Architect's taste:

Do professional building designers know better what beautiful means in reference to architecture?

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Master Thesis

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“We are the hands of people”

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Introduction.

Just before I started my architectural education my parents bought a house. It was a four bedroom building, just the size we needed, adjoining the fields where we could walk our dogs. We found it aesthetically neutral, but, as we all agreed, with just a few finishing touches we can turn our future home into something far more pleasing. I was a part of the house picking committee and at that point of time I was quite satisfied with the choice we have made.

I have started questioning it just few months later, during the first semester of my studies. This house was so plain and simple, but not Mies van der Rohe-simple, just ordinary and boring. There was no idea to it, besides for providing a comfortable settling for a family of five. It was not connected to the outside in any extraordinary way, just with small windows, that my mother covered with curtains, which caused my vivid objections, because, after all, one does not see too many traditional lace hangings in architectural magazines. At least if the building would have been organic, growing step by step with the help of neighbors or local craftsmen, than maybe I could combine it with the idea of critical regionalism. However it was not, it was composed of ceramic blocks according to a sample design. A few months later I have found myself convincing my parents to change the (perfectly working) pitched roof, to a flat one, that would be much more modern and, in my opinion, would improve the proportions of this building.

Suddenly I realized that I, the architecture student, am standing in the opposition to the rest of my family when it comes to judging our house. At that point of time it made me quite satisfied. The fact that my taste, language and behavior are changing meant that I am becoming a different person- an architect.

Now, almost six years of architectural education later, now, that I am standing on the verge of professional career, I have started questioning, whether that is something I should be so implicitly proud of.

After all, the buildings that I am eager to start designing, are going to be used by people with similar background, opinions, and aesthetic preferences as my parents- laypeople have, rather than the ones favored by the majority of my professors, fellow students, and myself.

i.   The discrepancy of opinions.

This clash of opinions concerns the entire profession. Buildings and styles that are favored by the general public are rarely appreciated by professionals. This situation is probably nowhere as visible as in the debate about residential architecture, the one that not only architects, but also laypeople can closely relate to.

According to real estate agents, the most popular housing styles in United Kingdom are Georgian and Victorian. "Generally speaking, Georgian and Victorian architecture creates greater demand from British buyers than new build homes." Says Geoff Wilford of Wilfords Estate Agents in London.

Lucian Cook, director of residential research at an real estate company Savills, agrees with him: "there's something about the grandeur of great Georgian cities that means it's always popular,"[1]

At the same time these two styles are widely criticized by professionals, who state: "(…) those horrible, cheap, car-dependent, cul-de-sacced estates of fake Victorian and Georgian shoeboxes that fringe our towns and cities like so many redbrick rings around bathtubs." [2]

The discrepancy of opinions leads to a much greater consequences, than an occasional quarrel over a family dinner.

Firstly, a series of studies including the RIBA's "Strategic Study of the Profession 1992-1995" and "The Future for Architects?" has presented architecture as a profession with decreasing income and social trust, a profession, that is failing to utilize its considerable potential and maintain its domains of activities. While there are many factors contributing to this situation, the commonly held beliefs, that the majority of architects value their peers recognition higher, than the one they could get from their clients, and that others in the construction industry are easier to communicate with and more willing to deliver what the client asked for, are definitely responsible for creating a number of problems that the profession of architecture is facing right now. (Brown, and Yates, 2000; Smith, 1999)

Secondly, in a number of cases architects, focused on their own objectives and perception of architecture, or unable to intuit the needs of a social group, that he/she is unfamiliar with, fail to provide built environment that the users can relate to, understand, and appreciate, or even tries to impose his/ her own lifestyle on them.

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[1] http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-23956650

[2] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/11092924/Why-is-Britain-so-terrible-at-domestic-architecture.html

It is not hard to find examples of structures that do not cherish the same level of enthusiasm among its users, as they do among architects, or to put it more sharply, are hated by the first group, and loved by the other. This contributes to the presumption that architects do not care for the well-being of the users of their buildings, as much as they do for architecture itself. At the same time, it has to be underlined, that architects are often the only ones who can represent the interests of the future users of a building they are commissioned to design.

John Zeisel and Brent Brolin quote a number of situations from all over the world, in which the new residents of social housing decide to leave their technologically superior, but culturally alien new apartments and move back to slums, that were more comprehensible and suited their lifestyle better. (Brolin and Zeisel, 1968)

There is an ongoing debate about the future of Robin Hood Gardens, a social housing complex designed by Peter and Allison Smithsons in the late nineteen sixties. Ever since its opening the residential estate has been a stage for crimes, vandalism, social exclusion, and alienation.[3] The east London Pevsner guide writes about the Robin Hood Gardens that it is "rough and tough ... ill-planned to the point of inhumane"[4], and a survey among the residents has shown, that around eighty per cent of them are in favor of demolition of the estate. On the other hand, Building Design magazine has mounted a campaign, supported by a number of architects, including two Pritzker Prize winners- Zaha Hadid and sir Richard Rogers, that glorifies the architectural values of the Robin Hood Gardens and aims in saving it from destruction, by refurbishing it and encouraging its residents to stay in their apartments.

There is one more repercussion of the disagreement between architects and laypeople about judgement of the built environment that needs to be mentioned. It concerns the professionals themselves.

Namely, architects find themselves in a state, that Dana Cuff, whose erudition I can only hope to match, describes as "the basic drama, that puts a starving artist against the profit-driven Barbarian" Building designers have to choose between delivering what the client wants to see (which in many cases means forgetting the standards and principles taught in Architecture Schools) or struggling financially, but staying true to their ideals.

When the designers decide for the first option- satisfying the client's wishes, they have to face either the scrutiny of the profession, or, at least, pangs of their own conscience. Witold Rybczyński (1986, 23) describes the experience of the first years of his professional career: "I had designed and built

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[3] It should be noted, that a number of factors, not only architectural, has contributed to the poor condition of Robin Hood Gardens and its inability to provide its residents with a safe, comfortable, and pleasing living environment.

[4] http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jun/20/architecture

houses, and the experience was sometimes disturbing, for I found that the architectural ideals that I had been taught in school frequently discarded- if they did not altogether contradict- my client's conventional notion of comfort. I was not a willful designer, and attempted to accommodate my client's demands, but I usually did so with a vague sense of unsettled compromise" Artur Wójcik, the owner of Archipelag, a Polish company selling projects of family houses, admits, that although his business blossomed, he felt uneasy for flattering the popular taste. [5]

The difficult situation created by the disagreement in judgement of architecture between laypeople and professional building designers forces us to ask a few important questions:

Where does the difference in taste and perception of the built environment come from? How and why is it created?

How big is the gap between the taste of an architect and a layperson?

Do architects know better what 'good' and 'beautiful' means in reference to architecture, or the taste and opinion about architecture of laypeople is as valuable as the one of architects?

Should non-architects be granted the right to live in a built environment, that they find beautiful, interesting, and pleasing, without being criticized for their choices of style of aesthetics, or would such a situation have a negative impact on the quality of architecture?

In this paper we will address those questions by deliberating on the notion of architectural taste. The text is a sympathetic critique of the architect's desire to both teach the society to appreciate the same kind of buildings as they do, and to control the debate about architecture. We will point why such an approach is inappropriate and harmful to the future users of the building, and the society in general. However, at the same time we will try to understand the difficult position that architects have found themselves in.

The breadth of the topic and the variety of the subject will force us to jump between different fields of knowledge such as architecture and art theory, sociology, environmental psychology, and philosophy, listen to many points of view, and take occasional shortcuts, that will help us to arrive to satisfactory conclusions. It should be noted, that although newspaper articles are not a common source of reference for academic papers, they are used in this essay, because it was important to incorporate the point of view of non-architects about the built environment, which is expressed almost exclusively in popular media.

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[5] http://polska.newsweek.pl/kompleks-dworku,31285,1,1.html

ii.   Thesis Structure

The text is divided into three sections.

In the first one, we will consider the notion of taste- how it is shaped and what role it plays in the society. We will then narrow our focus to architect's taste. How does it differ from the aesthetical and stylistic preferences towards architecture expressed by the rest of the society? How do architects and laypeople perceive the built environment? When and how is 'the architect's taste' created? Why is it supported by the building designer community?

Section two of the text answers two crucial questions: " Do architects know better what 'good' and 'beautiful' means in reference to architecture? Whose opinion (professionals or laypeople) about the aesthetic and stylistic value of buildings is more valuable?"

It contains a short consideration of architecture as a part of both high and popular culture and concludes strongly with stating that the taste of architects and laypeople is equally important.

It is a controversial statement, hence, in the third and final section of the text we will investigate the most common accusations against popular architecture.

The essay is finished with an epilogue, which contains personal, initial recommendations for possible improvements.

iii.   Clarification of terms.

Since a number of terms in this paper have ambiguous meanings, some initial, short definitions might be useful.

Architecture will be understood either as a common name for the profession, or as buildings designed by architects, or building developers, and intended for human usage. We are not neglecting the value of vernacular architecture. The restriction needed to be made, because architects as a professional group, are in the focus point of this paper.

Art is another definition that is the core of a long-term debate held between a number of professions such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy; consisting of a vastness of concepts and points of view, both historical and present. Because of the time restriction that the author of this paper is facing, and

especially since as Marshall McLuhan cynically suggested, art is "anything you can get away with"[6], we cannot dive into, most likely bottomless, considerations about the notion and nature of art and are going to use the definition from the Merriam-Webster dictionary[7] , that states that art is: "something that is created with imagination and skill and that is beautiful or that expresses important ideas or feelings".

Another term that needs clarification is a social group. It can be defined as at least two individuals, who "share a common social identification of themselves or (…) who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category" (Turner,1981,15). Those individuals share a certain kind of characteristics, such as values, religion, or socioeconomic background. A criterion, that is often added to this definition is that the individuals in a social group form an organized system of status, social norms and values, 'which regulate their opinions and conduct in matters of common interest' (Turner,1981,15)

Michael Hogg (2002, 56) adds, that a social group acquires meaning, when it contrasted with a background of people, who do not belong to this particular group (such as often mentioned in this text architects and non-architects) or with people who are in an opposite group- academics vs. politicians.

The number of such associations existing within a society is almost infinite, since as Linton Freeman (1992, 51) suggests, any individual can be at the same time a member of several social groups – family, occupation, social class, and many others.

Lastly, we would like to explain the difference between the client and the user of a building. The user will be understood according to the definition of the term proposed by Adrian Forty(2000, 312) as "the person or persons expected to occupy the work." It is worth noting, that the term has "strong connotations of the disadvantaged or disenfranchised- it particularly implied those who could not normally be expected to contribute to formulating the architect's brief." Client, on the other hand, has both the possibility to influence the architect's choices by expressing their wishes, preferences, and the leverage of being the one who pays the architect's fees.

