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Dialectics of locality and globality of contemporary architecture

Andrzej Wawrzynowicz from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in his work 'Theodor W. Adorno's negative dialectics as a rational necessity to break up with a positively established mind' presents Professor Adorno's view, who unmasks a human mind's tendency to define and identify phenomena as well as objects (the object of recognition in general). *Negative dialectics aims at thinking about an object without referring to any superior conceptual images. However, this tendency is not marked with naïve faith in the possibility of arriving at the absolute directness of a thing. Adorno knows that cognition perceives objects always in their mediated surroundings. As a result, what it deals with is also an exclusive particular play on mediations. On the other hand, negative dialectics is not to allow assuming those conceptual mediations as something permanent. Dialectic thinking should unceasingly fight the 'rampart' of positive assumptions of this kind, which as a matter of fact expresses intellectual sluggishness and reflexive powerlessness in the face of non-reducible dynamics of what is real. The thing itself constitutes something which is heterogeneous against all notions and images* [8]. Transmitting Adorno's concept regarding the essence of cognition to the ground of contemporary architecture, we can immediately assume that it misses clear definitions. In the face of post-modernity changes, architecture oscillates between its locality and global tendencies and the best way of defining it is to express it in the spirit of negative dialectics. Hence, the synthetic presentation of the problem seems impossible and the way of cognition – still open.

These reflections are to be perceived against this background only as an introduction to the discussion about the architecture identity at the time of globalisation[1].

The industrial revolution and development of the mass-media along with economical, social and political changes introduced the civilisation of the West to the époque of modernity and new technologies as well as products – following the threads of global dependencies – reached nearly every part of the Earth. Dynamics of changes results in the fact that the modern world is in continuous 'movement'. Giddens compares the life in 'the world' of highly developed modernity to the 'rushing juggernaut' [5]. Along with the introduction of information technology we entered the next stage of development – post-modernity.

Those rapid changes are also reflected in the construction industry. The development of technology allowed a free structure formation and gave big possibilities in designing façades. Architecture – set free from the yoke of the so far limitations – reflects the spirit of the époque of individualism and an accelerated pace of life. A modern urbanised space constitutes a 'vibrating' collage of old and new forms, in which the discrepancy between pre-modernity and the 20th century is demonstrated.

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[1] Mirosława Czerny quotes five most often used definitions of globalisation. For the needs of these considerations, based on her knowledge, I will understand globalisation as inter-nationalisation, universalism ('diffusion of phenomena and things all over the world') as well as a worldwide process of modernisation. I am also familiarised with the concept of identifying globalisation with the formation of 'one global area' in the context of interpersonal relationships [2].

Identity and globalisation

Differences in the construction industry existing in various regions of the world resulted from many factors such as climate conditions in a given region, availability of building materials, the level of knowledge, social system, existing religious dictates, or simply varied needs of the users. Moreover, each culture enriched its architecture with another form of decorations. Different architectural languages were created, which evolved and changed into various styles along with the changes of their époque within the range of cultures or even regions. A local architectural language – as one of the symptoms of culture – allowed emphasising the identity of place and at the same time it allowed the inhabitants to identify with it.

European architecture started to be transmitted to other regions of the globe by means of colonisation and was often included in local building traditions. This resulted in the creation of colonial styles but it did not lead to the unification of the contemporary architecture itself. At the turn of the 20th century, the civilisation of the West achieved a significant advantage in the technical development. In the meantime, the global network of dependencies among eight main civilisations was created [4] and it did not allow any of them to remain totally closed to external influences. The 20th century brought a completely new kind of architecture – formally economical, deprived of detail, in accordance with new banners such as 'ornament is a crime' (Adolf Loos) and 'less is more' (Mies van der Rohe)[2]. In the modernism assumptions a building was first of all to be the packaging for the function. Creators of the new trend, who did away with tradition and popularised new construction ideas, laid the foundations for the modern architecture – supra-regional and standardised. Minimalism of means of expression along with popularisation of concrete and prefabricates resulted in the appearance of the same simple residential architecture – blocks of flats – 'nobody's' architecture in different parts of the world. However, strict assumptions of modernism could not be the only determinants for construction of new times. The galloping technological development allowed free form shaping, which – along with the break up with traditions – gave designers real creative freedom. Architecture, which was reduced to the cuboidal structure by modernists, could be born again and become in fact a complicated product which was first created in the vir-

