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THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH IN THE WORKS OF MODERNISTS, POSTMODERNISTS AND NEOMODERNISTS

PROBLEM PRAWDY W DZIELACH MODERNISTÓW, POSTMODERNISTÓW I NEOMODERNISTÓW

Abstract

The article discusses the design ideas of architects in modernism, postmodernism and neomodernism, classifying them and trying to find the original truth contained within their work. The object is truth, not as an ideal being but as a value in art. It addresses the issues of aesthetic experience, the status of a work of art, the truth of art and the relations between architecture and reality. The author summarizes his observations in the form of an attempt to classify the values of truth or falsehood. As creators of space, we have the right to truth and credibility. Architect C.M. Bednarski claimed: "Architecture, since she was the mother of all arts, unfortunately has gone down to the level of fashion design. The world needs to be amazed at the new collection twice a year, so that the architect can see the media and clients."¹

Keywords: architecture, truth in architecture, modernism, postmodernism, neomodernism

Streszczenie:

Artykuł omawia idee projektowe architektów modernizmu, postmodernizmu i neomodernizmu, klasyfikując je i próbując odnaleźć pierwotną prawdę zawartą w ramach ich twórczości. Przedmiotem jest prawda: nie jako byt idealny, lecz jako wartość w sztuce. Autor podejmuje zagadnienia doświadczenia estetycznego, statusu dzieła sztuki, prawdy sztuki i relacji pomiędzy architekturą a rzeczywistością. Podsumowuje swe spostrzeżenia w postaci próby stworzenia klasyfikacji wartości prawdy lub fałszu. Jako twórcy przestrzeni mamy prawo do prawdomówności i wiarygodności. Architekt C.M. Bednarski twierdził: „Architektura od czasu, gdy była matką wszystkich sztuk, niestety zeszała do poziomu projektowania mody. Trzeba świat zadziwiać nową kolekcją dwa razy do roku, tak aby dostrzegały architekta media i klienci”.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura, prawda w architekturze, modernizm, postmodernizm, neomodernizm

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the challenge for reflection on the truth in architecture are the issues of hermeneutic aesthetic experience, the living status of a work of art, the truth of art and the connection between art and reality. To what extent is art compatible with reality? Is there

¹ F. Springer, *Dwunaste: Nie myśl, że uciekniesz*, Wydawnictwo Czarne, Wołowiec 2019, p. 13.

a need to come to the truth by treating “pure” facts without embellishment? You have to come to terms with (sometimes) unpleasant reality. The article confronts the above considerations with some manifestations of contemporary art, such as: happening, performance, pop art. They are increasingly popular in the process of creating architecture. They give it the character of temporariness and a sort of explosion of novelty, uniqueness and extraordinary commercial attractiveness so characteristic of a so-called post-truth society.² The focus should be on the consequences of this confrontation for the truth of art and its relation to reality. The topic devoted to the truth of art has recently been frequently addressed and very controversial during classification. Both in the history of art or, narrowing the boundaries, the history of architecture. Considering the work of architects in the perspective of truth or falsehood in relation to their works to the nature of the phenomenon, or generally nature as such, has special cognitive value. Over the centuries, we have observed different, sometimes very contradictory answers to the question of what kind of cognition architectural art can provide, and how it differs from scientific knowledge. Truth has been of particular interest to architectural intellectuals since the end of the 18th century. Creators of various architectural styles used polemical statements about the truth in support of their creative case. And so, for example, John Ruskin’s lamp of truth³ played a key role in promoting the gothic revival. Geoffrey Scott’s retort found the truth on the side of neoclassicism.⁴ Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe or Louis Kahn perceived the truth in the aspects of function and creation of modern architecture. In the 1960s and 1970s, some theorists considered truth as a manifestation of folk-style architecture. Relative truth, as honesty in experience, was the basis of Heideggerian phenomenology.⁵ The Critical theory, drawing from Marxist roots, also focuses on truth issues, finding political divisions in any limit, towards one knowledge. In our considerations, we usually approach the possibility of determining the truth in relation to architecture, questioning its traditionally received antithesis, the possibility of falsehood. Therefore, the question should be: “Can architecture lie?” It is a dialectical understanding useful for research. It is not intended to presume the existence of either truth or falsehood. It suggests that it is possible to outline two divisions of truth in relation to architecture. They are called authority and actuality. Both are studied, and each pertains to the possibility of architectural falsehood. The polemic discussion considers the possible implications of this distinction for contemporary architectural research. Speaking with great power about the importance of beauty

