**The Mansion of Adam**
An investigation of architecture at the phase of displacement

**I. Introduction**

Learning the methodologies of each field of study is an integral part of understanding and improving that field. In the case of architecture, it does not matter if we see architecture as a medium of thinking and reflection toward the world around or a science of construction that contributes with engineering sciences; in both definitions, research is the inseparable part of the architecture.

In the competitive environment of architectural practices, research is the tool that can differentiate one firm from the other. Researching and positioning toward the gained knowledge through the process of investigating is the way one can define him/herself in the real world. Moreover, development and innovation will not be possible without learning research methodologies, which act as a set of tools to attain to the existing knowledge of the field. Learning methodology facilitate the path to reach the next steps of research and a better outcome.

Probably the most beneficial part of the course to me was the introduction of various architectural research methodologies besides the related readings that were provided for each subject. Moreover, presentations of architects who used research as a tool to design, besides the introductory texts to different methodologies, was a very useful and practical example to show the mutual relation between research and practice.

Out of the presented subjects, the subject of Investigating on Spatial Narratives could be regarded as the most interesting topic of the course to me. The relation between linguistic studies and architecture was an eye-opening subject that directly affected my research approach thereafter.

The course presents multiple methodologies of investigating a subject without giving superiority to a methodology over the other. My interpretation of the heterarchical classification of different methodologies leads to choosing a selection of different methodologies in the investigation of my thesis's research question.

The Thesis topic rose from the studio's excursion to four cities of Caucasus (Poti, Tbilisi, Ganja, and Baku) along with the personal interest to the old Caravanserais. In two and a half week of the road trip to four cities in two countries, we experienced some sort of nomadic life. Our residence was in subject of constant changing, a dwelling that "…exhibits an incompletion, the impossibility of finishing …" (Derrida, 1987). However, each time our settlement acts as a new origin point to redefine our relationship to the surrounding context (Heidegger, 1971).

This paper investigates the meaning of place at the phase of disconnection of an individual with his former settlement, due to a drastic inner or outer factor. Provisionally, this phase is called displacement in this paper. The research question explores the term of displacement and its relation to the architecture and investigates how does displacement interpret in the architectural context? In addition, how could the subject of displacement translate into an architectural form? According to the experimental characteristics of the studio (Borders and Conditions along the New Silk Road), this paper explores the meaning of place in a mutual relation between research and design. The outcome is going to be an experiment that does not look at the architecture as a shelter maker but as a medium of thinking and making semantic communication.

## II. Research-Methodological Discussion

For the purpose of this thesis, two different methodologies were adopted together. Firstly, the meaning of the place investigated through a critical reading of the history of philosophy with an emphasis on the texts of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida. Subsequently, drawing used as a research method to investigate the collected data of the field trip initially and to study the term of displacement in architecture in the next step.

In investigating any field of study there should be a related terminology to be the base of further argumentations. On the subject of this thesis, although displacement is a term that has been derived from the term of place, it does not have an explicit definition in architecture. Besides that, although there are numerous studies on the term of place in architecture, relatively various definitions of place express different points of view on this subject, which sometimes are in contrast to each other. Due to the aforementioned reasons and the vagueness of the term of displacement, at the start point of the research, it was necessary to reach a precise definition of the displacement. Displacement defined by an investigation in different meanings of place through the history of philosophy. However, the respective readings did not use to argue about the accuracy of each definition, but the definitions of place in the texts of Heidegger and Derrida used as thesis and anti-thesis of my discussion to reach to a personal interpretation of place and displacement subsequently. At the end, the interpretation of displacement in architecture created the theoretical framework of later stages of research and design.

At the first stages of the studio, the collected information of the excursion, which was recorded through photos, notes, and drawings, to the four cities of Caucuses and the border city of Georgia and Azerbaijan mapped based on the qualitative characteristics of each visit. The experience of mapping a qualitative indicator beside the experimental characteristics of Borders & Conditions studio encouraged me to use drawing as a research methodology in later part of research and design. In the next step, drawing is going to be used to investigate the conceptual notions, which are defined by getting help from philosophy, in the architecture.

Application of philosophy to the research helped to found the essential basis of design. Besides that, by not completely relying on any specific philosophical tradition it was possible to take a critical position to the adaptation of tools or definitions from any of the philosophical traditions. The outcome of investigating between philosophy and architecture made it possible to choose the potent site for the subject of the thesis, through mapping and drawing of different cities. In the next stages of the project, the mutual relation between the components of my research/design approach will be continued. Moving back and forward through two adopted methodologies will shape the project in the later stages.

