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ESSAYS

ARCHITECTURE AS A SCREENPLAY¹

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“- So you proceed like a writer?”

“- I listen to my inner ear and see what experiences I can call on to tackle a new (...) job. I often experience – as writers say – that the book writes itself. You make a start and then have to let go to find out where the material is taking you. I find it quite surprising how the images come up in my mind – sometimes it’s like in the cinema.”²

Peter Zumthor

Film people are keen on saying that a screenplay is not something you write; it is something you constantly overwrite. It is a similar case with an architectural design. The initial idea is in subsequent stages clarified and corrected. The trick consists in sticking to the course and, while improving the project, in never losing the main idea and freshness of the initial design. I think screenplay and architectural design are comparable forms of art. The realization of an architectural work resembles the film “screenplay visualization”³. The record of one and the other is not the work yet, however both are protected by author’s license. For if on the basis of the commissioned and bought screenplay no film is shot, it shall not exist in the consciousness of the recipients. It shall not evoke anybody’s interest, apart from the critics’ dealing with film history. If

today we are reading the screenplays of Antonioni, Bergman, Kieślowski and Piesiewicz it is because their films have come into existence. It is like that in architecture. An unrealized design, no matter of what genius, shall not become a true work until it assumes real, that is material shape. As long as a screenplay or a drawing determining the future production process do not come into daylight in material form, there is no film and no architecture.

Today we deal with a tendency, I hope transient, according to which virtual architecture is more important than the real one. I say however, that this formula is being protected by people, who have not managed to achieve real architecture and who – like in his days Le Corbusier – want to gain space in the market by the way of writing⁴. This virtual architecture can sometimes be recognized in

¹ The text of the present article constitutes the first chapter of the book *Sztuka budowania. Współczesny paradygmat (The Art of Building. A Contemporary Paradigm)*.

² H. Rauterberg, *Talking Architecture. Interviews with architects*, Prestel Verlag, Munich, London, New York 2012, p. 153.

³ J. Wójcik, *Labirynt światła (The Labirynt of Light)*, Wydawnictwo CANONIA, Warszawa 2006, p.75.

⁴ Le Corbusier, *W stronę architektury (Towards an Architecture)*, Centrum Architektury, Warszawa 2012.

real works, usually built without any understanding of materiality or scale, which decide about all the *differentia specifica* of architecture. They look in nature as if (which very likely was true for those cases) someone had enlarged a designed object on the computer's screen and then made a 3D print of it. It is not architecture, but its model in 1:1 scale. The wallpaper of the materials has been stuck onto the wires defining the building's geometry. For another thing which makes screenplay so much like a work of architecture is the fact, that one as well as the other is a result of a certain creation process, taken into the frames of some very strict rules. The materialization of the work is too expensive an enterprise for the artist to pass immediately from the phase of the sketch of the idea straight to its realization. This, with the exception of a small shed or a documentary etude, is technically impossible. The contemporary ease of film recording or generating spacial forms thanks to friendly technology do not cause the record automatically to become a work of art.

Let us have a look at the model of the Fallingwater by Frank Lloyd Wright. The architectural screenplay is the design at the stage of a model and its plans. Another photo shows the house in the building stage with scaffolding. Finally, we see the architectural film already shot, that is, a ready building in the changing scenery of the seasons. The building is regarded as a masterpiece, an icon of architecture. It is an example of masterly realization of the screenplay. Through fragmentarization of the stone vertical and the massiveness of the ballustrade, the scale of the building is completely lost. A daring corbel makes for the impression of a mass suspended over the waterfall. Looking at Wright's house from above, we shall see that it has in fact only one condignation, whereas from the lower perspective it seems to be a monumental, piled-up, cascade-like solid. It's worth mentioning here that the Fallingwater, literally built on top of a waterfall, stood usually empty, because no one wanted to live there on a regular basis. The space in which it was situated proved to be noisy and upsetting for the inhabitant – Edgar J. Kaufmann. On the example of the Fallingwater one can see another, very important common feature between architectural design and screenplay. Just like a film maker is wondering whether his work is going to meet the likings of the public and whether it shall move the spectators' emotions, so the architect must take into consideration how one is going to live in the building he creates. Is it going to be comfortable?

Will the inhabitants be happy? Equally important is also how the building shall react to a change in the character of the environment or perhaps some change in its function. For instance, Wright's Robie House has been renovated by the architect's foundation, presently serving as a seat of seminar meetings. Also this building had not aroused any enthusiasm on the part of the original dwellers and for decades it had been gradually collapsing. Among other things, the first inhabitants wanted to have curtains in the windows, whereas the architect thought that the function of shielding from intruders' look was well fulfilled by the stained glass set into the windows. The architect defines the starting point, which we can call the concept, and in a screenplay – the so-called treatment. Sometimes it happens that going from this point, defined as the starting point, to the next one, the artist does not go along the straight line connecting the two, but goes in circles along a complicated curve. It is defined by a spiral, finally reaching the goal. I used to show my diagram of activities as a bunch of vectors aiming at an aim, situated in a certain field. On the way to the goal, I must all the time take care for the communication never to stop between all the participants of the enterprise. Partners in creating architecture often have "inverse vectors" – different, even contradictory interests, which I have to take into account. The executor wants to do everything the simplest way possible and at the smallest cost, in order to make the biggest possible money. The investor's desires are dependent on the building's destination. The developer may, for example, want it to be possibly efficient and to sell quickly, for a suitably high price. But if he is thinking about spaces to rent, and not for sale, he will pay attention to some other features. The architect, however, must reconcile those competing interests and see to it that the whole team efficiently strives after the set goal. This is exactly what should distinguish him from a construction producer: having a vision, the consciousness of what is going to happen as well as supervision over the executors, so that they do not stray from the chosen path. Just like with a film, which not only has to last throughout the projection time, but also carry a specific message, as well as attract new spectators.