² T.W. Grabowski, M. Lakomy, K. Oświęcimski, A. Pohl (eds.), *Postprawda: spojrzenie krytyczne*, Ignatianum, Kraków 2018, the volume contains studies on post-truth in its various contexts. These are generally skeptical opinions, both regarding the legitimacy of using the term and its meaning as a social phenomenon. The main motivation for publishing this publication is the huge and still growing deficit of truth in public discourse. It dies in the rush of redundant clamor of the mediatized and medialized world. The recipient remains vulnerable in the face of an info attack on an unprecedented scale. Mediatization and medialization mean that reality imperceptibly intertwines with its media constructs, which form the so-called “Hyper-reality”. The “images in mind” constructed in such a way are devoid of strong roots in reality, and thus in truth. This creates a field for various types of abuse and the danger of a participant’s infidelity in public discourse to the truth and its ethical and moral requirements. It is our common worries and concern at the about how to restore the ethos of truth in communicative interpersonal relations.

³ J. Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Smith, Elder & Co., London 1849.

⁴ G. Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism; A Study in the History of Taste*, Andesite Press, 2015.

⁵ M. Potepa, *Fenomenologia faktycznego życia: Martin Heidegger*, Genensis, Warszawa 2004.

in architecture, it was said that most of what we've built since the war should be torn down. We welcome the result of considerations with astonishment, which should be welcomed as a part of an honest conversation on reflections on the post-war work. In the course of the general view on broadly understood creativity, we cannot only think about function and form. We should include design art in our considerations, as an important element next to artistic creativity, creating attitudes and influencing the creation of forms. There is therefore a need to create a certain group of specialists in aesthetics, examining the relations with the truth of creative arts. So far, only in few countries such groups exist and exercise some kind of control over teams of engineers and architects so that they think about the project before building it. The beauty and truth in architecture have been overlooked in the last twenty years. Beauty and truth go hand in hand with divinity and we should once again try to reflect these eternal qualities in our built environment. Władysław Tatarkiewicz in *Dzieje sześciu pojęć*, in the chapter, *Art and Truth*, writes: "certain things are beautiful and a source of aesthetic experience, because they are true and give rise to pleasant feelings characteristic of real, true and known things; others, on the other hand, are beautiful because, on the contrary, they are unreal, because they arouse feelings that are equally pleasant, feelings of unreality, rising above reality."⁶ We must want the great artists and, of course, society gathered in the architects' environment to learn that with all our heart, we as creators of the world support the work that must be done to restore and revive the cultural heritage. "The architects' responsibility towards the user and society interferes with the dependence on the investor who pays"⁷ We must see how the buildings were built, when they were rebuilt and what remained of historical values. These would be symbolic acts that will inform and influence the design of new buildings or urban complexes. We haven't done well enough lately. As Filip Springer writes in the book *Dwunaste*: "Do not think that you will run away in the Jante code, you can attribute it to architects: 7. Do not think that you are unfit for anything 9. Do not think that no one cares about you, or 10. Do not think that no you can us / society / teach something."⁸ We need a new beginning for the truth in architecture, but based not on new cards, but on appreciating the material of the ages and the message of previous generations of creators. For those of us who have been formulating heretical thoughts for years, but are ashamed to express them, so that we do not offend architecture and engineering, this will be a refreshing dose of honesty. The heritage, design advantages, good proportions and architectural details should be continued. The article is based on examples taken both from theoretical considerations of the phenomenon of truth in the work of architects and selected examples of creativity confirming the thesis about the need to continue the truth in creative thought as opposed to the rejection of architecture in the literature of the subject – the architecture of post-true society. Therefore, we should trace the truth in the works and ideas of modernist architects as the original truth. One should also refer to the post-war period, to the times from the late 1940s to the breakthrough years of the renewal of democratization of Europe after the '90s, both in Eastern, Soviet and post-Soviet Europe, as well as Western Europe. It is also necessary to trace the joyful work of postmodernists, their desire to break away from the legacy of the modernist machine, and finally to define the architecture that is currently

⁶ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć*, PWN, Warszawa 1975, p. 366.