If we trace back the tradition of thinking about architecture, we will found out this tradition as old as the history of philosophy. For example, we can point out to the meaning of place through the history of philosophy. Edward Casey in his 1997 book *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History,* discusses the concept of place in works of philosophers from ancient time to nowadays, from considering place as "… one of the ten indispensable categories of every substance," in the work of Aristotle, to the place as the signifier of "being-in-the-world" in Heidegger's text. However, these theories are not apart from architecture research and practice, as we can find the use of philosophy in works of contemporary architects, out of which I can point out to the use of phenomenology in articles and professional projects of Juhani Pallasmaa and poststructuralism in works of Peter Eisenman.

Drawing as a native instrument of architecture is a practical tool for investigating in the field of architecture (Lucas, 2016). Out of contemporary attempts to use drawing in research, two different

approaches could be regarded here. Firstly, formal studies of Eisenman in which he used drawing to investigate the theory of Gilles Deleuze (Lucas, 2016; Eisenman, 1999). Secondly, using drawing in an allegorical layout to investigate the notion of qualitative concepts in architecture, Michael Webb (Webb, 1987) and Rem Koolhaas (Koolhaas, 1978) are among this category (Haralambidou, 2007).

The challenge in dealing with two methodologies in which one of them is text-based and the other is image-based is the difficulties of merging two systems of thinking together and translating from one methodology to the other. The difficulty is not only because of different natures of the methodologies but also because of the necessity of translation; in this regard, Derrida argues in his translated paper, *Des tours de Babel*, about the almost impossibility of translating from one language to the other without changing of the meaning (Derrida, 1987).

**III. Research-Methodological Reflection**

Philosophy has a significant impact on architecture through history as it discussed in the previous section. In the thesis, my focus is on the place and architecture in Heidegger and Derrida's points of view, which are among the main figures of two schools of thought, respectively phenomenology, and poststructuralism.

Phenomenology as one of the most related branches of philosophy to architecture founded in the early twentieth century, in which the philosophical concerns of the structures of consciousness and experience lead to the interrelationship between phenomenology and architecture. Among the philosophers whose works contributed to the development of phenomenology in architecture, Heidegger with studies on the being-dwelling relationship and Maurice Merleau-Ponty with studies on the perception's phenomenology could be mentioned (Lucas, 2016; Sharr, 2007).

Poststructuralism appeared in the sixth decade of the twentieth century as a reaction to its former school of taught, structuralism. However, unlike the structuralism that follows the same approach between its followers, in poststructuralism, we are confronted with various and controversial approaches.[1] Poststructuralism theory argues that the understanding of things happens through the relation and the difference between the things (Coyne, 2011).

Nowadays many architects and architecture scholars are associated with philosophical theories in their projects and articles. Peter Zumthor and Peter Eisenman are among the architects who used philosophy, respectively phenomenology, and poststructuralism, in their theoretical works, which appear later in their architectural practices.

Although the methods of drawing changed through the time, drawing as an essential part of the architecture in both as an instrument of representation and a critical tool of investigating continue to its life. Nevertheless, in the study of drawing as a tool of research, the drawing should be considered as a language of thought rather than an expression implement (Hewitt, 1985).

Through history, drawing was used in various methods to study related issues of architecture. During renaissance due to the discovery of perspective rules, new possibilities provided for architects to experience through drawing, and in the later centuries the experimental process of imagining the buildings that are not buildable through drawing, led to an architecture known as *visionary* or *paper architecture* (Harbison, 1991).

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[1] Such as Bernard Tschumi's comment on postmodernists, that stated postmodernism is "making Doric temple forms out of plywood" (Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi in Conversation, 18 May 2001, ETH Zürich).

Among those, who used drawing as an investigation tool in the pre-modern era the followings could be mentioned. Pirro Ligorio in 1551 and Giovanni Battista Piranesi in 1762 used drawing for historical investigation of ancient Rome, by reconstructing the city through their drawing process. Besides studying the history of the past, drawing used to imagine the possible future of architecture as we can see in an imaginary drawing of the Bank of England in ruins, which is drawn by John Soane in 1830. Besides animating the demolished past or imaginary future, drawing was used in practice related studies as well, among which we can point out to the works of Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand in 1800 in investigating building typologies through drawing.

In recent years, we can see numerous approaches among architects in using drawing to research. Rem Koolhaas, Bernard Tschumi, Daniel Libeskind, Peter Eisenman, and John Hejduk are among the architect-researchers who use drawing for their research/designs (Lucas, 2016; Allen & Pearson, 2016). However, each architect's approach differs in term of language that they use. For example in some works such as the Tschumi's diagrams in *Manhattan transcripts*, drawing used in an allegorical manner whereas in Hejduk's houses typology we are confronted with a more analytical approach.