tual world. As every other product, which is in great demand, 'liberated' modern architecture began to appear in all parts of the world. As a matter of fact, the existing rules regulate to some extent the fact of shaping the space; however, the amount of available finishing materials and a possible variety of forms often make this space incoherent. In a general approach, this phenomenon reflects a civilisation change and constitutes its result. A modern urban space imitates today's world which leaves tradition, is aimed at getting profits, is impatient and which undergoes continuous metamorphosis…

Global business contacts and relationships made it possible to establish international architectural offices. Structures for many places in the world are designed there; however, worldwide design standards are dominating. International teams of designers watch over the final result. A French designer Jean Nouvel, a winner of Pritzker Prize[3] in 2008, describes his work in the following way: *Each time I try to find a missing puzzle, an appropriate building in an appropriate place.* […] *When I say context, people think that I want to copy the buildings around but the context often means a contrast* […] *a wind, a colour of the sky, trees around – the building does not have to be the most beautiful. The surroundings should have the advantage. This is a dialogue* [11]. Nouvel's statement shows how much the role of an architect has changed. We can risk a comment that this kind of an attempt at searching for the architecture identity constitutes at the same time one of the symptoms of global tendencies.

In the époque of post-modernity the architectural 'style' stopped existing in fact or in other words – we can find several parallel tendencies. Some architects are recognisable through individual methods of solving problems of the form (see Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Daniel Liebeskind) (Fig. 1). Does not the notion 'style' itself mean a human tendency to classify and simplify phenomena, which is criticised by the above mentioned Professor Adorno?

The full architectural globalisation can be particularly observed in big cities. Shopping centres, business districts or big housing estates are deprived of cultural features (perhaps apart from stylised details in some regions) and become similar to one another. Global shops and fast-food restaurants network, international companies and corporations need the same functional and standard visual solutions.

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[2] Mies van der Rohe introduced a sentence from the poem *Andrea del Sarto* by Robert Browning into the world of architecture.

[3] The world's most prestigious prize in the field of architecture founded by Jay Pritzker in 1979.

Man and space

The notion of the identity of an individual can be considered on many levels. An individual defines his/her identity on the basis of, among other things, his/her own biology [1] and biography [5], his/her affiliation to the region and state, culture, religion as well as to different communities. An individual also builds it according to

the following rule: I know who I am because I know who I am not [4]. The space in which the individual lives influences his/her personality, health, neighbour relationships and even work efficiency [from the preface to the Hall edition – Alexander Wallis] [3]. Besides, man perceives the world mainly through visual impressions. Space in which

Fig. 1. Structure London Metropolitan University Graduate Centre designed by Daniel Libeskind in 2004 is an expression of the designer's individual style (photo: J. Krajewska)

Il. 1. Bryła London Metropolitan University Graduate Centre autorstwa Daniela Libeskinda z 2004 roku to wyraz indywidualnego stylu projektanta (fot. J. Krajewska)

man exists constitutes the basis for gathering information about the world in which he/she lives.

Television, next the Internet gave man the possibility 'to be' in different places at the same time. Moreover, development of transport made it possible to cover long distances in much shorter time. *Time and space compression* is the result of this [Harvey, acc. 2]. Giddens mentions *separation of time and space* which are already not connected with a 'place' [5]. At the turn of the 21st century the reality has been enlarged by a virtual world. Social contacts, discussion forums, trade and bank transactions, 'virtual travels' and other activities which are possible thanks to the Internet devaluated the meaning of a real 'place'. Moreover, a creation of the virtual world and television transmission resulted in a new dimension of mediated experiences [5]. Without leaving our home we are able – using our sense of sight and hearing – to achieve information about distant regions of the Earth, i.e. their architecture, organisation of space and history. In this context the world 'outside the window' is only one of the two worlds in which we participate gradually plunging in a global cyberspace.