⁷ *The Architects' Council of Europe, Europe and the Architecture of Tomorrow*, Brussels 1995, p. 78.

⁸ F. Springer, *Dwunaste: Nie myśl, że uciekniesz*, Wydawnictwo Czarne, Wołowiec 2019, p. 100.

emerging with trends particularly popular in the 21st century, i.e. neomodernism. The idea of comparing truths in architectural design over the last century has been created during the discussion on finding the perfect answers to the investor's questions and needs. During designing, do we really want to get the perfect form, combine it with the function of the object while responding to the needs of the user as well as to our architectural visions, professional path, its development? The question about art, about the source or essence of a work of art, its truth, must be a question about existence. In this question, especially when we consider it when assessing architecture, not so much in terms of extending knowledge as comparing it to our own existence. The thinking of many philosophers, including Heidegger about art and truth, is actually a reflection on the condition of man, a being whose calling, (which has not been fulfilled so far), is to let things be. According to philosophers, Heidegger wanted to, in line with Nietzsche's thought, using its logic to get closer to the truth. Its essence will constitute a principled value for determining the truth and its significance in the architect's work. To better illustrate the phenomenon of truth in architecture, especially after World War II, the article outlines the situation of architects in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe with an outline of the impact of politics on the perception of creativity, especially architects. Let us introduce the basic concepts related to the discussed trends. They will give us the basic and objective measure necessary to assess which of the trends were based on truth and which are the result of a pure style compilation for commercial effects.

2. RESEARCH AND COMPARISON

Developing the ideas contained in the article, we will compare three trends in the 20th-century architecture, classifying them in terms of their truth or falsehood. Modernism according to the concepts adopted as the primary idea of the building's purity of its form and internal content – "a general description of trends in world architecture developing in the years 1918–1975, assuming a total departure not only from historical styles, but also from any stylization. Modernist architecture was based on a new creative method, deriving the form, function and construction of the building almost exclusively from existing material conditions."⁹ Let us examine the widely regarded icons of modernism buildings: House of Mrs. Shroder Rietveld in Utrecht, Gropius – the Bauhaus school building and a multi-family building also of his authorship in the Hansaviertel district in Berlin. Let's consider their structure in terms of the truth of creation, how architects work in shaping these wonderful forms, artists in their times, considered as visionaries in their profession. We must not ignore the special influence on the architecture of those two artists: Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. For the purposes of the article, only the three objects mentioned above were analyzed. The first building under consideration is the quintessence of a simple functional and pure modernist spirit presenting a wonderfully complex form and function. Rietveld achieved a very pure formal procedure, showing the connectivity of planes, forming them without commercial activities. It is creativity based on the truth of looking through the avant-garde form of dynamic weave of planes showing us how you can think creatively about space intended for a human apartment, how you can use the idea of using minimal

⁹ *Modernizm* [in:] Wikipedia, pl.wikipedia.org/modernism (access: 15.05.2020).