The text contains a number of additional definitions, that were not initially explained contained in this short clarification of vocabulary, because they are less ambiguous and their explanations are short enough, that they do not break the rhythm of our narration.

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[6] Quite interestingly, some of the contemporary artists understood this statement as a challenge.
[7] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/art

Chapter One. A matter of taste.

1.1. What is taste?

A number of social scientists (Bourdieu 1984, Toffler 1973; Gans 1974) in the past fifty years claimed, that taste- the individual patterns of aesthetical preference, is a function of education, income, experience, and social class. In their opinion we are raised and taught to appreciate and understand a certain kind of aesthetics and cultural symbols. Despite the unfortunate, hierarchical naming of the categorization of taste - high, medium, and low or popular, all of the taste classes are equally valuable and essential for the existence and development of the society. Especially vulnerable to criticism are the cultural objects and aesthetics favored by the working class. Those objects are believed to be mass produced, shallow, and harmful both to their consumers and to the society as a whole. However, Pierre Bourdieu, a renowned sociologist and author of an influential book in this topic- "Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste" argued convincingly, that "popular aesthetics should be appreciated as 'authentic' and meaningful and of value to those groups who constructed them." (Webster 2011, 41)

Herbert Gans (1974) advocates, that representatives of each of the social classes can point specific pieces of art, that are meaningful and aesthetically pleasing to them, and evoke similar kind of emotions, as the, in their opinion, incomprehensible or unsightly artworks elicit in the higher or lower class groups. Hence, someone can experience similar feelings, or insights while reading Paolo Coelho, as other person with Plato's Symposium in front of their eyes. Therefore, if we take into account the content of the artistic piece and judge it on the background of the level of education, experience, intelligence of the people it was created for, it is impossible to value one, or the other book higher. Gans (1974, 127-128) writes that "the evaluation of any item of cultural content must be related to the aesthetic standards and background characteristics of the relevant public and that to the extent that all taste cultures reflect the characteristics and standards of their publics, they are *equal in value*[8]."

High taste is not in fact 'higher' than the medium or popular ones, it just more suited for the needs of the affluent, well-educated classes of the society. Furthermore, if we approach the idea of beauty and aesthetics from the sociological point of view, we have to admit, that there is no such thing as an

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[8] Emphasis added by author.

infinite beauty that we all should strive to achieve, so, there is no point in forcing anyone to better their taste.

On the other hand, there are pieces of art that seem to be admired and believed to be superior by most of the representatives of all of the social classes. They are usually used as counterarguments by the advocates of infinite, objective beauty. As David Hume noticed in his essay 'Of the Standard of Taste', they remain admired despite the changes in style, fashion, religion, politics, or language and constitute a body of exemplars, against which other pieces of art and architecture are judged. (Hume, 1757).

However, Gans states that this relative standard is not chosen individually, but its significance depends on other's judgment of them. Furthermore, the recognition they receive, is not entirely related to the value or beauty of the item itself, but rather its historical significance, or skillful marketing.

Without any problems we can point a number of artists such as Van Gogh or Emily Dickson, or art objects, representing either the high or the popular culture, that remained unrecognized for a significant amount of time, and gained status of masterpieces after a few successful publications, exhibitions, or after they attracted attention of the right people and institutions. As an eminent architectural example of such a story we can recall the famous piece by Mies van der Rohe- the Barcelona Pavilion. As Juan Bonta (1979) has shown in his study, the building had little impact on architecture during its short existence, and in fact, remained virtually ignored. However, over time it managed to generate a spectrum of publications, and now is referenced in nearly every elaboration, lecture, or movie addressing the topic of the Modern Movement in Architecture.

Hence, we can conclude, that not only the aesthetic and economic, but also the symbolic value of an object, its meaning does not come from the beauty of the artefact itself, but is something that is determined by the viewer/ visitor, to an extent that 'every work is, so to speak, made twice, by the originator and by the beholder, or rather by the society to which the beholder belongs' (Bourdieu and Johnson in Webster, 2011, 37).

Because every piece of art and architecture is created twice, once by the designer, and the second time by the visitor, the concept-driven architectural pieces, made by an individual with their own worldview, experience, and intelligence is often misunderstood by the general public, or rather, understood in a completely different way, than the one anticipated by the creator.

For this reason designers often feel the urge to provide elaborate explanations of their creations, trying to justify their creations, or blur what the building in fact reminds them of. Tom Wolfe called this phenomena 'theory speak', and everyone can definitely name a few situations, when they wanted to point, that the emperor is in fact naked, and the building, or the piece of art reminds of something completely different, than what the creator is explaining.

The innovative structure of the building, the effort put into alternating the exhausted typology of the skyscraper, the delicate reference to mathematical impossible objects, all of the different aspects of the design, that Rem Koolhaas believed his building to possess, were overseen by the general public, for whom the building looked just like 'big pants'. In an interesting, and somewhat funny twist of events one building is a gentle mathematical play for architects and engineers and an enormous piece of underwear, as referred to by the locals.

1.2. What role do the taste cultures play in the society?

Bourdieu lead a large sociological study of the cultural preferences and practices of students of the University in Lille and came to the conclusion, that taste is a weapon used by the elite in their fight to constitute dominance over other social classes, and transfer this power across generations. (Webster, 2011)

In the opinion of Bourdieu, the students who derived from the high social class and possessed certain dispositions, such as knowledge of high art, literature, philosophy, and a distinct sense of fashion, were tacitly favored by the teaching system of the university. Their cultural competence was presented by the students as a natural skill, and was used as a reason to claim superiority over those who lacked this ability, those with 'popular taste'. (Webster, 2011,31)

Bourdieu investigated also the museum- visiting habits of the French society. He found out, that representatives of high class visited museums often, and spent substantially more time in front of an individual art piece. They based their judgment of it, on the knowledge about its formal properties, style, meaning, importance, and relations to other artefacts of culture. On the other hand the members of the least educated groups of society rarely visited museums, spent there a short time, and were unable to explain the subject of a given piece of art.

Bourdieu concluded, that universities as well as culture-related institutions such as museums 'played an important role in both legitimizing high culture and reproducing high culture in the children of cultural elite' (Webster, 2011, 35)

Furthermore, he claimed, that cultural capital (non-financial resources, such as knowledge, competence, experience, style of speech or dress and many others) similarly to economic capital tends to accumulate itself unequally. Therefore, it is in the best interest of those who possess artistic competence, to limit the number of people who can have access to it, by defining the kind of virtues, knowledge and characteristic that a person should possess in order to be granted artistic competence.

Taste plays one more, important role for the existence of social groups.

Namely, because taste (expressed for example through clothing) is a class, education, and income related disposition, it is also a clear indicator, to which social class, social group, or even occupancy a particular person belongs. Hence, acquiring and displaying a certain sense of taste is in many cases a step that needs to be made in order to enter a given social group, for example, to be acknowledged as an architect. In the next section of this paper, we are going to investigate, how the taste of an architect differs from the one on a layperson, and how is the sublime taste of professional building designers created.

1.3. Is the taste of architects different than the rest of the society?

As argued in the beginning of the previous subsection, taste is a function of experience, income, education, and background. Therefore architects, who have similar education, experience, and comparable salary, are representing the same taste class. Furthermore, as various authors argue (Stevens 2002, Webster 2005, Groat 1996), the distinct taste of building designers is enhanced by the process of educational acculturation experienced by every architect during their studies, which results in a social group with nearly homogenous aesthetical preferences. Of course such a generalization may cause objections, since architects create a huge professional guild and some derogation to the rule definitely exists, nevertheless, the aesthetical preferences of the majority would fit into the standard.

A number of sociologists have asked themselves whether, and how does the perception of the built environment of an architect differ from the rest of the society.

Most researchers have come to the same conclusion, namely, that there is a significant gap between the judgement of architecture passed by an educated building designers and the one expressed by a layperson (Hershberger 1969, Groat 1982, Devlin and Nasar 1989, Gifford et al 2002). The differences refer both to the aesthetical and stylistic preferences (Hershberger 1969, Fawcett et al 2008) and to the meaning prescribed to buildings (Hershberger 1969, Groat 1982, Devlin and Nasar 1989).

All of the aforementioned examinations were constructed on a similar pattern- a group of architects were asked to grade a given set of buildings in different aspects, and the same task was asked of an equally large group of laypeople (whose education level and background were precisely checked and in line with the objectives of the study).

Every single of these researches as well as the ones that they are referring to showed significant differences between the two groups in judging different aspects of the buildings (whether the building was beautiful or not, meaningful or the opposite, simple, complex, clear, coherent, and many others). Linda Groat investigated the differences between architects and non-architects in prescribing meaning to buildings, and understanding the symbolism of modern and post-modern architecture. As expected, she found out that the understanding of a given object is significantly different for a professional (who

focuses much more on aesthetical values of an object, and is able to correlate it with a broader discussion) and a layperson. Furthermore, she argues that architects not only focus their attention on a whole different aspects of the building, but also use a distinct system of classification: "(…) non-architects are not merely misinterpreting the same classification system, but are instead using a completely different system of categorization" (Groat, 1982, 19).

Furthermore, as Herbert Gans (1977) notices, even if architects use the same terminology as laypeople, they understand it in their own, particular way. Simply, when the client says that he wants his apartment to be 'spacious' he has a very different image in mind, than the professional listening to them. As Robert Gifford and his co-workers found through their research, when architects were talking about originality they associated it with a greater presence of metal cladding and the lack of landscaping (the questionnaire was conducted at the beginning of the twenty first century). On the other hand, laypeople judged rounded and ornamented buildings as more original.

Herbert Gans suggests, that architects are producing buildings consistent with the preferences of the higher classes, since they are also the wealthiest one, and therefore are the most desirable clients.

If architects are trying to do so, they do not do a particularly good job, since, as Kimberly Devlin and Jack Nasar (1989) argued based on their research, the stylistic preferences of architects and well-educated representatives of society, who were not involved in the building industry, varied significantly. Based on a detailed research Kimberly Devlin and her colleague came to the conclusion, that architects favored what they described as 'high architecture'- white, modernist structures created out of a few materials (mostly concrete), with frameless windows, flat roofs and off-centered entrances, whereas the representatives of the high class preferred more traditional buildings, saturated in warm colors, made out of more materials such as brick, wood, and stone, with hip roofs, framed windows.

Furthermore, Nasar (1989) observed, that architects not only disagree with laypeople about their evaluation of architecture, but were also unable to predict correctly how non-architects are going to judge a given piece of architecture. Hence, even if the objective of an architect is to design a structure, that is going to be valued highly by the general public, he/she is deemed to fail, because of his/her inability to assess the public admiration.