Transformations of the urban space, which have taken place for the last several years, make us consider the meaning and essence of its identity as well as its connections with a human being. Does the space identity change along with social and cultural changes or is it always equally strong? Can it be preserved in the modern and globalised world? And who needs 'a place'?

The new époque is characterised by local dependencies which are transferred to global conditions [5]. In connection with the notion of a 'global village' in the awareness of contemporary man, there has appeared a feeling of belonging to one big human community. As Giddens writes: *Late modernity […] creates conditions, in which mankind means 'we' in many respects* [5, p. 46], in particular for representatives of the young generation. Some young people simply try to cover up their identity. A man, who comes from India and has been working in Poland for some time, said the following: 'I treat my fate as a balloon. I catch it and fly waiting for the place it will take me to.' Such attitudes among young emigrants, who leave their countries in search of work or look for life changes, are more common nowadays. Considering the above we can have an impression that the notion of identity becomes blurred at least in relation to a place – understood as a certain architectural space. But simultaneously, the need of emphasising a cultural identity revives, which will be mentioned later on in our considerations. According to Huntington, for most people identity has the most important meaning [4] and Castells reminds us that globalisation brought back the revival of nationalism [1].

Identity contrasts unification. Thus, it seems that the more expansive is globalisation, the greater the need to emphasise a local identity. Societies of our times do not live in such a settled way as their ancestors; however, they are not nomadic either. Even if young people change their place of living while studying or looking for a job, the moment they set up families they settle down somewhere. However, the space we can identify with and the space with strong identity do not always mean the same space.

Growing global contacts and dependencies, confrontation of different rights and values have generated world scale conflicts. In some regions a growing feeling of identity and local affiliation and first of all cultural affiliation opposes unwanted unification and foreign influences. Within the framework of a 'global village', groups are organised which are based on common cultural identity – in spite of their physical dispersion. (In the case of emigrants, cultural identity is not always connected with a sense of identification with a given space in its wider understanding (city); however, it is sometimes connected with the space in a micro scale (ghetto, district)). World metropolises are inhabited by many national minorities which often live in their 'own' districts. The architecture of these districts does not usually differ from the architecture of other parts of the city; however, there are institutions which are characteristic for a given culture (e.g. temples). Forms of visual communication (e.g. advertisements of service shops) and sometimes small architecture (e.g. gates in the Chinese style in London district of Chinatown) prove the autonomy of such a space in the most visible way.

Culture record

In the world of the West, we can have an impression that tradition (in a general sense) is of secondary importance and it will finally be excluded from the course of events. On many levels tradition is obscured by a contemporary supplementary form, market brand name, and kind of 'logo'

which are supposed to give a vague idea about the original form. Customs are gradually transformed, simplified or forgotten… This phenomenon is also observed in the sphere of architecture. Globalising tendencies replaced the building tradition in many regions of the world.

Fig. 2. Model of Beijing in The Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall
showing plans of the city development and illustrating the scale on
which the traditional architecture is replaced by modern buildings
(photo: J. Krajewska)

Il. 2. Makieta Pekinu w Holu Wystawienniczym Planowania Pekinu
ukazująca plany rozwoju miasta unaocznia jednocześnie skalę
wypierania architektury tradycyjnej przez zabudowę współczesną
(fot. J. Krajewska)

Fig. 3. Example of combining the modern architectural form with
stylised detail, Beijing (photo: J. Krajewska)

Il. 3. Przykład łączenia współczesnej formy architektonicznej
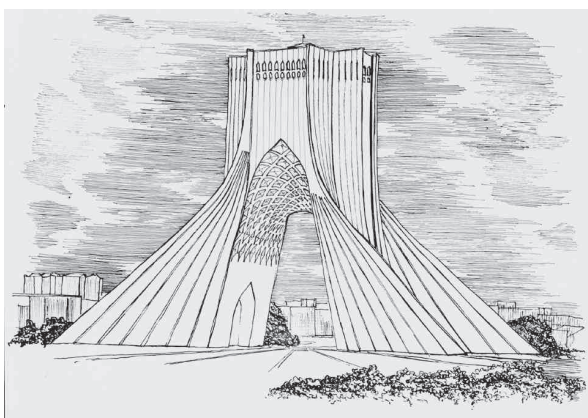ze stylizowanym detalem, Pekin (fot. J. Krajewska)

