An Analysis of Foucault's Theory of Discourse Practice as Applied to Design——Interpretation of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

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Abstract: Based on Michel Foucault's book "The Archaeology of Knowledge", we explore the new perspectives of "discourse practice" theory and "archaeology" method in the application of design analysis, i.e. to understand and analyze design from multi-dimensional perspectives such as time, space and practice relations. Through the understanding and analysis of "discourse practice" theory and "archaeology" method, as well as the interpretation of architectural design works, the book explores the new perspective of "discourse practice" theory and "archaeology" method in the application of design analysis, i.e., understanding and analyzing design from the multi-dimensional perspectives of time, space, and practical relations, and scientifically recognizing the design practice from different perspectives.

Keywords: Foucault; Archaeology of Knowledge; Design Discourse

Introduction

As one of the famous French thinkers in the 20th century, Michel Foucault's theory of thought has two methodological phases, roughly bounded by 1970, which are divided into the archaeological period and the genealogical period. The book The Archaeology of Knowledge, published by Foucault in 1969, is a summary of the theoretical results of the archaeological methodological research phase, in which he sorted out the history of knowledge in an archaeological way and explained discourse theory, which is of great theoretical significance for the understanding of discourse analysis and discourse practice.

The first person to put forward the theory of "discourse" was the Russian scholar Bakhtin, who claimed that "the actual existence of language is linguistic communication, discourse, not abstract linguistic structure", followed by Althusser, Foucault and others who also made their own understanding and interpretation of "discourse". Discourse" was also understood and interpreted by Althusser, Foucault and others. In Foucault's book The Archaeology of Knowledge, "discourse" becomes the focus of the whole book. For the definition of "discourse", Foucault did not give a clear definition, compared to what "discourse" is, Foucault is more inclined to tell us what "discourse" is not, "discourse" is not a "discourse", "discourse" is not a "discourse", "discourse" is not a "discourse", "discourse" is not a "discourse". "Discourse is not a mode of speech, not a mode of expression, not a structure[1] . "Discourse is constituted by the totality of sequences of symbols, provided that these sequences of symbols are statements", so that "the term discourse can be identified with the totality of statements belonging to the same system of formation" [1] . In other words, discourse consists of statements, "statements are the atoms of discourse", the concept of discourse is based on the concept of statement, in order to understand the meaning of discourse, the first step is to define the concept of statement more clearly.

"The statement is the basic unit of discourse", Foucault defines the statement in his book as "the way of being of the signifier as a whole", "the statement is not a unit in itself, but a function" [1] . In the assumption of statement, it is also mentioned that statement is not a proposition, sentence or speech act, but a function subordinate to signification. For example, the Taihu Lake stone in the Suzhou Lion Grove is not a statement in itself, but when it is de-analyzed and given the meaning of a lion, it becomes a statement. So the meaning of a sign lies in its function as a statement, without which the sign loses its meaning[2] .

Statements belong to the category of semiotics, and discourse consists of statements and is the totality of statements, so can discourse be defined as the totality of signs? The answer is no. According to Foucault, "discourse is composed of signs, but discourse does more than refer to things with these signs. It is this 'more than' that prevents discourse from being reduced to language and speech, and this 'more than' is what we should reveal and describe" [1] . In this point is a rejection of the binary opposition of structuralist

linguistics represented by Saussure, Foucault rejects the reduction of discourse to abstract linguistic symbols because discourse is not only used to refer to things, but it is also "a multiplicity of practices that systematically form the object of discursive talk" [2] .

Foucault's purpose in introducing such a pair of categories as discourse and representation is to illustrate the historical and practical nature of discourse. Foucault questions the traditional conception of the continuity of history and focuses on the rupture of history, arguing that the continuity of history only represents the dominant discourse of the time, while the rupture in history is the reality that should be focused on. He regarded discourse as a kind of discursive practice, and analyzed discourse not by reducing it to a certain system with the concept of a whole and continuity, but by reducing discourse to the reality of social history, looking for the possible socio-historical environments and rules of the formation of discursive practice, and analyzing how it was formed, why this kind of discourse and not other discourses was formed, and what its own specificity was, which is what is called "archaeology". This is what is known as the "archaeological" method: to restore the appearance of the discourse, to analyze the conditions under which various discourses emerged, the forms, links and laws of change.

Foucault's "archaeological" method is to analyze the "discontinuities" and "ruptures" in history, to discover the history that has been forgotten and sifted out by the dominant view of history as continuous, and to try to establish a new method of historical research based on the theory of discursive practice. It is an attempt to establish a new method of historical research based on the theory of discursive practice[1] . This is the reason why, after reading only one book, The Archaeology of Knowledge, it is not considered that Foucault's theory is inclined to structuralism, with which the opposition to binary oppositions mentioned above, as well as the account of the historical and practical nature of discourse, are fundamentally different. His creative combination of structuralist and phenomenological research methods, Marxism and critical theory, structural and historical analysis, presents more of a post-structuralist character.

Deconstructionism, which evolved from the philosophical ideas of post-structuralism, has gradually evolved into a creative method and design aesthetics since the 1980s, and its essence is the destruction and decomposition of structuralism, with an avant-garde cultural nature. Deconstructivist architecture, as a post-modern architectural trend, has questioned traditional architecture in its own unique way[3] .

(Figure 1) Wixner Visual Arts Center

In the design of American architect Peter Eisenman's Wixner Visual Arts Center (Figure 1), Eisenman superimposed the map of Columbus at the time and the map of the state university campus on top of each other, bringing together the city street system and the center of the university campus to form multiple grid systems. Through the practical investigation of the surrounding area, different axes were created, and the grids were inserted into the building, connecting the axes, so that the architectural discourse stated the geographic structure of the time; and then, in the practical investigation, the arsenal, which was found to be historically broken and omitted, was added to the design, introducing historicity into the structure, and forming a structurally rigorous architectural discourse. Similarly, in the design of the IBA Berlin Community Residence (e.g., Fig. 2), Eisenman fully demonstrated his memory for history, lineage, environment, and culture, using the method of drawing the plane by overlapping the local urban grid system and the Mokatto

projection mapping grid system, digging into the deeper history in the base, and searching for the buried remnants of the Berlin Wall, which is then embodied in the architectural design, using the architecture to convey the The architecture is used to convey the words of history.

(Figure 2) IBA Community Housing

Foucault's theory of "discursive practice" provides a new perspective for the understanding and analysis of design, which focuses on the practical relations behind design, places design in specific time, space and history, and utilizes the perspective of "archaeology" to provide a pluralistic analysis of design. It has profound theoretical value and application value[4] .

References

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