1.4. Is the architect's taste created during studies?

In the face of the few previous pages, the obvious answer to the question posed in the title of this subsection seems to be positive, however, Purcell and Nasar (1992) concluded based to their research, that the appreciation to 'high' architecture does not change significantly in the course of studies of an architect. The first year students were asked to evaluate pictures of houses drawn from popular magazines (popular style of architecture) and professional writings (high style architecture) in four

criteria- goodness of example, familiarity, interest, and preference. Already at this very early stage of education they valued the high style far more than the popular one.

To see how the education process of an architect changes their architectural taste Purcell and Nasar made the same group of students evaluate the same examples of houses two and a half year later. Surprisingly, it seems, at least according to this research, that the five semesters of education did not leave their mark on the way architecture student perceive and appreciate high architecture- the assessment of the professionally acknowledged examples remained unchanged.

However, the educational process had the biggest influence on the perception of popular-taste houses, whose overall rating declined significantly.

Purcell and Nasar(1992, 210) ask a question that seems to be one of the main focus points of this paper: "How appropriate is it that one result of an architectural education process is to produce low levels of preference for the style of houses potentially most preferred by the general public?"

The authors of this text give two possible explanations of this phenomenon. Firstly, it might be caused by the fact, that the architectural education is a particularly rapid process. Purcell and Nasar also suspect that the recognition of high style of architecture expressed by abecedarian students is a representation of their prior interests and associated learning resulting from their background. Garry Stevens who claims in, that the education system of architect generally favors the representatives of the privileged classes, hence those, who possess the largest cultural capital would definitely agree on that. Furthermore, in many universities (for example in every public Architecture Faculty in Poland) the architectural studies are preceded by a preparatory course and an entrance examination, which eliminates the candidates, who have an unwanted architectural taste, and do not favor the high architecture.

From my own experience and observation I can conclude, that in many cases students know or rather anticipate what their professors and other architecture professionals expect them to say. Students do so, even if they are not exactly of the same opinion.

That is one of the 'not getting killed' tactics as one of the pupils named them in a research conducted by Helena Webster.

In the next section we are going to investigate them more thorough in the hope, that it will help us understand, among many other aspects such as the vocational character of the profession, how and why is the architect's taste created.

1.5. How is the architect's taste shaped?

Even, if as Purcell and Nasar argue, the education process does not change the taste for high architecture of an aspiring designer, (although, there is a number of academic papers that argue otherwise -Downing, 1992; Wilson, 1996) the difference in perception and understanding of the built environment between architects and laypeople is significant, as argued in the previous subsection. The education process of the abecedarian architects has an immense impact both on the identity of a building designer, their taste, and perception of the built environment, as well as their levels of tolerance for the popular taste by the means of a number of practices that are described below. We should start with the aspect that has the greatest impact on shaping the future designer- the professional indoctrination.

1.5.1. The hidden curriculum.

The hidden curriculum "refers to those unstated values, attitudes, and norms which stem tacitly from the social relations of the school and class-room as well as the content of the course" (Dutton, 1987, 16). In the opinion of a number of sociologists and architectural theoreticians (Dutton, 1897, Groat 1996, Stevens 2002, Webster, 2005), the hidden curriculum is a crucial aspect in the shaping of the professional identity of the future building designers. Thomas Dutton (1987,17) adds, that the hidden curriculum is "one of the major socialization forces used to produce personality types willing to accept social relationships characteristic of the governance structures of the workplace".

The aforementioned researchers declare, that except for the obvious agenda of introducing the students to different aspects of construction, design, architectural theory, building norms and physics, the education of architects has one more hidden aim. Namely, it is supposed to socialize the students with the professionals and align their *habitus* with the one accepted and supported by the profession.

Habitus is a concept known since Aristotle, but (re)elaborated in the modern times inter alia by Pierre Bourdieu, who described it as "a system of dispositions, that is of permanent manners of seeing, action and thinking, or as a system of longevity (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception and action." (Webster after Bourdieu, 2008, p. 69)

In other words, habitus is the set of values, worldview, expectations, taste, and lifestyle that every individual possess, and it is a result of his/her upbringing, experience, education, and class discrimination.

As Garry Stevens (2002, 112) notices, instilling the appropriate habitus in the pupils of architecture schools is not a new idea, and used to be not only acknowledged, but also glorified by the educators of

the previous centuries. Jacques-Francis Blondel, the creator of full-time architectural education, reassured parents of future architects "fencing, music and dancing; exercises to which particular attention is paid, since they should form part of the education of all well-born persons who devote themselves to architecture, and who are destined to live in the best society" (Stevens after Blondel, 2002, 187)

Making sure that the values, taste, self-presentation of an aspiring architect is compatible with the ones supported by the profession is gained through a number of sociological and psychological tools, that Helen Webster calls 'micro-technologies of power'. Stevens goes even a step further and names them 'ways of ensuring docility' (Stevens, 2002, 202). They include a number of practices.

For example a total, vocational commitment of the student is not only encouraged, but also tacitly requested and exhibits itself for example in the long-hours work culture, and the sacrifice of personal life, in order to finish the project in time. The number of sleepless nights becomes a currency students use to gain recognition among their tutors and peers.

Moreover, an intense competition between the students is enhanced by comparing the results of one pupil to another, providing extra curriculum activities with a limited number of places available only to the best students, or, as it was in Ecole des Beaux Arts, organizing competitions among the scholars. Garry Stevens adds to the list of micro- technologies of power the use of vague, allusive, and in many cases recondite to the uncultured students, language.

Another important aspect of the hidden curriculum, vital to a number of teaching practices, is the commonly held presumption that students are 'empty vessels' that need to be filled with knowledge. Because of this supposition the previous experiences, personal characteristic, talents, culture, knowledge of the students, so, in short their habitus, is ignored, which makes the teaching based on dialog, a method focuses on 'interactive, cooperative, rational aspects of teaching and learning' (Groat, Montgomery after Tilburg,1998, 1) impossible.

The belief, that students are in fact all the same is, in the opinion of Greig Crysler (1995, 210) and Magali Larsson (1977) central to architectural education since the aim of this process is to produce alike professionals equipped with standardized, marketable skills.

The empty vase model of pedagogy fosters discriminatory behaviors by ignoring the cultural and personal nuances, strengthens the discrepancy of power between the one 'who has the knowledge' and the 'empty vessels', the hierarchical order of the profession, and the formation of cults.

Moreover, that presumption assumes, that competence is linked to the amount of knowledge received, hence the ones with least knowledge- first year students and non-architects are not able to participate

fully in the debate about architecture, and their opinion and aesthetical preferences are of much lesser value, than the ones of educated and experienced architects.

Furthermore, Garry Stevens vividly persuades that people whose habitus, because of their origin and upbringing, is far away from the one promoted by the architectural profession choose fields of studies where the cultural capital of the student (and later the practitioner) is less significant, such as engineering, dentistry, or nursing. They pre-eliminate themselves from the artistic and architectural professions (Stevens, 2002, 190), which further proves the thesis, that architects represent only one of the social classes.

The most important consequence of the aligning the habitus of the students with the one promoted by the tutors, studio, school, and discipline is the fact, that it results in a quite homogenous body of professionals (with, of course, a number of exceptions, since life is never black and white). Those alike architects are supposed to answer to the diversity of needs, taste, worldview, and lifestyles of representatives of all class groups of society. How hard the task is for the acculturated architects, who has been taught 'the right way' to think about architecture, was already mentioned in the introduction.

1.5.2. Studio

There can be no doubts, that the design studio occupies nowadays the primer position in the education process of a future architect, both when it comes to the importance of the grade, the time load, and the impact the various events occurring in it have on shaping the taste and identity of the future professional. As mentioned in the previous subsection, the studio is the main stage for the micro-technologies of power.

Design studios foster an intensive mode of education, that can be related to the internship of medical students. Compared to the traditional classroom education, studios are far more active sites. They involve students in a number of activities both intellectual and social, and require from them constant shift between analytic, synthetic and evaluative thinking. (Dutton, 1987, 16)

This popular at Architecture Faculties form of education originated from the nineteenth century articled apprenticeship model, in which one gained knowledge through practice in an architectural office, while observing and being guided by a master architect. In the modern schools of architecture, the office became the design studio, the real commissions were replaced by simulated design problems, and the design tutor played a dual role of a coaching master architect and a client[9]. (Webster, 2008, 64)

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[9] The latter is especially criticized, since it is barely every the case, that the client knows more about the design of buildings than the actual architect.

The studio-centered education has been praised for its sophisticated means of teaching creative problem-solving. It engages students to work on cases similar to real-time issues, creates a closer relationship between the teacher and the student and encourages a high and active involvement of the students in the education process.

However, the voices of criticism are just as strong, and indicate the ways in which this model of education contributes to the creation of uniform professionals, with low levels of tolerance for wishes, and aesthetical preferences of non-architects.

An important disadvantage of the design studio is the fact, that in the majority of cases it is isolated from the everyday life, from the problems of real people. Designing in seclusion puts the student with their perception and ideas in the center of the problem, pushing the points of view and concerns of the others- the users, neighborhood, society, even the client, to the edge. It is the taste of the architect and their understanding of the built environment that is crucial for the project.

In boldest cases the seclusion of the design studio has achieved such a level, that it is no longer just ideological, but became literal- the students spend entire weeks in the studio space without setting their foot outside of the faculty building. They rotate mostly in the circle of people with similar knowledge and perception of the built environment, people that favor the same kind of buildings, or architectural solutions, and that 'speak their language' when talking about it. That contributes to creating and enhancing distinct taste of architects, promoting the vocational character of the discipline by encouraging students to neglect the social, psychological or even hygienic needs in the name of architecture, as well as fosters the use of jargon , and finally, creates problems with understanding the general public's perception of architecture. One would assume, that teaching the aspiring architects what the needs of people towards the built environment and how to respond to them would be one of the central point of the education process of an architect, unfortunately that is not always the case.

The entire design can be made between drawing board, the laptop, and the library, without even thinking about the needs and wishes of the users of the building. Witold Rybczyński complained in the forward to his book 'Home' about the lack of users perspective in the curriculum of his studies. It is even more curious, that this omission was not fixed almost half of a century later. It might have been just my personal unfortunate experience, but the topic of comfort of the users has barely ever been mentioned by my tutors. In order to find out, it was just a coincidence during my education, or an experience shared by a broader spectrum of students of architecture, I have made a short questionnaire among my fellow students[10], who finished their bachelors at five well-known universities- Czech

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[10] The questionnaire had an informal character. It was conducted only among a few people that were well known to the author of this paper. Therefore it cannot be treated as a proof of the bad state of architectural education.

Technical University in Prague, TU Delft, Glasgow School of Art, University of Waterloo, and TU Eindhoven.