Fig. 4. The Azadi Tower, designed by Hossein Amanat, Tehran, 1971 –
symbolic gates of the capital city; example of symbiosis of tradition
and modern technology (by J. Krajewska)

Il. 4. The Azadi Tower, proj. Hossein Amanat, Teheran, 1971 r. –
symboliczna brama stolicy; przykład symbiozy tradycji i nowoczesnej
techniki (rys. J. Krajewska)

The process of modernisation, which comprises the
whole world, transmits the Western construction methods
to the ground of other civilisations. The heritage of modern-
ism – the form deprived of ornaments, new technologies and
building materials – unified the world architecture of big cit-
ies first of all. The municipal tissue was filled with cuboidal
skyscrapers built of steel, glass and concrete (Fig. 2).

Revolution in China, in spite of the fact that it introduced
the state into the system of reforms, constitutes a cultural leap
and a Chinese civilisation, which was not prepared for moder-
nity, had to accept many ready solutions from the outside, in-
cluding modern architectural solutions; similarly to other civi-
lisations which did not find their own answers to the problems

of modernity. However, after the time of non-reflective adop-
tion of western patterns and fascination with new possibili-
ties, there will be a turn in the direction of one's own identity.
Huntington persuades that modernisation and the inflow of
foreign products will not lead to westernisation of non-west-
ern cultural circles; non-western civilisations discover again
the value of their cultures [4]. The architectural language – as
one of the 'records' of culture – will develop again.

The Ju'er Hutong in Beijing by Liangyong Wu complex
(1992) inspired by a courtyard arrangement of residential
structures constitutes a good example of an attempt at the
building tradition continuation [12]. Two- and three-storey
building, cosy common spaces as well as the reminiscence
of old forms in a new edition allowed to compose modern
architecture into the old municipal tissue; a complex became
a model example for the further development of this type of
architecture in the capital city of China. At the same time,
a wrong direction in Beijing's architecture – and not only in
this – can be exemplified by 'sticking' a stylised ornament
detail to culturally neutral forms (Fig. 3). In my opinion, this
is a dead end which leads designers to theatrical solutions
and makes a 'trashy' relic of the culture heritage, which does
not constitute an authentic continuation of the tradition.

In Japan necessary reforms were introduced from the
very beginning according to the banner: 'Japanese spirit,
western technique' by erecting ultra-modern buildings but
at he same time not allowing the state to undergo west-
ernisation in the process of modernisation [4].

Djemili Abderezak and Bellal Tahar from the Faculty of
Architecture from the Algerian University Sétif in their work
concerning modern Arabian architecture *Contemporary Ar-
chitecture in different areas of the Arab world: Redefining
identity through a new building environment* wrote: *In the era
of global civilisation the Arab world cannot ignore modern
technology, but it has to rationalise it, readapt it and to make
a tool of the culture. That means technology is in the service
of the culture and not the other way around* [9]. An excel-
lent combination of Islam and Persian building tradition with

Fig. 5. Burj Khalifa, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, Dubai, 2009 – now the tallest building in the world (photo from author's archives)

Il. 5. Burj Khalifa, proj. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, Dubaj, 2009 r. – obecnie najwyższy budynek świata (fot. z archiwum autorki)

Fig. 6. Continuation of local tradition in modern architecture of London is exemplified by, inter alia, combining bricks in higher storeys with light service basement (stone, plaster) (photo: J. Krajewska)

Il. 6. Kontynuacja lokalnej tradycji we współczesnej architekturze Londynu to m.in. połączenie cegły na wyższych kondygnacjach z jasnym przyziemiem (kamień, tynk) (fot. J. Krajewska)

a modern technology is *The Azadi Tower* by Hossein Amanat in Teheran (1971) – a symbolic gate to the capital city of Iran (Fig. 4). The most spectacular example of the new Arabian architecture is the highest building in the world – *Burj Khalifa* designed by the American Office Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, which was built in Dubai in 2009 (Fig. 5). The plan of the skyscraper refers to the shape of a desert flower so the designers derived inspirations from the building's surroundings. However, the scale of the building as well as the uniqueness of the whole enterprise makes it a kind of a manifest of possibilities of the modern technique and emirates power. And in spite of its location and due to the international character of works connected with its construction, it constitutes a world scale civilisation achievement.

