THE METAPHORICAL TOWNSCAPE
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The town is experienced through multiple meanings in an ever-changing reality. Conscious and subconscious factors of our memory, knowledge and imagination play an important role in this experience, as well as our immediate perception and condition of our body. In the centre of place-experience and town-experience is the **meaning** (Merleau-Ponty 1969). Experience of the **nature** forms the bottom layer of town experience and of any other experience in the environment. It is related to man's original environment and to his body. Man's body is the zero-level of the spatial experience (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 151). All his mental and spiritual realms are based on the natural world. Edmund Husserl treated lived experience (*Erlebnis*) as a flow, depending on changes in the object and in the subject. They also depend on intersubjectivity. The original feeling of reality is the bottom layer of experience: **protodoxa** (Macann 1993: 36–43). Martin Heidegger interprets **doxa** as a view, opinion, appearance, semblance. Understanding and finding one's way in the town always has a sketchy character (Heidegger 1962). One becomes aware of his body through a number of signs. Man relates with the environment iconically. The idea of the world is based on icons. Index-signs help us in finding our way in the space. Signs help to arrange our feelings and the chaotic perceptual realm. *Semiosis* is a connecting link between the body, environment, spirit and culture.

Metaphors play a specific role in this. Metaphor is "a cognitive phenomenon, that transfers factual situation of feeling into an artificial conceptual structure" (Danesi 1994: 107). Metaphor is a fundamental form of thinking. Since the town experience is not reduced to thinking only, we have to take into account all the different levels and forms of perception, when describing and analyzing this. The idea repeatedly coming up in the works of Husserl and Heidegger is called **the principle of verticality of perception** by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1969:

177–179). The past and the future are connected with the present in this; also the visible and the invisible, as well as the sensual and the rational.

The townscape encloses different spaces: the pragmatic, the perceptive, the existential, the cognitive, the abstract and the expressive (Norberg-Schulz 1971: 11). The classification by Christian Norberg-Schulz is based on function: different kinds of space depend on man's experience and conduct. It is practical to see these types of space as different layers of experienced space that have a simultaneous effect on man. The dominant meaning is specified by the overwhelming intensity of one of the layers. The dominant meaning can change, depending on relations with the environment. It can be established and it can create a place with a symbolic meaning.

Almost all kinds of different signs – indexes, icons and symbols (basic triad according to Charles S. Peirce) can be used on different layers of space experience. Finding one's way and other physical activities are usually routine in the pragmatic and perceptive space. In this kind of space the remembering of places, the feeling of body and knowledge, are mostly based on indexes and icons, but even in this case we can speak about metaphorization in the widest sense (Lakoff, Johnson 1980). In this case metaphor covers metonymy, synecdoche and symbol. The metaphorical approach includes different ways and levels of experiencing town environment. It is not only a way of accepting and conceptualizing town reality. On the level of existential space comparatively persistent environmental forms take shape and attain meaning. On this level metaphors are of primary importance.

Existential space is based on immediate pragmatic and perceptive experience in their reduced form. The iconic and index-signs of this kind of experience, as well as the hybrids of those signs, participate in the creation of meanings. Spatial experience becomes more concrete on this level, and it is transferred into cognitive, abstract (scientific) and expressive (artistic) models of space.

The creating of metaphorical meanings in townscape can be based on different kinds of spatial experience. Mostly they are:
1) experience of the body
2) relations with the natural environment
3) life-experience in an artificial environment in a town or a country.

These three realms of experience have a contextual effect on each immediate, newly experienced cognition of town.

A metaphorical relation between town and body (town as the body) can be based on formal, as well as functional analogy. This relation can rely on immediate metaphors, or on those used about the nature. A good example of a metaphor is the head. It has become a universal archetype and has crossed borders of language and culture. This latent metaphor is based on formal analogy in toponymy: for example, as a metaphor, mountain peaks (especially with a rounded top) are sometimes called *caput montis*. In the Fenno-Ugric languages names of hilltops often have the suffix 'head' (*pea*, *pää*). Functionally the most important town is the capital, adopted into English and French from Latin (*capital*, *capitale*). In German this notion is marked by *Hauptstadt*. In Estonian and Finnish a capital is literally called *pealinn*, *pääkaupunki* 'head-town.' The medieval castle in Tallinn is called *Toompea*, here a formal analogy (*pea* 'mountain as a head') is connected with the political significance of the place (*Toom* 'place for the power').

The same kind of latent metaphor is used when naming the main street, the main building and the central square of the town. For example, in German, *Hauptstraße*, *Hauptplatz* and *Hauptgebäude*. In Estonian: *peatänav* 'head-street' and *peahoone* 'head-building.' In the Estonian and Finnish languages antropomorphic metaphors are quite numerous in toponymy, denoting different natural objects. The greatest number of them are related with coastal objects: a head, a nose (meaning 'a headland'), a leg ('a long narrow peninsula'), a throat ('strait'), a back ('mountain slope'), an eye ('small body of water'), a foot ('foot of a mountain or a hill'), a heel ('foundation of a building, trunk of a tree') etc. When we look at Tallinn street-names, we can find the streets *Pikk Jalg* 'Long Leg' and *Lühike Jalg* 'Short Leg,' one intersection is called *Vanaturu kael* ('Neck of the Old Market') etc. We certainly talk about the heart of the town, etc.