Only one person of that group responded positively to the questions: "Were you encouraged to look at your building from the users perspective? Did you consider the needs and requirements of the users? Were you taught how to do that?" This person was the only one among my interlocutors, who did not study architecture, but finished the Department of Industrial Design at TU Eindhoven. The rest of people questioned by me admitted, that there was either very little concern about the abovementioned aspect, or that it depended entirely on the character of the studio and the wishes of their professor.

The professors setting the tone for the character of the entire studio is an acknowledged phenomena, and another aspect of the design studio, that we would like to focus our attention on.

The fact, that one person, the one who has the most knowledge, experience directs the debate about architecture, contributes greatly to aligning the habitus of the students to the one promoted by the profession, as well as creates a pattern for the encounters between a building designer and a layperson. It is teaching the future architects, that the solutions proposed by the less educated and less powerful parties of the project (such as the future users of social housing), are far less worthy than the ones preferred by the architect.

In the studio based model of education the teacher plays the role of a critic, whose goal is to 'correct' the designs of the students, and his/her power is objectified by a number of tools. The 'critic'- the presentations of the design made by the students, and held at least once during the semester and once more when showing the final outcome, followed by a judgment of it expressed through the tutor(s) and external critics, deserves the title of one of the most powerful of them. The sole choreography of this event, with the student explaining and 'defending' their design in front of a jury and then being subjected to a cross-questioning lead by the jury of professors and external examiners, assigns the power to the latter. (Webster, 2005)

Their dominance is signaled also by the ability to 'talk the talk'-using jargon, understood properly by those, who know 'how to play the game', effectively excluding most of the inexperience, novice students, who do not come from privileged background.

Moreover, the power of professors and critics is legitimized by 'folklore' stories broadcasted by tutors and fellow students, stories of 'great masters' such Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who in anger, would rip off the walls unworthy drawings of his students. Such anecdotes legitimate both the event of the judgment itself, as well as assign the power to the judging.

Yet, as Helena Webster (2005) noticed, tutors were not entirely consistent in exercising their symbolic power over the students. It was observed, that teachers were adopting the role of a co-researcher when

talking to those pupils, who seem to 'have the feeling for the game'. Those students developed a number of tactics that were meant to 'not getting killed' during a presentation. Their 'ritual mastery' consisted of a number of methods such as using jargon, certain ways of drawing and presenting the project, a distinct behavior during the presentation, even wearing the right kind of clothes[11]. Once more, all of this techniques meant in fact acquiring, and developing the 'architectural taste' - adjusting the behavior, self-presentation, language, perception of architecture to those promoted by the teachers, studio, school and the architectural profession.

On the other hand, students who did not exhibit the required taste, graphic and linguistic acuity, and a particular demeanor, whose work was considered the least able had their work described with harsh, dismissive and dialogue-prohibiting words, such as 'wrong', 'bad', 'rubbish'. Clearly, such an action is primarily judgmental and has a very little possibility to either motivate or help the reflective learning process of the student concerned. (Webster, 2007, 24). A small percentage of tutors supported the weak (the least aligned with the habitus of the profession) students through diagnostic questioning, encouragement, and suggestion of comprehensible improvement means. The rest of the tutors seemed to share the opinion, that the least able students should not be studying architecture at all (ibid).

As Reyner Banham (1999; 295) suggests everyone who has to deal with architectural education on a daily basis can name a number of cases, when the students are convinced (rightly in twenty percent of cases, as Banham estimates), that they failed, because they 'do not draw in the right style".

Such behavior consolidates in the future building designers the notion, that there is a right and wrong way to perceive and experience architecture.

The difference in power between a professor and a student is so significant, that it lets the teacher impose their design solutions on the student, ignoring the fact, that design is a dynamic, multifarious task, in which more than one solutions is correct. Moreover, the student, with his own, individual habitus might propose solutions that the teacher cannot fully comprehend, or even labels as 'wrong', simply because they do not have the same experience as the student.

All of the abovementioned aspects of architectural education influence the future practitioner by lowering levels of preference for popular architecture, creating a pattern for the character of the relationships between an educated professional and a layperson, and shaping the perception and a sublime taste of an aspiring architect. In the next subsection we will investigate why are the 'micro-technologies of power' accepted and supported by the profession.

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[11] There is a well-known saying, that "architects always wear black, unless it is hot, than they wear black."

1.6. Why is the sublime taste important for the profession of architecture?

Displaying the 'right' kind of aesthetical preference helps architects, as any other social group, to guard the boundaries of their profession and to make sure that the disposition of the cultural capital, one of their main assets, is controlled by the profession.

It is of a great importance to architects, especially since, as the recent developments proved, a growing number of experts from construction related branches are entering the domain that previously belonged exclusively to architects. A substantial part of the design work has been undertaken by subcontractors, consultants, and project developers, hence, it is not a surprise that architects are trying to use many tools to defend the last bastions of their autonomy. Being the only one who can create, point, and judge the value of buildings, and making sure that they are leading and controlling the debate about architecture are definitely one of the most powerful weapons in their fight.

However, we can question, whether it is not in fact a two-sided sword. On one hand architects control the judgement of their works, on the other, their attitude confirms to the would-be clients, that building designers are self-centered and hard to communicate with.

Nevertheless, the importance of preservation and promotion of a sublime taste among architects are of sociological, or socio-psychological nature, and their complexity reaches far beyond the scope of this paper.

There is one more reason why architects think, that their way of perceiving architecture and their aesthetical preferences are more important, than the one from laypeople. They anticipate, that providing representatives of all of the taste cultures with the built environment they want to live in will lower its quality, or have a negative impact on the future of architecture.

In the next part of the text we are going to investigate if, and to what extent is such a claim justified. Whether the primary aim of good architecture should be to achieve beauty and innovation, or if buildings, that are considered unsightly by some, can still create a desirable man-made environment by providing a number of other aspects. Finally, we will consider the nature of the theory of architecture to convince, that "Architecture Depends"[12] and having theoretical knowledge does not ensure understanding the needs and lifestyle of the users better, or being able to provide them with the most suitable built environment.

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[12] A book by Jeremy Till.

Chapter Two. There is no accounting for taste.

2.1. "De gustibus non est disputandum"

"There is no accounting for taste" states the well-known Latin maxim. Disputes about aesthetical and stylistic preferences are too subjective to be resolved.[13] We have already argued in the previous section, that it is impossible to valorize taste cultures- they are equally important. This conclusion should be true for the appearance of architecture as well. After all, in a democratic society everyone should be granted the right to express their opinion about style and aesthetic values, and be able to live in a built environment that they find beautiful, comprehensible, and interesting.

However, such a statement is, at least for some architects and professionals from architecture-related branches, controversial.

Following the example of Henry Ford, who stated about the futility of asking laypeople about their opinion: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses", those architects, architecture critics, and theoreticians claim, that neglecting the value of non-architect's perspective and focusing on the opinions of professionals will ensure the development of architecture and provide the society with good built environment.

Aaron Betsky wrote in vitriolic response to a piece declaring the need for human-oriented architecture, published in The New York Times, that "architecture is not made by or for a wide spectrum of the population. It is made for those who have the means to commission it, and reflects their values and priorities."[14] Moreover in the opinion of Betsky, architects should focus on what Kenneth Frampton called "acrobatic feats" – experimentation and preoccupation with the new and the exotic. Betsky reassures architects not to worry too much about being not understood and appreciated by the society, or by delivering buildings with construction flaws. It seems that bizarre outlook and leakages are an inevitable part of architectural progress: "the fact that buildings look strange to some people, and that roofs sometimes leak, is part and parcel of the research and development aspect of the design discipline."[15] In his opinion such an approach would ensure the improvement of the man-made

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[13] Quite interestingly, this proverb is usually followed with 'but', and a long, detailed judgement of someone new haircut or interior décor.

[14] http://www.architectmagazine.com/architects/the-new-york-times-versus-architecture_o.aspx

[15] Aaron Betsky bravely let other make sacrifices for his art.
After all, he is not the one who has to run around the house with buckets every time it rains.

environment: "Experimentation can sometimes look weird at first, but it is a necessary part of figuring out how to make our human-built world better." Better, of course only of the ones, who can afford having a say in this debate by commissioning a building.[16]

Letting only professionals, and people who are interested in architecture and possess a certain amount of knowledge about the built environment decide, which stylistic and aesthetical solutions are valuable, would be justified, if we assume, just in line with Aaron Betsky's opinion, that architecture is high art, and its prevailing aim is to design with imagination and skill buildings, that express important ideas, or that strive for innovation and beauty.

In the next subsection we are going to consider, whether it is a reasonable approach.

2.2. Architecture as art.

There is an ongoing discussion about the status of architecture as one of the fine arts. Friedrich Schelling in his famous lecture on the philosophy of art equated architecture to painting, music and sculpture by stating famously that "architecture is frozen music". However, he immediately expressed his concern by asking: "To what extent can an art form that is subordinated to need and serves a purpose external to itself be counted among the fine arts? Fine art is absolute in itself, and thus without any external purpose; it is not a matter of need. For this reason many people have actually excluded architecture." (Bearn after Schelling,1997, 87)

This seems to be the core of the problem. Architecture, unlike drawing, sculpture, music, and literature, does not serve only the purpose of creation of 'something beautiful, or something that expresses important ideas or feelings' but is subordinated to human needs, technological requirements, financial constraints, and as the only of fine arts, is restricted by legislation. Furthermore, it is the only art-related profession, where the artist in the majority of cases has to rely on their client's money to

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[16] Aaron Betsky, a well-educated architecture critic, educator, lecturer, and the former director of the Netherlands Institute of Architecture, represents and opts for the high-architecture. We would have no reason to criticize him, if Betsky made clear to whom and about which buildings he directs his comments. Unfortunately, nowhere in his text appears the distinction between high and popular architecture, or architecture and building design, so it appears, that he is talking about the whole built environment.
A more thorough examination of the critique of popular architecture is available in the third part of this paper.

create his/ her piece. This fact forces the architect to choose between their own values, taste, concept and what the client wants to see.[17]

On the other hand, there is a number of buildings that because of their aesthetical values, meaningful expression, extraordinary form, innovatory solutions, and many other, impossible to grasp reasons, deserve the status of a work of art. However, it is hard to point more precisely how a building becomes art, especially when the newly completed constructions are at question.

Stephen Davies (1984, 39) in his essay 'Is architecture art?' gives three possible answers to this problem: firstly, there is a number of architects who create their designs with the overriding principle of the building becoming a piece of art, and surrender functional, technical or economic requirements to this need. Secondly, an existing building can gain the status of an art piece after being recognized for its historical importance, formal solutions or beauty, by 'some agent of the art world'. Lastly, an existing building can be called a work of art after being recognized by a famous artist, who treats it as a conceptual art piece- such an attempt was undertaken by Marcel Duchamp, who wanted to transform the Woolworth Building into an artwork.

