

## Reusing Postmodern Heritage: How Literary Theories Can Help

*Reconvertir le patrimoine post-moderniste : l'apport des théories littéraires*

**Maxime Coq and Claudine Houbart**

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This article is based on a paper that was presented during the 2020 Society of Architectural Historians session, entitled “Preserving the Postmodern Past.”

## Introduction

- 1 In the last few years, a striking renewal of interest in postmodern architecture has arisen, be it through conferences, publications and media or, more importantly, the surging defence of its built heritage.<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously, as numerous postmodern buildings are nearing the end of their lifespans, whether from a functional or a constructive point of view, the time has come for them to face an unavoidable update. Yet, history has shown that the task is not that simple, as the misunderstanding of postmodern architecture can easily lead to proposals displaying no consistent dialogue with the existing structures, or worse, to demolishing essential parts of their composition and jeopardising the transmission of the buildings' architectural values.
- 2 Fateful examples are unfortunately plentiful, from Michael Graves's Portland Building and Venturi Scott Brown's extension of the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, to Jon Jerde's Horton Plaza or even Philip Johnson's AT&T Building.<sup>2</sup> A clear depiction of the problem can be seen in the recently completed transformation and expansion of the 1985 Hood Museum of Art in New Hampshire.<sup>3</sup> Designed by leading postmodern architect Charles Moore, the original building offered a subtle, yet remarkably contextual architectural language. On the site, Wilson Hall, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century neo-Romanesque brick building, and 1962 modernist Hopkins Centre (Wallace K. Harrison),

were convincingly and delicately connected with a gate concealing the entrance and a sculpture courtyard for the museum (fig. 1). At the time, critic Roger Kimball even recognized that “its concrete gateway minimizes the visual chaos that was bound to attend any effort to bridge two such wildly different buildings, and its sturdy brick construction establishes at least some degree of visual coherence in the *mélange* that faces East Wheelock Street and the Dartmouth Green”<sup>4</sup> (fig. 2).

Figure 1. Aerial Sketch of the Hood Museum



Charles Moore's original Hood Museum in Dartmouth. From left to right: Wilson Hall, the Hood Museum and the Hopkins Centre.

© Charles Moore Foundation

Figure 2. Original Hood Museum



Charles Moore's original front facade of the Hood Museum in Dartmouth. From left to right: Wilson Hall, the Hood Museum and the Hopkins Centre.

© Timothy Hursley

- 3 However, Billie Tsien and Tod Williams Architects' expansion plan removed this crucial entrance sequence, only to replace it with an anonymous white box that visually disconnects the museum from its context, be it Wilson Hall, Hopkins Centre or even the original museum itself (fig. 3). Before, this end of the building actually displayed an intricate architectural language. It integrated references to the past, such as the concrete entranceway itself, and to the existing buildings on site, such as the brickwork, the arched window typology, the window frame design, and the gable roofs. This created an ambiguous and complex semantic unity, typical of postmodernism. However, and needless to say, neither the 'new' architectural style and language nor the expansion itself are in any way in dialogue with Moore's building, nor with the neighbouring buildings.

Figure 3. "New" Hood Museum



Tod Williams and Billie Tsien's front facade of the remodelled and expanded Hood Museum.