Also in the regional scale we pay attention to the benefits of preserving the identity of the urban space which is, among other things, a quality of this space as well as the local culture recorded in it. In recent years in Poland there have been three open architectural competitions which were supposed

to choose the best designs of typical detached houses for given regions: Opolski House (Opolski Silesia, 2007), Sudeten House (Kłodzka Land, 2009), House for Warmia and Mazury region (2010)[4]. The aim of all competitions was to introduce into the space of regions the architecture with high quality (including aesthetic one), and a program dialogue with tradition was supposed to preserve the models for rural constructions in the regions and bring back the best features of local architecture which have been forgotten during recent decades[5]. It is worth noting that the interest in this type of competition has unusually increased during the last three years. Twelve works entered the 'Opolski House' competition[6] and 184 works entered the House for Warmia and Mazury Region competition[7].

The process of incorporating new architecture into the old urban tissue in the spirit of cultivating tradition takes place in London. Old fashioned functional models are not copied there; however we can see a continuation of certain forms as well as material procedures as echoes of the Victorian architecture: jutties and risalits or a light service basement with non-plastered bricks which were used in higher storeys (Fig. 6). An industrial and austere character of architecture is also preserved and thanks to the revalorisation of post-industrial buildings, the identity of the city space is maintained.

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[4] See: www.a-ronet.pl [accessed: 30.01.2011].

[5] In the period of the Polish People's Republic the so called 'dice' constituted the model of detached houses – a standard, plastered building with a flat roof. After the change of the system, typical one-family architecture was catalogue houses which were built according to ready designs. This caused levelling of architectural differences between regions and introduced urban chaos.

[6] Information from the following website: polskalokalna.pl/news/opolski-dom-nagrody-wreczone, 989925, 4517, [accessed: 30.01.2011].

[7] Information from the following website: architektura.warmia.mazury.pl [accessed: 30.01.2011].

Identification

The architecture identity can be considered in two aspects: the one which comes from the building tradition and the history of place as well as the other which refers to identification and recognisability. Modern designers, who, in their works, take into consideration the issue of identity, use the means which aim at exposing at least one of these aspects.

The notion of identification, which is strongly connected with the notion of identity, in relation to the urban space can be considered as the identifiable space and the one that can be identified with. A demand for new functions, development of technology and in some cases a contracting area of life of each inhabitant led to the situation in which cities all over the world are overcrowded with skyscrapers and blocks of flats. A new generation can identify with modern architecture (not connected with a local tradition) in the same way as it imitates foreign trends or patterns of behaviour. However, the new generation grows up in the space deprived of cultural features and losses one of the aspects of its identity. Thus, we can ask a question whether the coexistence in the global network of dependencies sets us free from taking care of our own autonomy. How to treat the situation in which the whole civilisation builds its identity from scratch?

A French painter Fabienne Verdier in her book *A Passenger of Silence. Ten years in China* describes the life of Beijing residents in the 1990s: *There was a bigger and bigger dissonance between these depositaries of Chinese culture and the young people who Americanised. The wealthier visited new shopping complexes and discotheques in the Las Vegas style, while the poorer became addicted frequenters of Kentucky Fried Chicken bars; there were already several hundred bars of this kind opened in Beijing.* [...] *At that time aunt Xu had to ride a bicycle for two hours in order to get to work* [...] *"Imagine – she said to me – that we will live in a block of flats; no life in a district, no market place! We will be deprived of land marks;*

we will be isolated and eradicated." [...] *End of the art of life on the thresholds, walks with a bird, meetings in tea-houses. McDonald's was built at the place of a big book-shop at Wangfujing Allee* [7, pp. 272–273]. Post-revolution China, which opened to the influences of the West, builds a new image of the capital city – by metropolitan standards of the 21st century – with the help of designers from all over the world. The complex with the features of the old architecture, which is mentioned in the previous chapter, is now disappearing in the sea of scrapers built of concrete and glass. Before the summer Olympic Games which took place in Beijing in 2008, the metropolis was additionally filled with structures of high architectural quality and it is difficult to find a dialogue with tradition in them. Apart from a new stadium, a futuristic structure of *CCTV Headquarters* by a Dutch design office OMA was supposed to be a new icon of the city (Fig. 7).