We must admit, the explanations proposed by Davies leave some crucial questions unanswered: Why do some buildings, which were created with the principle of becoming an art piece, succeed and others do not? What extraordinary qualities do they have?

These issues are definitely interesting and deserve a more thorough investigation , but trying to answer them would make us derive too far from the main topic of this essay. Nevertheless, they are important in order to indicate, that art and architecture are hard to describe disciplines with soft boundaries- what is art to one person, does not have to be art to the other (the ready-mades of Marcel Duchamp with the fountain-urinal being the first example that comes to mind). Hence, some presumptions in this paper are necessary.

Once more, just for the sake of mutual understanding let us assume, that art are those pieces of architecture, which designers gave priority to aesthetical, conceptual or spiritual considerations over the functional ones. In this essay we call them high architecture.

High architecture is dominated by creators and critics- it is designed by professionals according to their taste and acknowledged by critics and practitioners. Highly intellectualized, it is struggling with aesthetic, stylistic, and formal questions, and striving for innovation. The most important difference between high and popular architecture is that the latter follows the taste, requirements and wishes of its

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[17] It should be noted, that both high and popular art responds to the wishes of the public (Gans, 1974). However, the role of the client (with his/her opinions, taste, and financing) in no other branch of art is as important as in architecture.

sponsors and users, who are not of high, or architect's taste. It prioritizes function over aesthetics, although style is an important issue for both high and popular architecture.

We make the distinction only between high architecture (follows the taste of architects, architecture theoreticians and critics, as well as 'architecture geeks'), and popular architecture (follows the taste of the rest of society), however, it should be underlined, that there are in fact a number of different movement and taste classes within popular architecture, that give its consumers a freedom of choice. It is an important point because the critique of popular art and architecture sees lower classes of society as uneducated, limited, apathetic, and easy to manipulate masses. Kenneth Frampton (1971) calls them 'the silent majority', and the 'constrained masses'.

Denying people their individuality and ability to make personal choices is extremely demeaning. The main points of the critique of popular architecture are investigated in the third part of the paper.

The Glass House designed by Philip Johnson can serve as a good example of high architecture. The design required living in austerity and subjected the crucial, functional demands towards residential architecture- the need for comfort, coziness and warmth (among many others such as good ventilation, easy and cheap maintenance), to the prevailing aesthetical, and ideological principle. (Melchionne, 1998).

The outcome is a widely acknowledged building, named by an architecture critic, Nicolai Ouroussoff "a legitimate aesthetic triumph"[18], and a "visual poem"[19]. According to the director of the Glass House Museum, the building still has the power to move its visitors, especially young architects "It's not uncommon for tears to well up in their eyes as they approach the house." [20]

Although recognized for its artistic values and the ability to create emotional responses in its visitors, the building is almost unlivable. The ventilation is insufficient, it is poorly energy efficient, its transparency requires, as already mentioned living in austerity, and denies the need for comfort[21]. (Melchionne, 1998)

The Glass House is an outstanding example of high architecture and a very poor building design regarding functionality. Although being an art-architecture building does not exclude being a functional and comfortable building at the same time, it is much easier to find examples of the first,

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[18] http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/06/arts/design/06glas.html?pagewanted=print

[19] http://www.artesmagazine.com/2013/04/philip-johnsons-glass-house-modern-architecture-in-rolling-connecticut-hills/

[20] http://www.architecturaldigest.com/architecture/2012-09/architect-philip-johnson-glass-house-modernism-article

[21] However for Philip Johnson comfort was a function of aesthetics: "comfort is a function of whether you think a chair is good-looking or not." (Rybczyński after Johnson, 1986, 211), so he most likely did not experience the house as uncomfortable.

than the latter. Not everyone, or, more likely, very few people are willing to make sacrifices, required by living in high architecture.

For that reason the answer to the main question of this section, whether architecture should be considered as art is: some pieces of architecture definitely deserve the status of an artwork, and they are needed to fulfill the requirements of a certain group of society. However, in general architecture is not fine art in the traditional understanding of the term, and nor should it be.

Regarding architecture as art would mean judging the work of architects according to a set of norms governing the art world, making architects concentrate on the aesthetical, formal or stylistic problems. As Stephen Davies (1984, 40) noticed giving architecture the status of a fine art would mean condemning "most of the profession by suggesting that this majority produces inferior artworks, when, in fact, it responds to the reasonable demands of its employers by designing functionally successful buildings within the myriad of constraints commonly applying, not least of which are financial ones." It would demand from the users of the buildings surrendering their needs to the overriding principle of the design, principles that they might not agree with or even comprehend.

2.3. Good architecture is more than style and aesthetics.

As already mentioned in this text, a number of architects fear, that granting people of all of the taste classes the right to live in buildings, that they find beautiful will have an adversely effect on the quality of the man-made environment. However, the judgement of buildings depends on a much bigger number of aspects, aesthetical values, formal solutions or innovativeness being just a few, and (since architecture is not art) not the most important of them. In this section, we have asked two questions:

What qualities should good popular architecture provide?

What does an average citizen expect from their built environment?

These questions proved to be much harder to answer, than they appear, especially, if we want to incorporate the perspective of non-architects. The reason for that results in the fact, that laypeople barely ever express their opinion of architecture, especially when it comes to non-residential buildings, and especially in a written way. They feel secluded from the debate even, if it comes to public buildings that they in fact have paid for through taxes.

Moreover, the requirements, wishes, and preferences towards architecture are personal and to some extent unique, and depend on a number of factors. What is good architecture to one person, does not have to be considered as such by another.

Nevertheless, in the hope that a decent amount of points of view provided both by professionals and non-architects will help us enter the vestibule of objectivity I have collected a number of reference texts, lectures, interviews and created a list of aspects, that characterize a popular architecture building.

However it should be noted, that neither the list of the aspects, nor their explanations are finalized- based on the literature investigated during the research, we claim that most likely such a list can ever be closed- architecture is too relative, and too subjective. Creating an all- containing list was not the objective of searching for the characteristics of desirable architecture. The summary was created to present, that the quality of the built environment depends on a number of aspects, other than its aesthetic values. Even if the discipline opens itself bravely towards the society by starting a dialog about architecture, even, if architects follow the taste and wishes of their clients, or the users of the buildings, it does not decrease significantly the domain of architects. There are many aspects of design that only a qualified professional can solve properly. Furthermore, it can serve as a starting point for a non-critical debate about the wishes and requirements towards architecture of all tastes, and focus both the professionals and laypeople on the most important question: What makes a building good?

Based on our research we can claim, that good popular architecture provides:

2.3.1. Comfort.

„There is nothing like staying at home for real comfort." Jane Austen

"One would have thought, that comfort was a crucial issue in preparing for the architectural profession, like justice in law, or health in medicine." (Rybczyński, 1986, forward) states Witold Rybczyński while complaining, that this important aspect was missing from the otherwise rigorous curriculum of his studies.[22]

The German word *Behaglichkeit* (comfortableness) has two other meanings: bliss, and content, originated from the old German word *Hag,* which meant a fenced enclosure that provided security from wildlife. These three meanings- bliss, content, and security seem to encompass the most important aspects of comfort. (Janson, and Tigges, 2014, 62)

Janson and Rybczyński add a number of factors to this list such as privacy and intimacy, domesticity, commodity and delight, ease, efficiency, appropriate room size, adequate spatial gestures, use of

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[22] The blessing in disguise in this case is the fact, that the omission in Rybczyński's education made him investigate the topic of comfort in architecture individually and, in result, provided us with a very interesting and readable book.

materials, and color, sense of security and, finally, coziness. (Rybczyński, 1986; Janson and Tigges, 2014, 62)

Of course there is a multiplicity of individual factors, and preconditions, that need to occur to create a comfortable piece of architecture. Building physics investigates and codifies them by a number of measurable means: light intensity, air exchange and velocity, temperature, odor, and noise. Even though all of them are unquestionably important, they do not ensure solely the atmosphere needed to create comfort. This is why architects have to communicate effectively with their clients, instead of just assuming, that everyone feels comfortable in the same kind of buildings they do.

2.3.2. Unfinishedness[23]

If architecture is background there are consequences. The first is the need of all architectural space, however magnificent or perfect, to be completed by something outside itself (…) Buildings whose architects forget this, that strive to be all foreground and allow no room for completion, fail.
Rowan Moore, (2012,100)

Architecture should leave the possibility to its users to change and adjust it to their needs and requirements. Forgetting about this simple truth generates dilemmas similar to the one described by Adolf Loos in his essay 'Poor Little Rich Man'. It tells a story of a millionaire, told a renowned interior architect to "Bring me art, art under my roof". (Loos, 1900, 18) As asked, the architect designed interiors, that as a totality and in every single detail were a piece of art. The designer did not forget about anything. His client sat on art, when reading his morning paper with an artistic cup of coffee in his hand. His feet sank into a carpet that was a piece of art, when he stood up to go to the bathroom. The door handle he grasped to open the door was a piece of art as well.

Every piece of furnishing had its prescribed place, which caused some problems. "Sometimes the architect had to look at the blueprints to rediscover the correct place for a box of matches" (Loos, 1900, 19) Nevertheless, the client remained happy, until the architect commanded him to throw away a handmade gift received from his grandchild, since, everything the millionaire needed was already designed by the architect, and there was no chance for alternations.

Although the story sounds to be naïve and exaggerated it does convey a simple wisdom- architecture is just a background, therefore should be completed by something else, something that stays in the foreground- the life of people, their personality, individuality, their material possessions.

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[23] Charles Jencks states in the introduction to "What is Post-Modernism", that every author is allowed one neologism per book, and, hoping that the same rule applies to Academic Papers, I have decided to create a new word, that would describe the condition of never being finished.

2.3.3. Flexibility

„Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future." Niels Bohr

Thom Watson, the Chairman of IBM, predicted in 1943 that the entire world market of computers will amount up to five exemplars. Although nowadays such a statement brings smile to our faces, the truth, which we can learn from it is that it is extremely hard to predict the future. Especially nowadays, when we hear more and more often about technological innovations that have pushed the boundaries of human knowledge and experience a step further.

If trying to predict the reality of tomorrow creates an obstacle, making ourselves ready for this uncertain destiny may be a recipe for a disaster. The lifespan of a building is in most cases counted in decades, and, as it is (or at least should be) believed in the architectural profession, the responsibility of an architect does not end with the moment of cutting the ribbon.

Creating a structure, which through different measures (being easily adaptable, universal, or transformable) is ready to house the uncertain future is a matter of efficiency, sustainability, and functionality. Even, if that is not possible on the scale of the entire building, or the task of trying to predict the future, even if based on scientific investigation, seems to be rather a guesswork, than a reliable assumption, the fact remains, that buildings (especially public ones) have to be, to some extent flexible, in order to accommodate the 'shared individualism' - the different requirements, needs, preferences of their users.