© Rob Strong

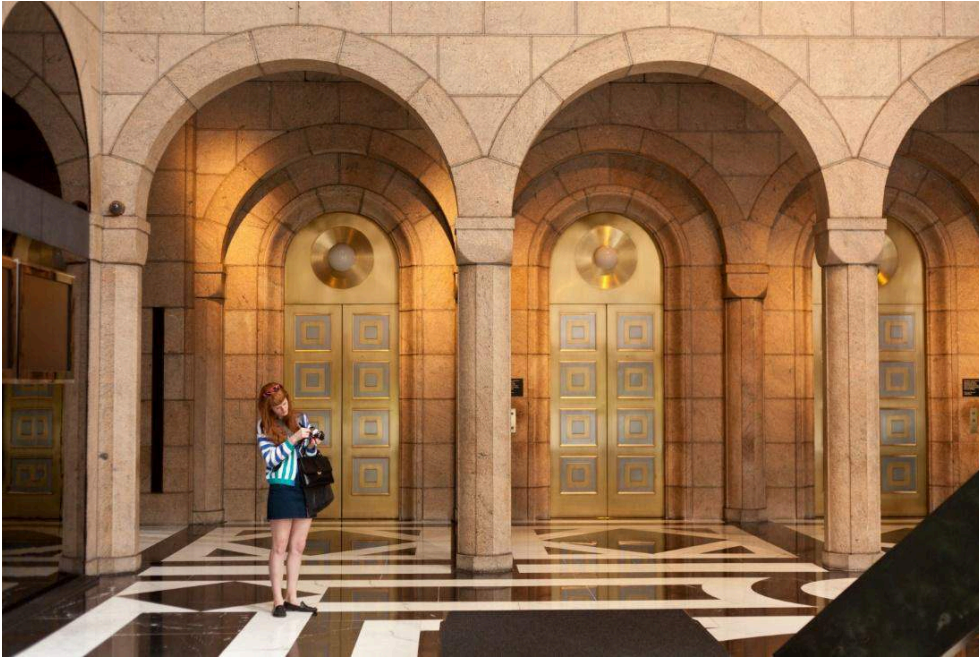
- 4 Here, the significant issue lies in the realm of meaninglessness: the choice of a particular language is a predominant characteristic, if not the most significant feature, of postmodern architecture. As such, understanding and mastering it seems like an unavoidable step before designing any addition or transformation. National and international guidance documents for the preservation and restoration of historic buildings—such as the Venice Charter or the United States' Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation—commonly settle that any addition to a historic building should be differentiated from the existing composition. However, they also state that this distinctive stamp should be subtle, and should not detract from significant parts of the original building.<sup>5</sup> In the case of the Hood Museum, while Moore's building did comply with these principles, the new expansion not only leads to the disappearance of some of the most significant parts of the original composition, but also puts an end to a dialogue that the postmodern wing successfully initiated.
- 5 Naturally, joining an ongoing conversation where the interlocutors have found common ground may seem like a boring exercise. Thus, one might be tempted to throw a cat among the pigeons, particularly if the words are deemed worthless. Further, even had the architectural value of Moore's building been acknowledged by all concerned parties, designing an addition in such a context would have been quite challenging. This, however, is where literary theories may come into play, not only to get a better understanding of postmodern language, but also to help develop a vocabulary of intervention that is both respectful of its particularities and of generally accepted conservation principles.

- 6 To foresee the future of these postmodern buildings, we argue in true postmodern fashion that one should look back to the past and bridge the gap between architecture and literature, just as Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown<sup>6</sup> and Charles Jencks<sup>7</sup> did before us. This would allow to import literary tools into our field once again, in order to thoroughly understand the language of postmodern architecture. The concept of transtextuality, derived from literary critic Gerard Genette's 1982 book *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, can therefore prove particularly helpful in trying to thoroughly perceive the subtleties of different underlying tones implied by the use of references, hints and nods in postmodern architecture.<sup>8</sup>
- 7 Transtextuality, as Genette defines it, is "all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts,"<sup>9</sup> a meta-category that actually encompasses five subcategories. Of these, we focus on intertextuality and hypertextuality, both especially useful in the field of architectural study as they delineate relations of textual co-presence—or "the actual presence of one text in another"<sup>10</sup>—as well as their respective tones.<sup>11</sup>

## Hypertextual and intertextual relations

- 8 First and foremost, it is important to draw the necessary distinction between intertextual and hypertextual literary relations. The former specifies relations of textual co-presence at the scale of semantic micro-structures, whether implicit or explicit, literal or non-literal. In literature, these micro-structures could be sentences or parts of texts within another text; while in architecture, they would be architectural elements or fragments of buildings, such as columns, staircases, cornices or window typologies within another building. A compelling example is the intertextual relation between Philip Johnson's columns in his renowned AT&T Building and the Ottonian style columns, such as those found in Saint Michael Church in Hildesheim (fig. 4). Zooming out to semantic macro-structures, hypertextuality determines any relation linking a text B, the hypertext, and a previous text A, the hypotext, from which the former is either derived through imitation or transformation. For instance, in the field of architecture, Alberti's facade for Santa Maria Novella in Florence can be considered the hypotextual origin behind an entire building of Jon Jerde's Horton Plaza shopping mall (fig. 5).