Buildings-icons are in fact an architectural sign of our times. Cities all over the world seem to compete to have the most unusual building which they could be identified with. There are already some of them in the capital city of China. The office block *30 St Mary Axe* (the so called *London Gherkin*) by Sir Norman Foster built in 2004 with a characteristic shape of a cigar represents the newest architecture of London. A skyscraper with a round structure was opened a bit later in Barcelona – *The Torre Agbar* designed by Jean Nouvel. In some cases the designers derived inspirations from locations; some other buildings could be built in any city. Undoubtedly, such structures contribute to the identification of the place, providing one has the knowledge to recognise them. The identity of those buildings – as unique of a kind – also seems to be strong. However, looking ahead it is really difficult to agree that creating the identity of the modern urban space is to be based on buildings-icons surrounded by culturally neutral architecture.

Brand quality

The icon of architecture may also serve the purpose of promoting a city by becoming its recognisable sign. Probably the most known example is *The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao* by Frank Gehry, which was opened in 1997. A characteristic form of the building, typical of this architect's style, as well as the function – a museum which belongs to the international network – attracted plenty of tourists to Bilbao. Hence, the term 'the Bilbao Effect' was created, which meant a situation in which one investment contributed to the development of the whole city. The building itself balances between its own identity and a globalized trend.

Also, cities with strong cultural identities constitute a tourist attraction. A district of Hutongs in Beijing can be an example – the area of Zhong-Gulou (the region of Drum Tower and Bell Tower from the 13th century) located in the northern part of the capital city on the axis of the palace complex – the Forbidden City situated in the very

heart of the metropolis. The maze of small streets between one-storey houses and service points is characteristic for the capital city of China and attracts tourists who look for the atmosphere of the old Beijing.

Until the beginnings of the 20th century the Beijing society lived according to the strictly established rules. General buildings principles (supported by *feng shui* rules) did not change for centuries. Guidelines for heights of buildings, applied materials, forms and colours of buildings had to be complied with. Families lived within the range of a residential complex (*Siheyuan*) and around the courtyard, whereas the world of neighbour contacts and business affairs was situated behind the wall [6]. A collapse of feudalism in China and the revolution which started in 1966 and lasted ten years led to a breach of tradition on many levels. Moreover, the Chinese buildings, which had not changed for hundreds of years, did not meet contemporary functional and social requirements. Thus, the space

Fig. 7. Seat of CCTV in Beijing under construction (February 2008) designed by OMA. Futuristic structure is one of the 'icons' of modernized capital city of China (photo: J. Krajewska)

Il. 7. Siedziba CCTV w Pekinie w trakcie budowy (luty 2008 r.) proj. OMA. Futurystyczna bryła to jedna z „ikon" zmodernizowanej stolicy Chin (fot. J. Krajewska)

Fig. 8. New and old in Beijing – service and office buildings – top part: Sanlitun VILLAGE North Area EAST designed by Beijing Matsubara and Architects, 2007; bottom part: old buildings in the area of the Drum Tower (photo: J. Krajewska)

Il. 8. Nowe i stare w Pekinie – budynki usługowo-biurowe – u góry: Sanlitun VILLAGE North Area EAST proj. Beijing Matsubara and Architects, 2007 r.; u dołu: dawna zabudowa w rejonie Wieży Bębnów (fot. J. Krajewska)

of Hutongs – in spite of its indisputable strong identity – became a relic of the past époque (Fig. 8).