In my approach, philosophy used to help to formulate the terminology of the project. In defining the definition of displacement, although the works of Heidegger and Derrida were the backbone of the project, it has been tried to consider the meaning of place through the history of philosophy as the background knowledge of the project. However, the meaning of displacement did not adopt completely from one on the opinions and has been interpreted by considering both works of the aforementioned philosophers and subsequently two related schools of thoughts of phenomenology, and poststructuralism. Drawing used at first to map the visited cities, in order to document the excursion and find the appropriate site for the mentioned topic of the thesis. In the next step, drawing used to investigate the meaning of displacement in an allegorical style based on the outcome of the literature review.

Displacement is an obscure and equivocal term and needs an explicit definition to make it possible to start the next stages of the research/design. In the field of architecture numerous studies have been done on the meaning of the place and as the novel studies will be built on former knowledge, the works of the predecessors have been used to achieve a new concept. In the next step, due to the incorporeal nature of the place and consequently displacement, drawing in an allegorical style has been used to visualize the invisible. As one of the pioneers of this method, I can cite Koolhaas who used allegorical drawing to theorize his thoughts in his 1978 book *Delirious New York* (Haralambidou, 2007).

**IV Positioning**

In this paper, the following position with regard to architecture and term of displacement has been taken. The architecture of displacement is the architecture of dreaming, thinking, and interpreting; it is the architecture of dreaming in a sense that it let to its user to be in the past (through nostalgia) and future (through vision) while his physical body exists at present. In order to elaborate on this position, the process of approach will be explained.

In the pursuit of the meaning of place, Heidegger defines the dwelling as something that man uses to define his relation to the world, which will help Heidegger later to define the place as where the activity and experience exist (Heidegger, 1971; Sharr, 2007). In Derridean point of view, man is seen as a nomad that his comprehension from his surroundings is through understanding the differences and relations between the things (Coyne, 2011). Indeed, in Heideggerian point of view, the relation between man and world is through man's dwelling on the ground, while in Derridean perspective, man is always on the motion and he becomes aware of his environment through the differences between the things. Based on the mentioned statements, terms of placement and displacement in this paper has defined as follows:

Man is on a journey throughout his life, a journey consisted of numerous road segments (Derridean places) and nodes (Heideggerian places). At the moment of reaching to each of these nodes, they will act as a new origin point for man to understand his temporary relation to his surroundings at that moment, which could be considered as the phase of placement. However, when the man is compelled to leave his placement, due to internal or external forces, he will be in the phase of displacement, a phase where he is physically or psychologically detached from his previous placement and being located between two Heideggerian places, a phase that could be regarded as a Derridean place. In this phase, although he is displaced from his previous place, his still in connection to it physically or psychologically, but not both.

In a world that is regularly changing, the displacement is one of the things that is happening every moment and everywhere in the world. Displacement's origin could be due to the external (physical) or internal (psychological) factors, which both can effect on different architectural fields. External factors, such as war, result in human settlement's destruction, an occurrence that led to physical demolition and needs to the re-construction of the settlement. However, in the psychological issues, the man's settlement physically exists but the psychological relation between mas's mind (psychological home) and his physical home is interrupted (Casey, 1997; Sigmon, 2002). Out of the different mentioned types of displacement, this paper has been focused on the psychological detachment of man from his surroundings, when he needs to redefine his relation to the world.

At the phase of psychological displacement, man requires to redefine his relation to his surrounding world to reconnect both of his psychological and physical houses. Mind as the tool of this redefinition should be irritated at the phase of psychological displacement and facilitate the process of redefinition. Indeed, architecture could act as a medium that is tasked to make the mind pay attention to its surrounding, an attention that will start with reading a sign through the building, a sign that led to dream, interpret the dream, think about the surrounding environment through the personal interpretation, and finally redefine the man's relation to the world.

The paper revolves around the subject of place in architecture and concentrates on the definition of displacement in architecture. The paper proposes that architecture at a psychological displacement phase of man, when the building exist but the relation between man and his dwelling is missing, needs a critical consideration. It purposes to consider architecture as a medium of knowledge transfer to the users. The major aim of the paper and the project in the next step is to establish meaningful encounters between the users and elements of the project as the signs of the project's story, a mutual relation that led to the revision of the user on his previous relation to the world.

Place as one of the most interconnected words with the field of architecture has a long history of existence in architectural terminology, however, this is not applicable for one of place's same family word, displacement. Displacement as a term that I was intended to investigate its possible definition in the architecture does not have an explicit definition in architectural dictionaries. In the process of defining the term of displacement, although the philosophical discourses helped to adjust the theoretical framework of displacement's definition, it was not possible to investigate the architectural characteristics of displacement in architecture only by use of text. However, the drawing as a research tool helped in the next step to investigate the possible spatial configurations of architecture at the phase of displacement. In this paper, philosophy besides drawing were a practical pair of methodologies that shaped my research approach, in which philosophy take care of theoretical investigation and drawing used to study the architectural features of the project. The balanced usage of these two methodologies could be considered as a practical research approach in the investigation of architectural subjects in theory and practice.

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