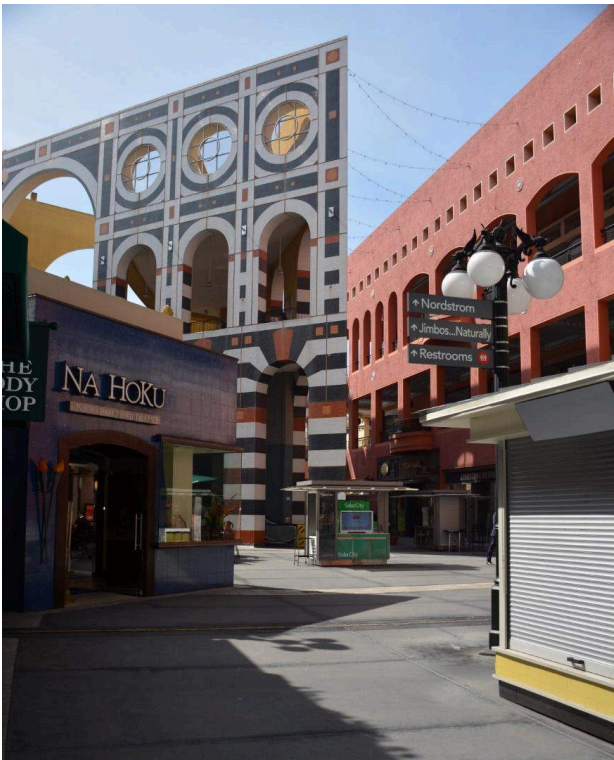
Figure 4. Lobby of the AT&T Building



Original lobby of the AT&T building in New York City, designed by Philip Johnson and complete with Ottonian styled columns.

© Addison Godel

Figure 5. Horton Plaza



Jon Jerde's Horton Plaza in San Diego.

© Roman Eugeniusz



- 9 It is important to keep in mind that, according to Genette, one must not view the five types of transtextuality as separate and absolute categories without any reciprocal contact or overlapping. On the contrary, their relationships to one another are numerous and often crucial.<sup>12</sup>
- 10 This indeed contributes to the richness of the concept; and as in this case, intertextuality and hypertextuality will help both to determine postmodern tones and architectural stances. Theorizing the relationships of co-presence at different levels gives a better understanding of architectural borrowings by approaching them through different semantic angles. On the one hand, references can be considered as autonomous macro-structural semantic units—e.g. Charles Vandenhove’s ionic columns in the Cour Saint-Antoine project as an autonomous reinterpretation of its classical counterpart (fig. 6). On the other, they can be considered as micro-structural semantic units relying on the architectural context with which they coalesce—e.g. Charles Moore’s insertion of reinterpreted ionic columns in the larger context of Lawrence Hall, indicating the entrance (fig. 7). To go through the precise definition of each of these theories, postmodern cases will be used to exemplify the literary techniques contributing to intertextual and hypertextual relations.

Figure 6. Cour Saint-Antoine



Ionic-shaped column of the Cour Saint-Antoine in Liège designed by Charles Vandenhove.

© Maxime Coq

Figure 7. Lawrence Hall



Charles Moore's Lawrence Hall in Williamstown, complete with a pair of reinterpreted ionic columns signalling the entrance.

© Mary Ann Sullivan

## Hypertextuality: borrowings as autonomous subjects

- 11 Clarifying relations at a macro-structural level, thus considering postmodern architectural borrowings as autonomous subjects, hypertextual devices can be sorted in a double-entry chart, as presented by Gerard Genette in *Palimpsests*.<sup>13</sup> First, he identifies two types of derivations or relations: the transformation of a text and the imitation of a style. Then he distinguishes three functions or moods,<sup>14</sup> as he calls them, suitable in both relations: playful, satirical or serious. These offer the possibility to discern an identical typology (transformation or imitation), but whose tone varies (playful, satirical or serious).
- 12 Genette specifies that the mood categories should not be considered as hermetic, since the relations' distinction is more profound, and that "one could even go so far as to say that every form of hypertextuality entails some kind of game, inherent in the very practice of reusing existing structures [...]."<sup>15</sup> Thus, it is a rhetorical game that is as indivisible from hypertextual relations as it is from postmodern architecture, making the exercise of field-crossing even more interesting and relevant. As presented by Genette, each crossed-category coincides with a literary device (tab. 1).

Table 1. Hypertextuality Chart

relation \ mood	playful	satirical	serious
imitation	<i>PASTICHE</i>	<i>CARICATURE</i>	<i>FORGERY</i>
transformation	<i>PARODY</i>	<i>TRAVESTY</i>	<i>TRANSPPOSITION</i>

Gerard Genette's hypertextual chart delineating the different macro-structural semantic relations.

© Maxime Coq

- 13 The derivations by imitation are divided into three literary mechanisms: pastiche (playful mood), caricature (satirical mood) and forgery (serious mood). Each one of these is defined by its imitation of a hypotext's style and the respective mood it implies. In the realm of postmodern analysis, one can consider Venturi Scott Brown's facade of the National Gallery's Sainsbury Wing in London as a pastiche or caricature of the neighbouring façade, displaying a playful yet satirical mood (fig. 8). As the key component of both of these literary devices is the exaggeration of style, it is definitely perceivable through the arrangement of the facade's pilasters—themselves serious imitations of the neighbouring building, except greater in number, gathered together and supporting a vanishing entablature.