2.3.4. Haptic quality

In a time not distant, it will be possible to flash any image formed in thought on a screen and render it visible at any place desired. The perfection of this means of reading thought will create a revolution for the better in all our social relations.

-Nikola Tesla

It is surprising how adequate and inadequate the prediction of Nikola Tesla was at the time. The twenty first century in architecture is definitely a time, where one can 'flash any image formed in thought on the screen'. It seems, that in many cases architecture is not judged based on its appearance, but rather on the quality of pictures made of a given building.[24] On the other hand, it appears, that the easiness of production of images has not contributed into bettering the social relations. Juhani Pallasmaa would argue just the opposite. Because of the hegemony of vision people are losing touch

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[24] Unfortunately, seeing for the first time in real life the poor execution and materialization of Zaha Hadid's Chanel Pavilion has significantly contributed to me gaining a Paris Syndrome.

with themselves and with reality. (Pallasmaa, 1996) This is why he argues that "It is evident that 'life- enhancing' architecture has to address all of the senses simultaneously and fuse our image of self with our experience of the world" (Pallasmaa, 1996, 11). Pallasmaa accuses the hegemony of sight over the four other senses of contributing to the inhumanity of contemporary architecture and urban settings, as well as increases the alienation, detachment, and solitude. Even if one finds such an opinion to be exaggerated, the fact remains, that humans have (at least) five senses at their disposal while exploring their surroundings and providing architecture that can respond to this biological and psychological aspect of people will let them engage with their built environment on a much deeper level.

2.3.5. Accessibility.

"In Britain, we've tended to replace the kind of architectural culture valued in much of Europe with an in-flight magazine lifestyle - all branding, marketing and 'accessibility', a word that usually means dumbing-down." David Chipperfield

Accessibility can be understood in a threefold way, and none of them requires 'dumbing the design down' as David Chipperfield suggested.

The first, physical meaning, most common and literal, involves arrangement of movement and sensor infrastructure that removes the obstacles (called 'architectural barriers') in free movement of handicapped people.

On the other hand, accessibility does not only suggest providing ramps, elevators, and beeping crossings. From a psychological point of few, having accessibility as a design principle implies that the project does not create psychological barriers in the city, does not exclude, and, more importantly does not valorize people because of their origin, gender, race, age, physical and mental abilities.

Providing ramp in the backyard as an entrance for people on wheelchairs does not mean that the building is psychologically accessible for them.

Within the normal and reasonable constraints of privacy, people should be able to feel welcome in every part of the city, especially in public buildings and service centers. (Lincourt, 1999, 115).

2.3.6. Conclusion.

Good quality of the architecture is created by on a number of factors, some of them are listed in this subsection which are not subjected to taste. Building designers can still provide satisfactory built environment, even if its aesthetics serves the popular trends.

Architecture not being a fine art is not the only reason why architects should not neglect the aesthetical preferences of laypeople while designing buildings. In the next subsection we investigate, whether having theoretical knowledge, that was acquired during the education process at Architecture Faculties ensures better, more valuable judgement of the built environment.

2.4. Architecture depends.

As mentioned, architects have learned by the means of a number of psychological tools, that the value of the opinion about architecture, or even the right to express it, is combined with professional knowledge in this domain. Moreover, only if we follow the opinion, and taste of professionals, a good quality and beauty of the built environment will be ensured.[25]

However, a number of architects, architecture critics and theoreticians emphasize, that at least to some point, the theory of architecture is vague. Michel Lincourt (1999,9) states, that architects should be the first ones to agree on the fact, that: "their practice is based on a body of knowledge riddled with uncertainties, half-truths, partial data, and controversial assumptions".

Jeremy Till (2009) argues in his book that architecture (as a profession and a field of knowledge) depends on a number of factors and forces, and is one of the very few professions that is constantly under the threat of contingency. While other disciplines, be it medicine, law, or physics, can stand on a hard base of measurable proofs or a reasonably stable body of previous cases, architecture lacks this luxury and is an assemblage of rather soft skills.

Helena Webster (2008) adds that for every design problem there is a number of correct answers.

(Un)fortunately, there are no black and white answers about architecture.

As a result of the paradigm shift from enlightenment to post-enlightenment thought that occurred in the late twentieth century, the idea of an objective, definite 'truth' and 'knowledge' has been

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[25] Almost all of architects and architecture students, to whom I have explained the my central idea of my thesis is that everyone should be able to life in a building, that they find interesting, understandable, and beautiful, and should have no problems with finding an architect, who is willing to design such a built environment responded with: 'But how are we going to make sure then, that it is good?'

dismissed. A kind of relativism, in which 'truths' are created by cultural group is commonly accepted. Those groups not only construct 'knowledge' and 'truth' considering their profession, but also further it and guards its dominance over the 'truths' proposed by other professional groups. Similar struggles for power are also taking place in the field of architecture and are the easiest to notice while observing the battles over aesthetical styles. Hence, if we accept, that a knowledge is both constructed, evaluated, and contested within one professional group, we can no longer present this knowledge as 'unproblematic', harmonic, objective, and irrefutable.

There is no divine truth, nobody can be completely right or wrong when talking about architecture, regardless whether it is the dean of Architecture Faculty at TU Delft, or my neighbor with his eight columns entrance portico crowned with (as expected with Christmas time, when I am writing this section) a statue of Santa Claus on a reindeer sleigh.

It is impossible to prove, that the viewpoint and taste of non-architects would be any less valuable than a one expressed by those, who read 'Ten books on Architecture', studied ancient proportions, understand the principles of functionalism, formalism, critical regionalism and many other '–isms'. Laypeople might not be able to quote 'The Seven Lamps of Architecture', but they do have practical knowledge and insights based on their life spent between buildings, and, at least in the case of architecture, arguing that theoretical knowledge is more important than the practical one seems to be a lost case.

In the second part of this paper we have argued, that the architectural taste of laypeople is as valuable as the one of educated and experienced building designers, and that both the representatives of high and popular taste should be able to live in a built environment, that they find beautiful.

Architecture should not be regarded as fine art, hence, even if it fails, in opinion of some, to provide 'something meaningful or beautiful', or does not strive for innovation, it still can be considered as a good building. The same set of criteria cannot be used to judge high architecture, and popular architecture, because those buildings were designed with a different aim, and serve different purposes.

A clear distinction between those two is needed.

However, equating the taste of professionals and non-architects causes controversy.

Popular taste as well as popular architecture have been a target of many accusations, examples of which are not hard to find.

Poundbury is a neo-traditional, residential village designed in nineteen eighties according to Prince Charles's architecture and urban design principles. Appreciated by the residents : " the aesthetics are

popular – I didn't meet a single person who thought it was ugly"[26] scorned by the critics: "an embarrassing anachronism as the new century dawns (…) Street name signs are craftsy, not civic; house numbers are in a uniform style, not subject to individuals' bad taste." Wrote one of its critics, assuming that to appreciate such architecture one must be of 'bad' taste.

Stephen Bayley wrote in an article in The Guardian[27]:"It is fake, heartless, authoritarian and grimly cute. (…) [I]ts architectural design is an insult to contemporary possibilities. (…) What exactly is it about the 18th century that exercises such powerful control over the *aesthetically timorous and culturally backward*?"[28]. Asked Bayley, offending once again the residents of Poundbury.

In the last part of this paper we will examine the most popular accusations towards popular architecture and evaluate whether there is a grain of truth in them.

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[26] Of course, the five thousand people living in the village has made the choice to move there, so they must have liked the appearance of the village.
http://www.independent.co.uk/property/house-and-home/poundbury-a-town-fit-for-a-prince-868296.html

[27] http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/dec/07/poundbury-prince-charles-communities

[28] Emphasis added by author.

Chapter three. In defense of popular taste.

3.1. "Popular Culture and High Culture"- a short introduction of Gans's work

The relationship between the popular and high architecture, just as between popular and high culture is, at least to some extent, antagonistic. However, as Herbert Gans(1974,19), an acknowledged American sociologist, who conducted a broad research of popular culture, notices, the debate is mostly one-sided – popular culture is being constantly accused by the elites of a number of charges. Since Gans (1974,5) lists architecture as part of culture in his definition of the term "My definition [of culture] encompasses only the practices, goods, and ideas classified broadly under arts (including literature, music, *architecture* and design (…))"[29], and since a template of how to classify and investigate the accusations was needed, I have decided to base my own categorization of the main accusations against popular architecture on Gans's work in this regard. I did take into account though, that not all of the accusations apply to architecture (some of them are only related to television broadcasts) as well as the fact, that Gans investigated mostly the American society, thus, once more, not all of the accusations apply (some of them are unique to US citizens). The work of Herbert Gans was enriched by European perspective, such as the one from Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre.

In the opinion of Herbert Gans, high culture refers (and in a majority of cases still does) to art, music, literature and other symbolic products favored by the wealthy and well-educated elites of society. It is dominated by creators and critics, and most of the receivers of high culture approve their point of view and standards (Gans, 1974). High culture is characterized by being highly intellectualized, addressing abstract social, political and philosophic questions, being concerned with form and materialization. The lower the taste class is, the lower the education and income of its representatives, the less abstract and more literary its production becomes. Lower taste classes engage more often with current public concerns and interests, and are more focused on the product, than on its creator. (Gans 1974, 75-93). Popular culture for Herbert Gans(1974,10) is, "the symbolic products used by the "uncultured" majority".

Cultural production is a field of struggle for domination between "the cultured against the uncultured, the sophisticated against the unsophisticated, the more affluent, against the less affluent, and the cultural experts against the laity" (Gans, 1974,4) The critique of popular culture is a weapon in the

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[29] Emphasis added by author.

fight for power. Gans (1974,7) argues persuasively that "over time the critique has appeared when intellectuals have lost power and the statues that goes with power, and it has virtually disappeared when intellectuals have gained power and status"

3.2. Main accusations against popular culture.

Herbert Gans distinguishes four main groups of accusations against popular culture.

3.2.1. Popular architecture has a negative character of creation.

The first accusation of popular culture addresses the "negative character of popular culture creation"- popular culture unlike high culture is produced on a massive scale with the profit of the entrepreneur and not the quality of work as the main objective. (Gans 1974, 19)

Rem Koolhaas expressed this accusation in an essay called "Junkspace". Junkspace represents the problem of 'People's Architecture' (shopping malls, airports, leisure areas), that, in the opinion of Koolhaas we are all blinded to believe in because of 'our concern for the masses' (Koolhaas, 2002, 175) "Junkspace thrives on design, but design dies in Junkspace. There is no form, only proliferation… Regurgitation is the new creativity; instead of creation, we honor, cherish, and embrace manipulation." Junkspace is concerned only with delivering square meters, it duplicates itself without designing, and it is not innovative.