A luxurious complex *Medinat Jumeirah* in Dubai designed by Mirage Mille in which there are, among other things, hotels, SPA and a conference and banquet centre is on the other pole of this phenomenon. This exclusive multi-functional complex, which constitutes the whole district situated in a new part of the capital city of the Emirates, reminds an ancient Arabian citadel[8]. Stylised details of the buildings, high wind towers and wall facing are based on traditional local structures built of mud and wood (Fig. 9). Apart from the obvious promotional action which is aimed at attracting customers, these architectural quotations are supposed to express pride of the regional culture. Unfortunately, literal transfer of traditional forms and 'wrapping' the modern functions with them created an artificial space with 'a mask of identity' put on.

In the post-modern époque in the times when more and more spheres of human activities are perceived in the trade categories and when a city itself becomes a brand – a product whose image is shaped according to the promotion needs, the identity – built from scratch and understood as cultural heritage starts to be (in a sense) an element of marketing.

Fig. 9. Complex Medinat Jumeirah in Dubai (the first stage was opened in 2003) – the author of the concept Mirage Mille as his model took the traditional Arab buildings (photo from author's archives)

Il. 9. Kompleks Medinat Jumeirah w Dubaju (pierwszy etap otwarto w 2003 r.) – autor koncepcji Mirage Mille wzorował się na tradycyjnej arabskiej zabudowie (fot. z archiwum autorki)

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[8] See: www.jumeirah.com [accessed: 30.01.2011].

Heritage

The pace of changes in the modern world makes us think about the future image of the urban space. Will new local styles be created on the basis of the universal language of post-modern architecture? Does the modern architecture construct the space which has a strong identity on a different level of associations? Although centres of Tokyo or New York full of skyscrapers are similar to each other at first glance, it cannot be denied that they are also unique.

Chaos of the modern space is the chaos of our apparently ordered life. Multiplication of forms and overlapping of subsequent stylistic calques in the urban tissue reflect nervous pulsing of the global network of invisible connections. We are building our cities as if they were pop-art collages, impatient, fussy and longing for immediate effects.

Contemporary man is like a small cogwheel in the rushing machine of civilisation. Man's life was shred-ded into small sections of time and assigned for particular activities; the space 'flows around' man like a stream of information…

Paul Auster in his novel *The New York Trylogy* describes the main character's walk along the streets of the metropolis: *Each time he took a walk, he felt as though he were leaving himself behind, and by giving himself up to the movement of the streets, by reducing himself to a seeing eye, he was able to escape the obligation to think, and this, more than anything else, brought him a measure of peace, a salutary emptiness within... By wandering aimlessly, all places became equal and it no longer mattered where he was. On his best walks he was able to feel that he was nowhere. And this, finally, was all he ever asked of things: to be nowhere* [10].

Translated by
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Dialektyka lokalności i globalności architektury współczesnej

Architektura współczesna oscyluje między tendencjami lokalnymi a globalistycznymi. Dynamika zmian w epoce ponowoczesnej sprawia, że trudno jednoznacznie ocenić to zjawisko, dlatego proponuje się rozpatrywać je w duchu dialektyki negatywnej.

Wiek XX przyniósł nowe technologie, a świat zaczął się „kurczyć". Istniejące sieci globalnych zależności nie pozwoliły żadnej z cywilizacji pozostać obojętną na podnoszący się poziom wiedzy i rozwój techniki. Modernizacja, począwszy od Zachodu, objęła cały świat. Kompresja czasu i przestrzeni oraz zaistnienie rzeczywistości wirtualnej zmieniły znaczenie realnego „miejsca". Nowe materiały budowlane i wzrost możliwości konstrukcyjnych oraz nowa filozofia architektury – modernizm dały podstawy do wykształcenia się jednego języka architektury nowoczesnej, w ramach którego zaistniała duża swoboda projektowa. Tożsamość architektury rozumiana jako jeden z przejawów kultury, w niektórych rejonach świata zaczęła przechodzić kryzys. W obliczu niepewnej oceny swojej tożsamości w stosunku do otaczającej przestrzeni urbanistycznej stanął też współczesny człowiek. Tymczasem, jak dowodzą specjaliści, im bardziej ekspansywna globalizacja, tym silniejsza potrzeba podkreślania własnej kultury. Pozostaje zastanowić się zatem, jakimi językami przemówi architektura przyszłości.

Key words: architecture, identity, globalisation

Słowa kluczowe: architektura, tożsamość, globalizacja