Figure 8. Sainsbury Wing at the National Gallery



From left to right: Venturi Scott Brown's designed Sainsbury Wing expansion and the National Gallery of London.

© Rory Hyde

- 14 On the contrary, Disney's Beach and Yacht Club Resorts designed by Robert A. M. Stern can be seen as great examples of forgeries (fig. 9). They are both imitations and

continuations of American historic coastal architectural styles—namely Shingle and Stick—used, in this case, to create a new subject: a hotel.

Figure 9. Beach Club Resort

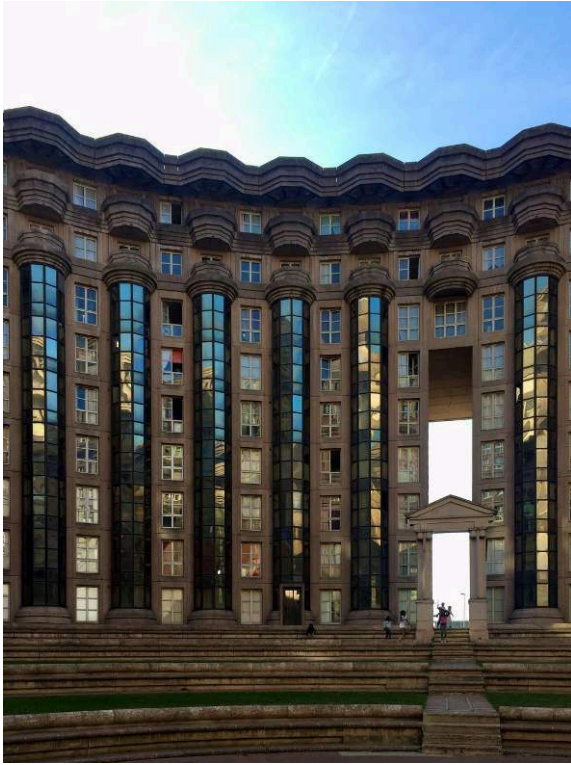


Robert Stern's Beach Club Resort hotel's Shingle and Sticks inspired facade at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando.

© Loren Javier

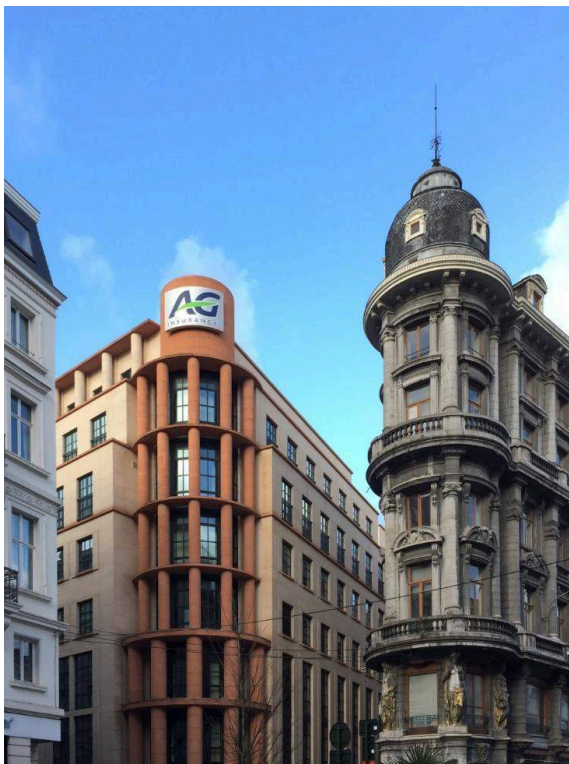
- 15 Derivations by transformation are also divided into three literary devices, depending on tone: parody (playful mood), travesty (satirical mood) and transposition (serious mood). Whereas imitations are a matter of style and not subject, all derivations by transformation are based on the alteration of a hypotext to create a hypertext. Style and subject can thus both be modified to reflect the mood that the author wants to convey.
- 16 Parody, as it is delineated according to Genette's theory, "consists in the transformation of a text whose subject it modifies while preserving its style."<sup>16</sup> As such, in Ricardo Bofill's *Les Espaces d'Abraças* near Paris, the glazed colonnade represents a perfect parody. While maintaining style, albeit with slight modification, the subject is changed: a column that was once a structural component becomes an oriel (fig. 10). Another example is Michael Graves's 2003 Fortis/AG headquarters in Brussels, which is a parody of the neighbouring tower. While style is altered, if considering the tower as a whole, the primary operation taking place is a modification of the subject, where a facade with engaged columns becomes an exoskeleton standing on its own (fig. 11).