detail for a warm, safe place to live. The combination of interior design and the idea of external form indicates the simplicity and purity of the artist's intentions. The second example is, as critics of architecture define, the decalogue of modernists. Its external form, simplicity, material purity and comprehensibility of the structure, showing for what functions it was designed, gives a sense of purity of the creator's intentions and confirms both the truth of thinking and acting when forming the idea of the building. This is indicated by conceptual sketches and truthfulness in showing the functional structure with the separation of space for the workshop and the didactic part. In addition, the object is completely clear and therefore true in showing the operation of the plane structures and the colors used. The third building accepted for consideration as a representation of purity and the truth of creation is an interesting multi-family residential house, created by Gropius. This building is an example of harmonizing simple cuboid forms. It is a show of the artist's pure intentions to present a modernist, functional structure with a wealth of space articulation. Light and divisions give a sense of elegance, lightness and purity of form. The building is very proportionately designed. For the residents, despite the form of the machine which was the idea of modernists, thanks to its rustics it provides users with a sense of harmony and tenderness of architecture. Architects during the creation of creative trend tried to design clear, functional spatially clean forms. Their approach to the truth was simple. They told the truth about their constructions, creations of both individual buildings and urban spaces. They integrally combined form and function presenting their views legibly and the truth in their art. Let us consider the truth in the creative currents referred to as Postmodernism – "trends in architecture of the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, following modernism and departing from its design concepts. Unlike modernism, postmodernism has no avant-garde ambitions and prefers composing and compiling to exploration in architecture."¹⁰ Examples of selected buildings of European architecture of this trend are: the building of the museum of architects Stirling and Wilford, Staatsgalerie, implemented in Stuttgart in 1977–84 under the name: Art Gallery, Museum and Civic Center. Another of those selected as representative for this time is Hans Hollain's famous Viennese building named Haas Haus. It is obvious that Piazza d'Italia, by postmodernist architect Charles Moore, is considered to be the first manifestation of the style or current created in New Orleans, America.¹¹ However, the analysis was limited to selected objects in Europe. James Stirling is a great figure of postmodernism, perfectly combining the expressive form of the buildings he designs, as well as wonderfully adding details at the highest intellectual level. The design material in his hands is a design in which we find many surprising places. The center is an example of how you can use a good proportion in line with the prevailing style and achieve mastery in expressing and showing the creative possibilities of the creators of postmodern buildings. Although not like functionalists, it does show us how well you can participate with an architect in a trip to forms that surprise with detail and proportions. There will be some distortions of the purity of form and function, but this is true for a postmodern building full of charm and detail. It gives us the opportunity to experience and perceive architecture as in a kind of film passing through subsequent interiors or approaching the object, we observe the details, we absorb their sublime form and color. Especially color is very important for the creators

¹⁰ *Postmodernizm* [in:] Wikipedia, pl.wikipedia.org/postmodernizm (access: 15.05.2020).

¹¹ *Piazza d'Italia (Nowy Orlean) – Piazza d'Italia (New Orleans)* [in:] Wikipedia, [https://pl.qwe.wiki/wiki/Piazza_d'Italia_\(New_Orleans\)](https://pl.qwe.wiki/wiki/Piazza_d'Italia_(New_Orleans)) (access: 15.05.2020).

of this period. It is through the manifestation of a complex detail, sometimes intricate function and strong colors, that the effect of participating in a fabulous form of imaging, function and architecture was obtained. In turn, The Modern Haas Haus is a record of architecture, very controversial especially for Viennese people, those with conservative views on architecture. To this day, although several dozen years have passed since its implementation, it brings many contradictory feelings. It is a very Viennese building, full of rich forms and details. It is a form corresponding to the place and has an undeniable charm with a lot of details. Watching and discovering its uniqueness is a necessity for many visits and peaceful contemplation of its form. Discovering details of the structure is a very deep intellectual experience. Hans Hollain was a highly respected architect of this period and enjoyed great recognition among his compatriots in Austria. We remember and admire his wonderful Viennese designs of many boutiques and their front elevations. He also showed how you can masterly design very interesting postmodern architecture. Without falsifying ideas and trying to make a breakthrough in the perception of its grace. Although postmodernism is a certain negation of form purity, thanks to such brilliant creators it also deserves to show the truth in it. Another valuable and current creative trend is neomodernism – “the architectural style of the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, referring to the repertoire of spatial forms and the detail of modernism, but in isolation from its socio-political and usually urban ideas. It is not uncommon for the building’s facade to be neomodernist, which is in direct contradiction to the modernist idea of treating the building as a whole.”¹² Some great examples, limited to selected European artists, are: Rem Koolhaas, AD Classics: Maison Bordeaux / OMA or Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron’s VitraHaus in Weil. The point identifying this direction is the work of probably the most known and unquestionable representative, the Japanese architect Tadao Ando, the creator of the famous building, Church of the Light. The villa designed by Koolhaas is a very minimalist form presenting the idea of minimalism for the function of an apartment. It contains clearly arranged basic sets of rooms, with the designed elevator as an element integrating functions contained at various levels of the house. This is a creative idea of a visionary architect, meeting the need to design commercial elements so characteristic of this trend. Here the designer, although extremely interestingly constructs the layout of solids, also puts emphasis on the commercial character of the building. It is designed to amaze the world. It is not unequivocally true in its idea. It uses modernist elements, however processed, oversized, with discussion on the modernist minimum. The arguable action of this, (in general) genius artist gives grounds to classify the building and the ideas contained in it as a certain free attitude to truth in art. The building is a unique display of the abilities of intellectual processing of modernist thought. Commercial activities dominate the simplicity and obviousness of solutions. Vitra Haus, in turn, is a building definitely created for the “wow!” effect. This action is based on obtaining the maximum individuality of the work. Very interesting design using the idea of the original house-shed, perfectly carried out. However, it lacks a simple story about the truth of creating space for the exhibition. Neomodernism represented by these selected artists is a typical response to designing for the ego alone. Recently, many projects have been created in this style that are beginning to dominate by their otherness, the need to shine on the design market. They appear to be very intellectual and avant-garde architecture. However, they are only the answer to the fight for the place of an architect and the client waiting list.