And another voice of critic, unsatisfied with the work of real estate developers, who focus on producing what people want:

"Of course, the volume builders tell us they're delivering what the market wants. But this is rubbish. For starters, if you're on a normal income, this is pretty much all that's on offer: do you want the pisspoor Victorian fake or the pisspoor Georgian fake? And secondly, good design is not about delivering what focus groups say they want."[30] In the opinion of this critic people do not know, that they can get something 'better' than historical fakes, because/so this is what the market delivers for them.

We have to admit that yes, popular architecture is massively produced, and there is a reasonable cause for that- the shares of the society, that each of the classes hold, and the income per capita, that the representatives of each class have, is immensely unequal.

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[30] (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/11092924/Why-is-Britain-so-terrible-at-domestic-architecture.html)

For example, the Polish society consists of only one percent of high class representatives, who have a monthly income of at least fifty thousand polish nowy zloty, sixty-nine percent of middle class with the income between four and fifty thousand, and twenty-eight percent of low class, with the income of less than four thousand polish nowy zloty per month (two percent of respondents refused to reveal both their class affiliation and the height of their income)[31]. Because popular culture has to appeal to a much greater, hence more heterogeneous audience than high culture, and its production has to be cheap enough, to be available to people of low, or middle income, it has to be produced massively, and its products have to be standardized, so that they would appeal to as many receivers as possible. As a result, it may appear less varied, and more predictable than high culture. (Gans, 1974) Copies, replicas, mass production, lamented by Rem Koolhaas in his essay, are, if not inevitable, than at least reasonable from the economic point of view.

However, at least in the opinion of Herbert Gans (1974,22), the diversity of the production of popular and high culture (and architecture) is comparable "there is as many varieties of rock, as of baroque chamber music." Gans states, that popular culture might be in fact more heterogeneous and creative than the high one, simply because its audience is much broader. If we take a quick look into a catalogue of projects of houses, a very popular source of residential architecture projects for Polish low and middle classes, the number of solutions and styles presented in it ranges from folk wooden, cottage-like houses, through solutions that resemble of the Arts and Crafts movement, Japanese modernist villas, simple one storey, or modern flat-roofed houses, finished with historicizing residential buildings modeled after seventeenth century mansions. Size, materials, number of floors and rooms varies in all of these different pieces of architecture, although, on the other hand, it is not hard to find similarities between all of them, or name the most popular kind, represented by the largest number of designs. There is no uniqueness (each of the projects can be bought and executed numerous times), but there is diversity, that allows everyone choose, what they like and appreciate the most, and what they can afford.

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[31] (http://natemat.pl/93731,co-decyduje-o-przynaleznosci-do-danej-klasy-w-polsce-pisze-najnowszy-newsweek). The division was made based on the income of the respondent, which is only one of the factors that affect the affiliation to high, medium, or popular culture.

3.2.2. Popular architecture lowers the taste levels of the society.

An important and often mentioned accusation against popular culture is that it lowers the taste levels of the society as a whole. Gans (1974, 44) rejects these allegations by reminding the reader, that popular and high culture has coexisted since the beginning of culture in general "Writers (…) remember only history's Shakespears and Beethovens and forget their less talented colleagues whose work has been lost or ignored".

We might wonder, whether the taste levels would be higher, if there was no popular culture at all. However, it has been historically proven by a number or totalitarian governments, that it is impossible to banish either popular or high culture.

The communist governments in Eastern Europe were trying to promote the official, controlled art production, and discourage both high and popular culture which did not serve their purpose. "The socialist realism was the sole theory and method of artistic expression suitable to Soviet society and demanded that all artists conform to its principles regardless of the mode of their past work" stated a Central Committee decree of the twenty third of April, nineteen thirty seven. Although independent artists or art groups were officially not allowed to function (Conquest,1968), and any disobedience was penalized with gulag exile or capital punishment, in the time of Great Terror around two thousand artists were arrested and charged for creating art that did not apply to the plan .While the offense of some of them concerned only one piece of art, such as the anti-Stalinist poem of Osip Mandelstam, others- Vladimir Sterligov, a student of Kazimir Malevich, refused to subordinate his artistic creation to the government's decisions, and continue to develop his own, forbidden style. (Conquest, 1968) At the same time, the official, communist art has become monotonous, homogenous, and self-referencing, and ceased its creative existence together with the regime.

In a parallel tone popular architecture is often accused of lowering the quality of the built environment, which was already examined in the second part of this paper.

Unfortunately, the critics, who praise the ability of 'high' architects to improve the quality of built environment failed to state precisely what 'better' means in terms of it. The vast majority of society would most likely not agree with Aaron Betsky's understanding of 'better built environment' as the 'more innovative one'[32], or the one favored by Alan Proud- less 'fake', bolder, more heterogeneous[33].

It is worth underlining once more, that if we do not judge architecture based on its stylistic and aesthetical values, but rather on a number of other criteria such as its ability to provide comfortable,

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[32] (http://www.architectmagazine.com/architects/the-new-york-times-versus-architecture_o.aspx)

[33] (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/11092924/Why-is-Britain-so-terrible-at-domestic-architecture.html)

well-functioning built environment, that can help humans to fulfill their basic needs (or at least not create an obstacle to do so) we can come to the conclusion, that this kind of space can be created both by high and popular architecture.

3.2.3. Popular architecture and is superficial and produces fake emotions.

Mass culture is criticized for providing superficial insights, shallow emotions, spurious gratification, and for being 'fake'. "High culture is a precarious achievement, and endures only if it is underpinned by a sense of tradition, and by a broad endorsement of the surrounding social norms. When those things evaporate, as inevitably happens, high culture is superseded by a culture of fakes. (...) There are fake beliefs, fake opinions, fake kinds of expertise." [34] wrote Roger Scruton in an article addressing the value of popular culture.

Similar accusations has been made towards popular architecture- "It's a mish mash of styles from different centuries, all added together. It's a toy town, a museum of a mythical past. There is no soul, no heart, a perfect example of the need for difference, for organic spaces created over time."[35] Stated Andy Spain in a review of Poundbury.

Vittorio Gregotti wrote about the very popular, newly built villas and mansions, deluding the real origin of its inhabitants (Gregotti in Frampton,1971, 31): "Faced with new conceptions of building exploitation produced by mid-cult, the neo-gothic villa and the sham "fin-de-siècle" mansion maintains a dignity which benefits their theatricality, but which today hides behind the false functionalism of low cost production. In this way, the slums of the rich pile up in continuous development in the suburbs or in the more central areas of the city. Structurally, they are built on the same principles as the new working class housing which in its turn strives desperately to turn its back on its proletarian origin"

As argued in this essay, taste is a function of many different aspects, education, intelligence, knowledge and upbringing being only a few of them. We are taught to understand and appreciate certain cultural object, we know their meaning, context, we understand their value and symbolism.

Modeled after eighteenth century residences of noble families, historicized houses in Poland are vastly criticized, yet very popular. Their popularity at least to some point stems from the association with power and wealth. "The cultural rising of peasants give them the opportunity and the will to imitate

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[34] http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/dec/19/high-culture-fake
[35] (http://www.archdaily.com/75106/poundbury-architectural-shame-with-a-worthy-aim-prince-charles/)

their old masters, the great heirs. What was their most distinctive possession? That were the mansions, so the imitations of mansions are being built right now."[36]

3.2.4. Popular architecture has a negative impact on high architecture.

The last accusation mentioned by Gans is the negative impact of popular culture on high culture.

Jameson (1991,100) says about the designs of Charles Moore, a well-known designer of popular architecture: "[in] Piazza d'Italia, and in many of his other buildings, the elements float loose under their own momentum, each becoming a sign or logo for architecture itself, which is thereby, needless to say, consumed like a commodity -- and with all the avid relish that accompanies such consumption -- in contrast to the role such elements were called upon to play, or most often repressed from playing, in a modernism anxious to resist consumption and offer an experience that could not be commodified".

Popular architecture consumes, and destroys the high one in the opinion of Jameson.

However, as Herbert Gans states, there is no evidence that borrowing from high culture leads to debasing it. On the contrary, as Georg Simmel (1957, 545) stated in his essay "[j]ust as soon as the lower classes begin to copy their [the upper classes'] style, thereby crossing the line of demarcation the upper classes have drawn and destroying the uniformity of their coherence, the upper classes turn away from this style and adopt a new one, which in turn differentiates them from the masses" Hence, the fact that the lower classes adopt some elements of the culture of the upper classes not only does not have a negative influence on the latter, but results in a greater vitality and creativity of the high culture.

3.2.5. Popular architecture gives an illusion of independence.

Furthermore, Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis (1972, 300) criticize the 'naïve' belief of populist, that giving people 'freedom of choice in matters of consumption' guarantees independence of one social group from the other. He deducts, that this false presumption comes from the wrong understanding of social classes. "If class was defined solely on the basis of observable norms and values, then social 'oppression' could be equated to dependence in matters of consumption (…) This definition of norms and aspirations rested exclusively with effects and led them [the populists] to conclude that the acquisition of products by a group designed according to its own norms and aspirations altered its dependence on other groups or classes and eliminated oppression."

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[36] http://teatrnn.pl/historiamowiona/swiadek_pdf/52498

Unfortunately, the author of that paper do not quote any specific writing of populist in this part of the text, neither is it possible to trace how did he come to the conclusion, that populists want to change the social order through architecture. Nevertheless, this is not the objective of the author of this text. As already mentioned in previous chapter, architecture is just the background to our lives, and its ability to influence the functioning of societies is extremely limited. The idea, that regardless whether of high, middle, or popular taste, everyone has the right to live in a built environment that they find aesthetically appealing and meaningful, and, that everyone should be granted the possibility to express their opinion about the current state of architecture.

3.2.6. Popular culture has a negative impact on its consumers.

On the side note of this considerations I would like to add one more accusation. Although I did not manage to find an exact reference to this accusation in the world of architecture, it is so frequently repeated while talking about popular culture, that I feel obligated to address it in this paper. Namely, popular culture is supposed to have a negative effect on its consumers.

This charge is a reasonable outcome of the high classes of the society (mis)understanding the popular culture according to the characteristics given to it by, among many other high art creators, Richard Hamilton. In an open letter to his friends, he wrote that mass culture is "popular, transient, expendable, low cost, mass-produced, young, witty, sexy, gimmicky, glamourous and big business." Hamilton, a well-educated artist himself, expressed the way in which the popular culture was and is perceived by a the members of the higher classes of society- as a shallow, dripping with sex, cheap sensations and flattering the lowest, almost animal urges and instincts of people.