Figure 10. Les Espaces d'Abbraxas



Les Espaces d'Abbraxas's palazzo facade designed by Ricardo Boffil for Noisy-le-Grand  
© Maxime Coq

Figure 11. Fortis/AG Headquarters



The Fortis/AG headquarters in Brussels designed by Michael Graves.  
© Maxime Coq

- 17 In Venturi Scott Brown's (lost) extension for the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, the columns and pergolas were to be regarded as a travesty of those found in Irvin Gill's original Scripps House. This kind of transformation implies maintaining the subject while changing its style, usually through exaggeration (fig. 12). Although an undeniably playful mood is conveyed—as Genette acknowledges for nearly all categories—in this case, the primary transformation from hypotext to hypertext consists of an exaggeration of style, where the elements become much bigger and wider than the original ones.

Figure 12. Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego



Venturi Scott Brown's designed expansion of the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, with Irvin Gill's Scripps House in the background.

© Timothy Hursley

- 18 Lastly, transpositions entail a serious mood, as seen in Charles Vandenhove's personal reinterpretations of the classical ionic columns—even though these recurring components of the architect's work are colloquially referred to as 'Mickey Mouse Columns' by his close collaborators (fig. 6).<sup>17</sup> Like the reinterpretations of historical architectural elements concealed within Philip Johnson's (lost) AT&T Building lobby (fig. 4), such as Ottonian columns, the subject of Charles Vandenhove's columns is maintained. Further, style is only slightly modified, in that the columns keep their scale and seriousness, while the capital's scrolled volutes are amplified.
- 19 As categories are not hermetic, several moods of transformation can be implied within ambiguous postmodern examples. Michael Graves's Fortis/AG headquarters, for example, is such a case, representing both a parody as well as a travesty, with exaggeration through outnumbered columns (fig. 11). However, Jon Jerde's 1985 Horton Plaza is both a parody of Alberti's Santa Maria Novella, transforming the facade into an exoskeleton, and a travesty through the obvious exaggeration of style (fig. 5).

## Intertextuality: borrowings within their context

- 20 On the other side of the transtextual spectrum, intertextuality theory defines textual co-presence at a micro-structural level. Postmodern architectural borrowings are therefore considered as parts of a greater whole with which they dialogue. Another double-entry chart helps classify the intertextual devices depending on whether the co-presence is explicit or implicit, and literal or non-literal (tab. 2).<sup>18</sup> As Genette states,

in its most explicit and literal form, it is the traditional practice of quoting [...]. In another less explicit and canonical form, it is the practice of plagiarism [...]. Again, in still less explicit and less literal guise, it is the practice of allusion.<sup>19</sup>

- 21 The different literary devices emanating from each crossed-category are as follows: quotation (literal and explicit), plagiarism (literal and implicit), and allusion (non-literal and implicit). As these relations are meant to be complementary, the buildings used to exemplify intertextual relations will be those previously considered through the lens of hypertextuality.

Table 2. Intertextuality Chart

relation \ form	literal	non-literal
explicit	<b>QUOTATION</b>	
implicit	( <i>PLAGIARISM</i> )	<b>ALLUSION</b> ( <i>metaphoric or metonymic</i> )

Gerard Genette's intertextual chart delineating the different micro-structural semantic relations.

© Maxime Coq

- 22 In the realm of literal co-presences in postmodern architecture, it is difficult to draw a precise line between explicit and implicit borrowings. In fact, it is quite difficult, if ever possible, to explicitly quote (with all the punctuation marks that it implies) in architecture. Admittedly, as postmodern architects usually reinterpret older architectural elements, cases of plagiarism are rarely recognizable, and could rather be seen as influences. Thus, only the quotation device will be considered. A great example of this literary process can be seen in Venturi Scott Brown's facade of the National Gallery's Sainsbury Wing, where pilasters are explicitly and literally quoted from its neighbour (fig. 8).
- 23 The non-literal implicit type of relation, and probably the most interesting one, is allusion. It essentially "evokes one thing without saying it explicitly, by means of another thing that makes you think about it."<sup>20</sup> Therefore, in a perfectly postmodern way, it requires the reader to perceive it as "an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it [the text] and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible."<sup>21</sup> It is, however, necessary to distinguish two different types of allusions that can operate in the field of architectural analysis: metaphoric allusions and metonymic ones.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 13. AT&amp;T Building



Original AT&T building in New York City designed by Philip Johnson.