¹² *Neomodernizm* [in:] Wikipedia, pl.wikipedia.org/neomodernizm (access: 15.05.2020).

Creativity becomes shallow and adapts to the tastes of customers. For the commercial success of an architect and investor we are allowed to do anything.

To broaden thinking and look for references, let us look at how architecture is constituted today in the world known as post-truth. In “Post-Truth Architecture”, a thought published on the internet by The Architectural Review on December 20, 2016, the author, Steve Parnell, criticizes the media for making the “post-truth” society real, for which, citing the Oxford Dictionary definition, “objective facts have less influence on shaping public opinion than appealing to emotions and personal beliefs”. Architecture is certainly not resistant to cultural and aesthetic discourse. Citing the ability of social media to satisfy a populist desire for immediate gratification as the biggest architectural problem, he says: “Buildings can be built on a construction site, but architecture is built in discourse”. In other words, the fact of building on the ground is, or should be, conditioned by the truth of the discussion about it. But such faith in discourse to give architecture an ethical dimension based on truth raises the question: what is discourse itself? If the truth is justified in relation to the fact how architecture discourse is built and disseminated in the world of “post-truth”. The relations between truth and fact is increasingly vague and ambiguous. Keller Easterling¹³ calls this phenomenon a “contemporary matrix space.”¹⁴ It is as deeply political as it is aesthetic and thus influences the shape of the discourse on architecture. What can you perceive and publicly discuss? Therefore, in order to contemplate architecture, it is necessary to recognize the aesthetic and political dimensions, which connect truth with fact. In this political reality, truth flows aesthetically before the fact, reveals, conceals or otherwise distorts the reality of things for selfish benefits. In other words, truth is not given but practiced – that is, it is intentionally disseminated as a deictic representation of the world. For better or worse, such claims of truth gain meaning and authority through infrastructures that configure the relational and representative dimension of communication. The medium is indeed a message, but who is the message for? What message should architecture get involved in? Architecture must reckon with the world of “post-truth”, sharpening its critical and disciplinary ability to ethically practice truth, reconfiguration of matrix infrastructure that conditions its objects, discourses and dissemination of the platform for the common good. It must be productive. Concern for ethics is our attitude towards ourselves, others and the world, and these relations are expressed through architecture. To understand the ethics of architecture, we must consider various factors, such as culture, structure, material and construction supplies. The truth in architecture can be understood in terms of correctness and authenticity. In “The Seven Lamps of Architecture,” Ruskin claims that architecture should not only be fair, but also reflect current society and culture. He states that the architectural form should express and relate to the true features of the building structure. An architect does not have to directly display means of expression, but suggests construction through form. A trained eye can identify the biggest construction secrets that an ordinary visitor would miss. The architectural truth is also contained in the material, which is properly used when its nature is not hidden in order

¹³ Keller Easterling is an architect, urban planner, publicist and professor at The Yale University. She deals with urban planning, architecture and organization issues in relation to phenomena commonly referred to as globalization.