While some of the artistic production of recent years appear to be balancing on the thin border between culture and pornography, one cannot deny, that the popular culture brings positive values into the lives of its consumers, and teaches them simple truths about life, interpersonal relationships, taking initiative, problem solving and many others.

For example Hollywood action movies helped working class males change their perception of themselves, their role in society and the opportunities, that life might give them. Jerry White writes that the films "offered heroes and heroines who were less hidebound by class than their technically inferior British counterparts.(…) The glamourized male (especially young male) violence of films like "Little Caesar" (with Edward Robinson, 1930), Public Enemy (with James Cagney, 1931), Scarface (with George Raft, 1932)helped working-class youngsters see themselves as heroes rather than bystanders, the subject of life rather than its object' (White 1986, 166).

It must be granted to Paulo Coelho, that although his writings do not meet the standards of high literature, many of his readers admit, that quotes such as this: "There are moments when troubles enter our lives and we can do nothing to avoid them. But they are there for a reason. Only when we have overcome them will we understand why they were there" helped them to face the hardships of their

reality. The previously mentioned residents of polish neo-traditional mansions experience a greater sense of power and pride thanks to their houses.

3.3. Reasons for the critique.

As we have seen in the previous subsections the critique of popular architecture and popular culture addresses a number of different aspects. It is a statement of dissatisfaction with its aesthetic values, symbolic content, or production method, supported by an incorrect and exaggerated estimation of their negative influence on its audience, culture in general, and society.

The critics of popular culture and popular architecture believe, that they have almost a Pavlovian hold on their consumers- the "uneducated masses", who prefer a certain kind of cultural products and live in a certain kind of architecture, because they do not know that there is a better option available, one, that offers innovation, uniqueness, true emotions, important reflections, or self-development.

However, those critics do not view popular culture from the same perspective as its consumers and neglect the ability of popular culture to communicate with its audience, provide answers for the questions crucial to representatives of working class, the ability of popular culture to assist in difficult moments of the life of its consumers, or when narrowing our interest to popular architecture, creating a built environment, that is comprehensible, interesting, and safe.

Herbert Gans (1974, 61) sees the critique, as a "marked disdain for ordinary people and their aesthetic capacity" and claims, that its main aim is to protect the privileges of high culture, and high class of society. It is undesirable as such, because it seeks to defend and strengthen high culture, as well as its consumers, and creators at the expense of the rest of cultural production and the society.

Conclusions.

Not only did my parents not change the roof of our house to a flat one, which I- a fresh architecture student was trying to persuade, but also they decided to build a small tool shed just next to the building, which develops it further horizontally and damages the, not so good in the first place, proportions of the building. They did not ask my opinion, so I did not express it.

From this research I have learned, that my taste, as the taste of nearly all of architects differs significantly from the aesthetical preferences of laypeople.

Taste is a function of income, class affiliation, background, knowledge, education, upbringing, and many other aspects. It was proved in a number of sociological research, that although architects create a large professional group, their aesthetical preferences are so homogenous and specific, that we can distinguish a separate taste group- architect's taste. Architect's taste differs significantly from the taste of the rest of the society. Professional building designers perceive the built environment in a distinct way, pay attention to other aspects of buildings, understand the buildings in a broader context, use specific terminology while talking about them, but, most importantly, prefer specific style of buildings, and exhibit low levels of tolerance for popular tastes.

The sublime taste of architects is created and enhanced through the process of educational acculturation, by the means of a number of sociological and psychological tools, such as encouragement of total, vocational character of the studies, long-hours work culture, use of vague terminology, or enhancement of competition between students. They create the 'hidden curriculum'- the part of the education of aspiring architects, that although less standardized and in many cases even not acknowledged, has as big influence on the formation of future building designers, as the theoretical knowledge passed during lectures.

The main aim of those sociological and psychological tools is to align the habitus (the set of values, worldview, expectations, taste, and lifestyle that every individual possess) of abecedarian architects with the one encouraged by the profession which results in the creation of a homogenous body of professionals.

Those alike architects are supposed to answer to the multitude of needs, wishes, and preferences of representatives of all of the groups of society. The task proves to be very demanding.

Although, as argued in this paper, the tastes of laypeople and architects are equal in value, the latter are, unwilling, or unable to respond to the aesthetical requirements of their clients. Architects anticipate that following the stylistic and aesthetical wishes of laypeople might have a negative impact on the quality of the built environment. However, as claimed in this paper, architecture is not a fine art, hence the evaluation of buildings has to incorporate a number of aspects other than their beauty or ability to express important ideas. Moreover, since the theory of architecture is riddled with uncertainties, architects should not assume that only people who have professional knowledge can participate fully in a debate about the quality of built environment.

Finally, in order to dispel concerns of those, who after the lecture of the first and second part of this essay still felt not at ease with the controversial idea of letting people of popular taste decide about the stylistic and aesthetic values of architecture, we investigated the most popular accusation against popular culture and popular architecture. We came to the conclusion, that their negative impact on architecture, society, and man- made environment is greatly exaggerated, while the ability of popular architecture and culture to bring positive values into the lives of their consumers is not fully appreciated. They are comprehensible, enriching, and interesting for their consumers, just as high culture and high architecture are for the elites.

This essay criticizes the low levels of tolerance for popular taste expressed by architects. However, as mentioned in the introduction, the critique is sympathetic. We were not only trying to point why such an approach is wrong, or inconsistent with facts, but we were also trying to understand why the profession supports such practices.

Pierre Bourdieu and number of other sociologists believed that taste is a tool used to constitute and maintain power of one social group over another. Expressing the right kind of taste helps architects to policy the boundaries or their social group and through that make sure, that their cultural capital is managed by competent people. It is not surprising, that the sublime taste is of such a big importance in times, when a growing number of subcontractors, consultants, and professionals from other construction industry branches are entering the domain, that used to belong to architects.

However, such an approach is contributing to the generally held notion, mentioned in a number of reports, that architects are hard to communicate with, more focused on their own aims, or gaining peers recognition, than delivering what the client, or the future user of the building might need and want. Criticizing popular taste appears not to be the right approach.

After all, if someone feels comfortable only under a pitched roof and feels freely and aesthetically pleased, when the windows are covered with lace curtains, than what is wrong with that?

Epilogue.

I have been always told that a critique can be constructive only, when after pointing the flaws, it proposes possible improvements. Unfortunately, the time limit prevents me from further research in this regard. Nevertheless, hoping that someone will find this topic as interesting as I did and will continue my research, I would like to share my findings and insights about the recommended solutions.

Proposing a clear distinction between high architecture and popular architecture, just as done in this essay, seems to be a step in the right direction.

Popular architecture (architecture that responds to the popular taste) would have to answer a number of crucial questions: How should the design process look? To what extent should the different parties (the architect, the client, future users, and general public) be involved in it?

Those questions have been previously asked by a number of architects, architecture critics and theoreticians.

Team X members proposed 'open architecture'- designs, were only the crucial, technical issues such as load bearing structure and installations were determined by the architect, and the rest of the aspects (partitions, circulation, expression of the facade) were settled by the client or users of the building.

While such an idea was an interesting experiment, it was not and is not the right path for the populist movement. There is a reason, why the title of an architect is legally protected, and why it takes at least five years of studies to get it. Architects have to learn how to solve a multitude of complex problems, have to be able to see the relationship between various parts of their designs, have to acknowledge, that decisions made on the scale of rooms can influence the performance of entire neighborhoods, and have to be able to balance a number of points of view, areas of interest, aspects of design. People who are not educated in this matter lack this ability and therefore will make a number of mistakes with far reaching consequences.

Another answer for the question of the role of architects in the design process was proposed by Chester Hartman, an American urban planner, who addressed the lack of understanding for the needs of the poor manifested through the norms implemented in social housing. "Physical factors alone have been stressed in the evaluation of housing conditions and in the planning for improved residential areas. Physical factors are important, but they have no invariant or 'objective' status and can only be

understood in the light of their meaning for the people's lives, which in turn, is determined by social and cultural values" (Hartman in Lefaivre and Tzonis, 1972) Middle or high class architects were designing buildings that were culturally alien to the lifestyle of the working class users. In the opinion of Hartman the solution to this problem is lying in a greater engagement of the users in the decision making part of the design process. Architects were supposed to be a 'advocates' of the values of the community they were working for, presenting and explaining the ideas and decisions on frequent meetings, making sure, that no alien values would infiltrate into the design process, and that the values and wishes of the users were correctly understood and properly implemented. They were also supposed to become a mediator between different parties engaged into the design. (Lefaivre and Tzonis, 1972, 294)

The easy to notice flaws of such a solution derive from the problem with determining who the user of the building is/ might be (especially when it comes to non-residential architecture), changing needs of the users (which often they are unable to predict), and, last but not least, with the enormous difficulty with sparking the interest of the future users in the design process (once again, especially, when it comes to public, non-residential architecture).

At approximately the same time a growing number of architects, urbanists, and sociologists were studying slums and squatter settlements in order to see how the "Architecture without Architects"[37] is being created. In the majority of cases they lamented the poor technical and hygienic conditions of slums, but praised the ability to express the values, priorities, and lifestyle of its residents. John Turner(1968, 360) wrote about the advantages of Barriadas, a settlement of poor in Lima: "the most important architectural advantage of the squatters' procedure is the consequent adaptability of space and structures to the changing needs and behavior patterns of the family. (…) This freedom to manipulate one's own living space is extended to the community as a whole: it is the local association that generally decides on the number of schools, open spaces, markets and so on."

After the lecture of such an article one might became convinced that we do not need architects at all. Although they can provide technically exceeding designs, they are unable to make them socially adequate. However, we cannot compare slums, that were built out of necessity and providing only for the most basic needs, to residential areas of cities.

Architects are indispensable in the design process for the reasons mentioned already in this section.

Neither stripping the architect of their power, nor demeaning their position in the design team appears to be the right answer.

Experienced professionals, equipped with exceptional problem-solving skills are necessary to ensure a good quality of the built environment.

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[37] A book by Bernard Rudofsky exploring the richness of vernacular architecture.

However, popular architects need to create a less homogenous body of professionals, deriving from different backgrounds, with various taste. They should be eager to look on their designs from the users/clients perspective, and willing to respond to their aesthetical preferences. Such a change in profession should be introduced by changing the education of future architects, since forcing the current practitioners to 'love what they hate' appears to be pointless and inhumane.

Unfortunately, although bold in their critique of the current education model, the authors, whose work I have referenced in this paper (such as Helena Webster, Linda Groat or Garry Stevens) were rather tactic about the possible improvements. Changing the current education practices into a dialog- based and student-centered model is one of the possibilities.

There are a number of questions that need to be answered before introducing the division between high and popular architecture into Architecture Faculties and into the profession.

Hopefully, they will be investigated. A need for change becomes increasingly visible.

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