© David Shankbone

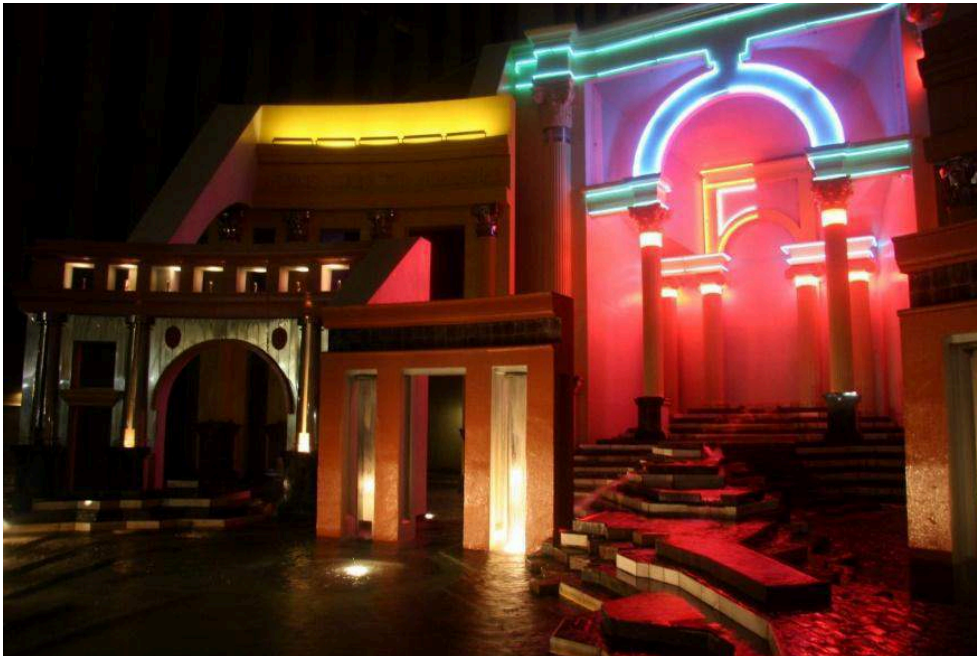
- 24 Metaphoric allusion generates a relation based on common characteristics that can be perceived between the allusion and the original text. An illustration of this relation can be seen in the pediment of Philip Johnson's 1984 AT&T Building in New York, which metaphorically alludes to both a pediment of a classical Greek temple and, perhaps more clearly, to the top of a classic Chippendale highboy chest (fig. 13). Another great example is Michael Graves's 2003 Fortis/AG headquarters in Brussels, where a cylindrical tower metaphorically alludes to the typology of its neighbour, thereby creating a relevant connection to the context (fig. 11). Finally, in Venturi Scott Brown's (lost) extension for the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, the new pergolas and arcade windows were obvious metaphoric allusions to Irvin Gill's original Scripps House (fig. 12).
- 25 Metonymic allusion, on the other hand, is used when referring to a category only through the mention of a specific related element. An example is the capital of Charles Vandenhove's column in his Cour Saint-Antoine in Liège, in that the exaggerated scrolled volutes themselves allude to the whole classical ionic capital (fig. 6). Robert A. M. Stern's Beach and Yacht Club Resorts is another compelling example, referring to particular coastal American architectural styles in order to allude to the entire littoral realm (fig. 9).



## Isotopies and allotopies: borrowings finding their 'place'

- 26 Lastly, to fully understand the impact that these micro-structures—i.e., the borrowings—have on their context—i.e., the postmodern buildings or their contextual environments—a final pair of literary concepts should be conveyed: isotopy and allotopy. The concept of textual isotopy was introduced by the semiologist Algirdas Julien Greimas in his 1966 *Sémantique structurale*,<sup>23</sup> according to which “the type of reality evoked by all the elements of the text constitutes the universe of discourse or isotopy. Isotopy occurs when the words refer to the ‘same place’.”<sup>24</sup> For example, the sentence “the dog barks for a bone from his kennel” undeniably refers to a canine isotopy, just as the architectural elements of Charles Moore’s Piazza d’Italia refer to an Italian isotopy (fig. 14).

Figure 14. Piazza d’Italia



Charles Moore’s Piazza d’Italia, New Orleans, at night.

© Joevare

- 27 Yet, it is the concept of allotopy—or isotopic disruption—that proves to be quite enlightening in the realm of postmodern architecture. It is, in fact, commonplace for postmodern architects to create allotopies, inserting elements that are seemingly out of place but that intentionally help build ambiguity or draw attention. Clear examples are Charles Moore’s neon lights on his Piazza d’Italia, emphasizing its grand portico and the fountain’s starting point, or Venturi Scott Brown’s new pergolas at the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, which highlight the entrance (fig. 12). These ambiguity-inducing postmodern disruptions in coherent isotopies or environments are usually meant to prompt a persuasive dialogue with the audience. Charles Moore’s pair of both ironic and ionic columns designed for his 1981 Lawrence Hall make for a

striking example, as they interrupt the building's isotopy to beckon passersby towards the entrance (fig. 7).