¹⁴ The behavior of the individual that reproduces the norms of a particular group or persons may overlap in varying degrees and intensity. An important factor here are the conditions in which it performs. This phenomenon is described in his new book: M.W. Rectanus, *Museums Inside Out*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2020.

to deceive the observer. An example of a material fraud would be if the plastic looked like wood and the vinyl looked like a tile. An “honest” building is one that does not hide its flaws under any decorative elements and expresses its structural functions. The contemporary narrative of the verbal description of architecture significantly affects the design. The potential impact of the myth on architects’ activities is still important. This applies not only to analogy and inspiration with mythological content and structure, but also to the use of mythical intentionality in the design process, so close to the imagination of the creators. It influences architects to support contemporary trends of critical regionalism.

Here is an example to confirm that the truth in city architecture is also a great achievement, despite the use of a simple non-commercial “trick”. An example of relying on the truth and simplicity of a spatial solution is the action of Paul Stevenson Oles FAIA, considered as one of the best architecture illustrators in the world. He has been working as an independent architect, professor, author and illustrator for over 40 years. Although most of Oles’s work was commissioned by the Pei Cobb Freed & Partners Company in New York, there are numerous examples of drawings made for many companies with which he cooperated. Pei wrote about him: “Steve Oles is an architect/artist who perceives the intellectual substance in the design intent and skilfully, rigorously and faithfully examines the design implications with drawings. He is a valued collaborator in the search for truth in architecture”. Here is one example of how the truth of the picture can show the assumption of the creators. Paul Stevenson Oles remembers that the Louvre Pyramid project was very difficult. Everyone hated it, except for François Mitterrand, who commissioned the construction of glass when he was still the president of France. This process was similar to that which took place in Santa Fe at the Congress Center. There were about 800 years of absolutely valuable architecture. Oles mentioned that the French hate everything that is proposed. The headline was: *Will we let them do it?* They love conflicts, they love fighting, but when it ends, when it rises: *Don’t touch our Eiffel Tower. Don’t touch our pyramid.* The stunning drawing of Grand Louvre by Oles helped the architect I.M. Pei in carrying out the work in the late eighties. It is similar to the process of seeking beauty, meaning and truth in architecture. It should not be a secret that as architects specializing in artistic and cultural projects we love public buildings, especially museums. Their galleries contain priceless paintings, sculptures, photographs, drawings and art objects, but they also have the spirit of the artists themselves, countless passers-by, talented curators who helped to create these spaces. Inspiration derived from these strong institutions helps in the design process. An example is the implementation of Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron. They rebuilt the industrial structure, retaining much of the original character of the Soane Building. The iconic power plant, with its brick construction, the impressive central chimney of the boiler tower and the wide building on the River Thames, impresses with its scale, the use of materials and the successful conversion of historical architecture and the art of modern architecture. Philosophers and historians of architecture, looking for a reference to the truth in architecture, drew attention to crystalline Gothic art in this respect. It embodies the truth, because it is spread over large spaces with vaulted arches, it uses soaring columns to express the structure. Provides spectacular visual experience. It can be defined by its character as a space for sound, for light and shadow. The way the space sounds depends not only on its shape, but also on the materials it is made of, and the materials not only affect the eyesight and sound, but also the sense of touch, and even smell. These relations are necessary and visible in buildings because they are seen as a whole. The building remains true because it has integrity in structure and material. Therefore, the truth

in architecture refers to the building's design with respect to structure, material, construction and culture. The visual and representative aspects of architecture contain meaning that represents important values in culture. An example can be the work of Laurie Baker, an outstanding architect from England. On the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, he made India his home. In his style we find the convergence of his thoughts and his own artistic views. His works give us a basis for deep reflection. They also offer internal strength for contemplation. He was referred to as "the architect's architect" and left his mark in relation to architecture with a human face, with a sense of beauty and functional aptitude. For such creators, we have a great debt of gratitude for working on love for nature and architecture.

