



Airport Architecture in the Context of Heterotopian Spaces

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In my Ph.D. project I will explore airport architecture in the context of 'heterotopian spaces', analyzing the architecture and 'performativity' of the interior space of these buildings as a sociocultural phenomenon and investigating the anthropological aspects of public spaces and 'non-places' as discussed by Marc Augé, Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau and other sociologists and philosophers.

My research has shown that airports have been envisioned and developed as gateways and monuments of political power and societal changes ever since the First World War. Le Corbusier explored the idea of positioning an airport in the pulsating center of what was to be the city of the future. Due to the impracticality of the matter he then removed his ideal *Naked Airport* far away from the city center, stripped naked of unnecessary buildings and obstructions on the airfield, offering instead a clear view of the airplanes.

Following Le Corbusier's paradigm, airports were designed that would have a landside and an airside, the latter consisting of generous glass curtain walls and offering unobstructed views of the aircraft and airfield. Renowned architects such as Eero Saarinen (Washington Dulles Airport, TWA Terminal JFK), Norman Foster (Stansted, Hong Kong and Beijing Airports) and Curtis Fentress (Denver, Incheon, TBIT LAX Airport) have since evolved the art of building an airport. Their work will be critically investigated in my dissertation with comparative case studies and through discovering the iconological process of building a hybrid architecture/signature building in the wake of globalization. Modern airports are no longer simply functional passageways and transitory spaces but rather public places with piazzas, malls and art installations, with dramatic architectural forms and interiors that are often rooted in the vernacular building traditions of their respective regions.

Criticism of the international style of the last century by philosophers and designers has led to a reflection on the importance of a sense of place in architecture in the last 30 years. The need for this so called "anthropological place" in which travelers and consumers can identify with (and as such spend more time and money there) has been taken up by philosophers and cultural critics whose theories of 'non-places', 'heterotopian spaces', space and place, interiors and society I will investigate in order to show the origins of this hybrid architecture, which can be traced back to Paxton's Crystal Palace (1851) and Benjamin's Passageways of Paris. Thus my dissertation will be an examination of the interrelation of our culture, society, public places and architecture seen through the lens of an airport terminal.