## Understanding: a key step towards respect

- 28 This theoretical transposition puts forth precise and comprehensive definitions of diverse postmodern architectural veins, by more clearly grasping their underlying rhetoric ambitions. Furthermore, they allow to better understand what postmodern buildings seek to express by dialoguing with their context, their audiences or their own references and discourse. While not to be considered as unique and absolute, this classification offers a broadened understanding of buildings that are all too often misunderstood, lacking a suitable and consistent way to delineate them precisely. Better defining postmodern architecture will allow to convincingly describe their significance and therefore ease the development of a consistent argumentation for their preservation.
- 29 Re-reading through Charles Moore's Hood Museum, in light of the semiotic concepts of hypertextuality, intertextuality and isotopy, shows how it successfully integrated references to its context through a subtle yet efficient combination of hints and nods. For instance, Charles Moore's arched windows not only served as transpositions of the existing arcade windows, but also as metonymic allusions to the entirety of Wilson Hall (fig. 1). However, they more importantly played a crucial role in bridging the gap—both conceptually and physically—between the 19th-century Wilson Hall and the 20th-century Hopkins Centre by metaphorically alluding to both structures, thus establishing a fundamental contextual discursive common ground between the two (fig. 2).
- 30 Furthermore, Moore's building not only blended in within its surroundings, but also brought new topics to the table by, for instance, conveying an overarching Palladian isotopy (fig. 15). Thus, upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that the building was embedded with references and nods to Palladian motives, such as the Diocletian window—laid within the Hood building's rear façade—and the two interpenetrating temple fronts—subtly alluded to within the front porch.

Figure 15. Rear façade of the Hood Museum



Charles Moore's original rear façade of the Hood Museum in Dartmouth.

© Daderot

- 31 This rich and prolific conversation, in which the Hood Museum took centre stage alongside its two predecessors and helped establish a comfortable common ground for both existing buildings, was interrupted by its transformation. With the removal of substantial parts of the original structure and the replacement of fundamental elements, it left the museum nearly devoid of its conceptual and semantic substance, severing its connection to the context. Instead of enriching the dialogue, the replacement remains strikingly silent and ends a conversation that had been progressing harmoniously, thus failing to enhance or convey the depth and significance as the original Hood Museum did.
- 32 Finally, does experience not show that in order to get along with an agent provocateur, it is often more effective to subtly play their game than fight in opposition? Therefore, to join such postmodern conversations in a rather relevant and interesting way, the first and somehow most crucial step would be to master the sometimes disconcerting language of the interlocutor. A further hypothesis of our research thus lies in the assumption that if these theories can help understand, describe and preserve postmodern architecture, conversely and following in the footsteps of postmodernists, they might also support the shaping of a bespoke language for the design of interventions often made necessary by the adaptive reuse of buildings and sites. Just as Genette himself suggested that, in the field of literature, “some kind of game was inherent to the very practice of reusing existing structures,”<sup>25</sup> why not take the gamble of entering the playful dialogues created by postmodern heritage rather than ignoring their rules which, whether considered too complex or too simple, still often erroneously appear obsolete?