In order to be able to fully and objectively address the problem of truth, it is necessary to consider the picture of the phenomenon in general against the background of the situation in post-war Central and Eastern Europe. There were critical discussions about the truth in the architecture of capitalist society. An example is the work of György Lukács, an internationally recognized Hungarian philosopher.¹⁵ History and class consciousness were the main inspiration for later Neo-Marxism. However, authoritarian state socialism only allowed apologetic theories, using Marxist critique of capitalist society and culture to justify its own form of domination. Was even a critical theory possible in socialist state societies? And if so, how did it affect architectural theory? In the socialist countries, architectural debates in 1960–1990 showed conflicting directions of thinking. Usually, each of these conflicting tendencies considered themselves a Marxist line, and their positions on architecture and planning were different. During the decades immediately after World War II, Marxism as an official state philosophy became a rather rigid, schematic teaching that barely reached the whole of society. Similarly, a young generation appeared in architecture, unencumbered by the repressive atmosphere of the early 1950s. They were more inspired by Western writings than texts written in socialist countries. This clearly influenced the theory of architecture and was the main impulse in the development of two characteristic positions: on the one hand, the emphasis on the "specificity" of architecture, and on the other, a criticism of planning "statists."¹⁶ Modern architecture and its discourse provide a critique which maintains that every attempt at synthesis, every attempt to create a united culture is ideological and therefore false. It can be argued that architecture could in one way or another contribute to the design of emancipation and social progress. The next step was to develop a position that would avoid the pitfalls of being simply complicit in modernity or so cynical that it excludes any possibility of criticism. This project explains the antinomies caused by the desire for critical architecture, although it was initially supposed to be quasi-realistic, but a critical alternative to modern urban practices soon proved to be right. There was a deep discussion about the relation between art and modernity, which was based on a specific philosophical concept

¹⁵ B. Jasiński, *Estetyka realizmu György Lukácsa i jego przesłanki filozoficzne*, Książka i Wiedza, Warszawa 1984.

¹⁶ D. Drabińska, <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/etatyzm> (access: 15.05.2020), "statism means the state's interference in various areas of economic, social and cultural life, the lives of local governments, associations, small groups and individuals, and taking responsibility for many areas of social activity; in economic terms, statism is a variation of state interventionism and means the state taking over the function of an economic entity – the state is an investor, employer, producer, buyer and seller of certain raw materials, semi-finished products, finished goods, services and technologies, exporter and importer, lender or borrower, process organizer, economic manager, administrator and owner of enterprises" [author's translation].

of modernity, as well as on a clear sensitivity to the aesthetic problems of modernism. The assessment of the critical potential of art was based on the conviction that the dual nature of art, socially fabricated (as well as autonomous), generates the possibility to resist and criticize, provides the opportunity to see a similar critical relation between architecture and modernity in a way that explains its dilemmas and antinomies. The complex configuration of thoughts contained in this concept offered an informative reference to reflection on the potentially critical nature of architectural works.

3. SUMMARY

Communing with art strongly influences human existence. Reality and art, despite different ontological status, are in a dynamic relation with each other. The basic theoretical rather than historical assumption is that the issue of modernity is of fundamental importance for architecture. This importance goes beyond the assessment of the modern avant-garde movement. It includes considerations for topics that have recently been identified as key in architectural discourse. A broad reflection on modernity is able to offer a productive key for interpreting issues such as the state of modernity, architecture's attitude towards the city and territory, its awareness of history and tradition, involvement in the media and the public sphere. The perception of truth in the architecture of its individual success is significantly influenced by the growing competitiveness based on the global advantage of the possibility of using technology and innovation. Investigating these issues involved in critical theory can provide valuable clues to intensify and enrich the theoretical debate on the role of architecture in society. If architecture is unable to design a new, wonderful world in which all our problems are solved, it is doomed to succumb to impulses resulting from social development. I believe that architecture has the ability to express in a very specific way the contradictions and ambiguities that modern life struggles with. In this articulation it can generate a sense of commitment as well as criticism of the present.

I would like to address a friendly, warm call to you and to all artists again: Never separate artistic creation from truth and love. Never seek beauty far from truth and love, but with the richness of your genius, your creative impulse, always seek the truth and witness love. Let the truth shine in your works. Try, let their beauty arouse in the eyes and hearts of those who look at them, the desire and need to strive for life, so that every existence would be beautiful and true.¹⁷

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¹⁷ Benedykt XVI, *Poznanie prawdy. Wykłady papieskie*, WAM, Kraków 2017, p. 50.

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