics is the ability to create and feel beauty. Beauty is a material manifestation of our visualization of a good life [16]. It reminds us of our higher values and invites to experience them.

Mental factor - C. Norberg-Schulz separates the following components of it: history of a place (strongly emotionally loaded events), emotional function (positive places, like creative workshops or maternity clinics, differ from places where people suffer – hospitals with severely ill people and prisons), and the state of people who stay in the place. Places and environments evolve along with the evolution of humanity; biological matter transforms into an intelligent one[30]. The process of realization is essential for the process of development and learning somebody's inner nature, as well as for an integration of outer (national or other) senses and values into an inner nature of an individual[6,12].

"*Spirit of a place*" is an aftertaste, an impression, which stays after the contact with the architectural creation. It comes from the synergy of a landscape, history of a place, an individual, architecture, function, and itself. Ability to experience and feel is more important than an intellectual knowledge[30].

Conclusion

An individual vibrates between animal instincts and spiritual nature. He/she often seeks for outer support. That is why an architectural environment should provide a backbone for these opposites balancing, and, on the other hand, serve as a resemblance of what an individual strives for. Thus, integrative architecture reaches the bottom of the human values (comfort, safety, body needs) and goes up to spiritual, transcendental, and panhuman values. Integrative architecture requires consideration of the full spectrum of qualities of a human being, as well as an understanding of the role of architectural environment in them.

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