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## NOTES

1. For example, Historic England's listing of 17 postmodern buildings in 2017, the AT&T Building's landmarking and the abounding number of associations raising their voices and fighting for the preservation of postmodern heritage for such buildings as the Horton Plaza, the San Diego Museum of Art, the J. R. Thompson Center or the Portland Building.
2. For a better understanding of these examples, see: Docomomo US Staff, "Docomomo US reacts to proposed "reconstruction" of the Portland Building", *Docomomo US*, [online] [www.docomomo-us.org], accessed on 06/08/2024; Izzy Kornblatt, "Fashion victims: the preservation and evolution of the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego", *The Architectural Review*, [online] [www.architectural-review.com], accessed on 26/08/2024; Michele Racioppi, "Efforts to Save San Diego's Horton Plaza", *Docomomo US*, [online] [www.docomomo-us.org], accessed on 26/08/2024; Docomomo US Staff, "Docomomo pushes for AT&T lobby inclusion", *Docomomo US*, [online] [www.docomomo-us.org], accessed on 26/08/2024.
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4. Roger Kimball, "Dartmouth's Hood Museum", *The New Criterion*, [online] [www.newcriterion.com], accessed on 25/03/2024. Originally published in *The New Criterion*, 4-3, 1985, p. 45.
5. On the one hand, the international 1964 *Venice Charter* states that any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp (art. 9) and should not detract from the interesting parts of the building, its traditional setting, the balance of its composition and its relation with its surroundings (art. 12). On the other hand, the United States' Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation document asserts that new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment (art. 9).  
International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter 1964). [Online] [www.icomos.org], accessed on 25/03/24. *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, [online] [www.nps.gov], accessed on 25/03/24.
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7. Charles Jencks, *The language of post-modern architecture*, New York, Rizzoli, 1977.
8. Maxime Coq, « Un nouvel ordre classique... et (post-)moderne : rhétorique de la colonne dans l'œuvre de Charles Vandenhove », *Bulletin de la CRMSF* 32, Charles Vandenhove, 2019, p. 129-176.
9. Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*, translated by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, University of Nebraska Press, 1997, p. 1.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
11. The other three subcategories are as follows: paratextuality—defines the relations between a text and its paratexts—architextuality—defines the relations between a text and the genre to which it belongs—and metatextuality—defines the relations between a text and its critics. *Ibid.*, p. 3-5.
12. *Ibid.*, p.7.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
14. Translated from the French word *régimes*.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
16. Nathalie Piegay-Gros, *Introduction à l'intertextualité*, Paris : Dunod, 1996, p. 57. Translated by the authors. Original text: "consiste en la transformation d'un texte dont elle modifie le sujet tout en conservant le style."
17. *Interview with Prudent De Wispeleare*, Charles Vandenhove's associate, the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2019.
18. Nathalie Piegay-Gros, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
19. Gérard Genette, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
20. Bernard Dupriez, *Gradus, les procédés littéraires*, Paris, 10/18, 1984, p. 34. Translated by the authors. Original text: "évoque une chose sans la dire explicitement, au moyen d'une autre qui y fait penser."
21. Gérard Genette, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
22. Bernard Dupriez's *Gradus, les procédés littéraires* identifies five different types of allusion : metaphoric, metonymic, catachretic, synecdochic or allegoric allusions. However, in the case of micro-structural semantic architectural units, only the first two seem to be particularly relevant. *Ibid.* p. 268.
23. Algirdas Julien Greimas, *Sémantique structurale. Recherche de méthode*, Paris, Larousse, 1966.

24. Bernard Dupriez, *op. cit.*, p. 268. Translated by the authors. Original text: “*le type de réalité évoqué par l'ensemble des éléments du texte constitue l'univers du discours ou isotopie. Il y a une isotopie quand les mots renvoient à un 'même lieu'.*”

25. Gérard Genette, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

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## ABSTRACTS

With the resurgence of interest in postmodern architecture and the need to preserve its built heritage, the challenge arises of effectively updating postmodern buildings without compromising their architectural values. Drawing on examples such as the Hood Museum of Art's transformation and expansion, this paper highlights the pitfalls of misunderstanding postmodern architecture and proposes a novel approach utilizing literary theories to navigate the complexities of postmodern language. Specifically, the paper delves into the concepts of intertextuality and hypertextuality, derived from Gerard Genette's literary theory, as well as isotopy and allotopy, defined by Algirdas Julien Greimas in the 1960s. These are applied to unravel the subtle nuances of postmodern architectural references, hints, and allusions across a range of examples. By using literary theories as analytical tools, this paper advocates for a deeper understanding of postmodern architecture and suggests that mastering its language is essential for effective engagement and for shaping future interventions.

Avec le regain d'intérêt pour l'architecture post-moderniste ainsi qu'une nécessaire préservation de son patrimoine bâti, se pose la question de l'intervention sur celui-ci dans le respect de ses valeurs architecturales. S'appuyant sur des exemples tels que la transformation du *Hood Museum of Art*, cet article met en évidence les pièges d'une mauvaise compréhension de l'architecture post-moderniste et propose une nouvelle approche faisant appel aux théories littéraires pour appréhender les complexités du langage de l'architecture post-moderniste. Les concepts d'intertextualité et d'hypertextualité, dérivés de la théorie littéraire de Gérard Genette, ainsi que d'isotopie et d'allotopie, définis par Algirdas Julien Greimas dans les années 1960, sont convoqués afin de comprendre les nuances subtiles des références et allusions architecturales post-modernistes à travers une série d'exemples. Enfin, la posture défendue est qu'une compréhension fine de l'architecture post-moderniste par la maîtrise de son langage est indispensable pour opérer une intervention sensible sur son patrimoine bâti.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** Patrimoine post-moderne, Théories littéraires, Intertextualité, Sémantique, Emprunts architecturaux

**Keywords:** Postmodern Heritage, Literary Theories, Intertextuality, Semantics, Architectural Borrowings

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