A good number of widely used metaphors are drawn from man's relationship with his natural environment. Paul Ricoeur calls the kind of metaphors that have a specific metaphysical power "primordial metaphoricity," functioning as certain keys (Ricoeur 1977: 289). They could also be called archetypal metaphors, involving the sun, the light, the heat, the earth, the water, the air and the fire. These metaphors are globally spread. Their symbolic meaning goes back to ancient times, it is celebrated in mythology or religion (Eliade 1989). The arch-metaphor is home (Ricoeur 1977: 289). Fireplace is the center of the house and the symbol of home (Bachelard 1994). The house is *caput mundi*. The sun and

sky, gods of earth and water function as the original mother and father in a number of religions, starting from the Sumers and ending up with the present-day aboriginal peoples.

Existential, basic notions, functioning as archetypes in the natural environment, are the **path** and the **place**. They are the elements of the basic structure of existential space in town as well (Lynch 1960, Norberg-Schulz 1980).

The two basic types of existence – settled and nomadic – are as important in the natural environment as in town. Metaphors that are archetypes in the nature, have retained their importance in town, even if their meaning has shifted. The brightest lights in the town, neon signs, can draw attention to anything: a department store, a temple or a gambling hall. A small garden, a piece of cultivated land surrounding a town house holds a specific value. This green patch symbolizes life quality in the town environment.

In the metaphorization of townscape a number of typological metaphors have been borrowed from the nature: town as a swamp, as a forest (jungle), as a desert, as an island or as a hill. Sometimes we talk about "jungle-laws" in the town and about "sloughs" of the underworld. We think about home as an island in the city's sea of people; and about institutional power as a pyramid or a mountain. Forest, mountain, river, island and the sea (ocean) are universal and historically established symbols in mythical and religious thinking. Their meaning has changed in the perception of the town environment, sometimes becoming an opposite to the original one. A bright light can allure to a ruinous amusement place, misleading like "will-o'-the-wisp" in a marsh or a swamp. On the other hand, the meanings of two opposites in a marsh, an island and a bog pool, can merge into one in the town. "Bog pool" can be someone's protected island or a hiding place in the town. Two substances, water and earth, merge in the marsh to the degree of a chaotic mixture. For this reason an island is a protected place in the marsh: organized and dry in the middle of this bottomless wet chaos. An island and a bog pool are opposites. In the town a place can undergo a total loss of identity. This happens because of the change of context. A metaphor taken from the nature is covered with a new layer of meanings derived from the social and cultural context of the town. Multiplicity of meanings increases, because the original meanings never disappear completely. They glimmer through the layers of new meanings. Town metaphors are vertically transparent, open to vertical perception (Merleau-Ponty 1974).

Metaphors of the townscape can be based on the experience of artificial, man-made environment, on the experience of objects and places inside and outside the town. Several generations of architects and mayors have been dreaming of a town that operates as a machine. The most popular synecdoche's are: town as a museum, town as a monument, town as a prison, town as a castle. In this context the most characteristic functional part of the town is represented. A number of metaphoric relations are mutually convertible: one can look at a castle as a town or at a town as a castle; look at a prison as a town or at a town as a prison etc. This convertibility of meanings is continuously changing, renewing and expanding the context. The etymology of names can be revived. Historically the Estonian word *linn* ('town') is derived from the word *linnus*, that is synonymous with the castle or a stronghold. In the Finnish language a word derived from the same root is used to denote a prison today. Historically a castle was a prison, a castle and a town. Analogous "language-game" can be played with the English word *borough*, the German word *Burg* and the French words *bourg*, *bourgade*. In the historical context we are "reminded" of the protective function of early towns.

On the other hand, metaphors have an evaluative function in their new context. "Town as a castle (palace)" indicates its representative beauty and wealth. "Castle as a town" indicates its size and multiplicity.

Another group of metaphors is tightly connected with artificial objects and the environment. It is based on abstract geometrical forms: the circle, the cross, the net, the bars, the square etc. The word "architecture" is often used as a metaphor in the structural interpretation (Karatani 1995).

Metaphors derived from agriculture form still another group. They are connected with the garden, the plain and the field. Productive function of town gardens usually gives way to a symbolic quality, representing nature as a green "oasis" in the middle of the town's "desert." Ebenezer Howard was not the first, and not the last dreamer, who based his town conception on a garden. Promise of happiness in the Garden of Eden pertains to every major religion. But it is represented in the contemporary urbanology as well. One can find the idea of a penned/gated town in postmodern town conception (Ellin 1996). It can be derived from the idea of a castle-town, or from the rural scene of pastures and fields surrounded by fences.

Metaphors are continuously created and consumed in the dynamic process of changing the meanings. Extinct metaphors can come to use again; overused ones can become latent. Shifts in meaning, convertibility and piled layers of metaphors drawn from different sources enrich the townscape with a variety of meanings. *Semiosis* in town (creating of meanings for places and paths) does not only depend on associating the spatial environment with cultural texts from myths, legends, fairy-tales, literary and other cultural narratives. It includes a play of metaphors in bringing town experience into consciousness. Ambivalence of townscape enables different kinds of experience that depend on the chosen aspect, strategy and expectations. Problems of perception come to the front in the choice of aesthetic aspect and in the corresponding attitude. Their solution is variable. Multi-metaphorical basis of our town-experience creates prerequisites for a specific aesthetic environmental condition. In this condition the subjective and variable immediate perception can in any moment be subjected to different kinds of mythological-poetical material for creating the town-image. In this case metaphors certainly play the leading role.

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