"What we are after, is a situation in which, thanks to co-operation, one can raise something higher, show something in a wiser way and recreate in the film set in such a way that the future spectator will say: 'That's what I thought'", as the cameraman Jerzy Wójcik, the co-creator of *Kanal* and *Eroica*, writes.

“It is very hard. This is the proper understanding of a profession which first of all should be treated as a craft. Benvenuto Cellini was a craftsman, too. One should understand craftsmanship in such a way that in the case of certain film one could say: this is art. Without craftsmanship, there is no art (...).”⁵ - Wójcik adds.

An architect, if he takes into account the context of his project – meaning the landscape, the culture, not to mention the urban and land use planning conditions that are in force – he starts from an architectural and urban planning study, which determines his initial idea (predevelopmental study). After that is accepted and corrected, the phase of the final idea comes. This is a test of the program’s feasibility – is it in accordance with the investor’s business plan? Will it bring profit? Only after this idea is confirmed by the client, the stage of building documentation comes, aimed at acquiring the licence for the building. Then, through the bidding, or tender stage (in order to choose the best offer for its production) and then technical-and-execution stage and the workshop stage (prepared by the builder) comes the process of the work’s realization.

The scriptwriter, on the other hand, first writes his idea down in the form of 2 or 3 pages draft. Sometimes one can see that the idea is good even when it is written down in a mere couple of sentences. The next step is the film treatment, that is a ten pages summary of the story, the main plots and the description of the characters. Then the scriptment is created, with the detailed scene plan and the scenes’ content, often with the dialogues drafted. Finally, on the basis of the scriptment, the author writes the screenplay, on the basis of which a storyboard is drawn, that is – the scenes are drawn, as a kind of pictorial shooting script. The distribution of tasks in the process of creating a work of architecture resembles the contribution of all the artists into the making of a film. The architect is the scriptwriter, the executor and the project manager – the director and the client/investor/developer – the producer. In film from the very beginning there have been three co-authors, even without the scriptwriter. By the way – building, too, can do without the architect sometimes.

“The cameraman was the one who started the camera and knew how to expose a negative,” enumerates Jerzy Wójcik⁶, “The second one is the one who told the actors what to do. This second one got to be called the director. (...) The third one paid the money and tried to make some, too, constantly afraid to go bankrupt. The third one called himself the producer. That was the beginning of the hierarchy.”⁷

The poet Zbigniew Herbert in one of his poems proposed a definition of architecture which combined intellect with emotion. The Prince of Poets thought that in order to get to know a place and its soul, one has first to sketch it. We can feel it when we look at his drawing of Mont Saint-Michel⁸.

They say that building is prose and architecture – poetry. In building, it is enough to have a suitable outline, and what counts in architecture is the aesthetic way in which it is used.

An architectural design, just like a film, is open to analysis along two lines. We can draw at the Aristotelean formula, according to which every thing has its beginning, middle and end. Or to the formula devised by the American writer and myth scientist, Joseph Campbell, defining the twelve point encompassing the whole composition of a screenplay⁹.

The first element of a film work is exposition. A well-known film by Michelangelo Antonioni, *Blowup*, shows the story of a young photographer, and this way shows an artist’s choices in the face of life’s dramas. In the first scene, we get to know the main character, played by David Hemmings. We learn who he is and what he is after. Let us have a look at the first page of the screenplay, that is, at the exposition of *Blowup*. During one sequence of scenes, which should not take longer than 8 minutes, the scriptwriter should tell who the main character is and what his goal is, as well as create the atmosphere characteristic for the film. In the times when there were no mobile phones, the hero goes around in a convertible Rolls Royce where he’s got a radiophone. This defines his status.

Just as a screenplay begins with exposition, so the first element of an architecture design is an idea which can be put into one or two sentences. A given area can be flat and dull like the surroundings of

⁵ J. Wójcik, op. cit., p. 32.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 69.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Z. Herbert, *Znaki na papierze (Signs on paper)*, Wydawnictwo BOSZ, Olszanica 2008, p. 15.

⁹ R.U. Russin, W.M. Downs, *Jak napisać scenariusz filmowy (Screenplay, writing the picture)*, Wydawnictwo Wojciech Marzec, Warszawa 2005, p. 89.

Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye or, quite the contrary, appear difficult and pose a serious challenge, like in the case of the Fallingwater. There are no wrong questions. There are only wrong answers. A challenge for the architect can be a bland reaction to the banality of the environment as well as his will to prevail over the landscape, which with its power can only ridicule the designer's egotism. F. L. Wright advised never to put a house on the top of a hill, instead he recommended to place it just before the top. It is a similar thing with the coda of a film.

The moment of a screenplay's initiation requires good judgment and consideration. It is worth being careful with the client. I say that even the simplest and esthetically illiterate investor can come up with a clever idea which the architect has never thought about. It is so, because it is his property, his money and his place on earth. For the architect is not erecting a monument to himself, but to the client, and if to himself – only indirectly and for the client's money. The client is usually after another goal and he builds for another reason than the architect. The owner knows his land and usually he knows better than the designer how the sun operates there and what winds prevail.

In every film-making process there are perturbations. A similar thing happens in the architect's creative process. If we try to reconstruct it, going back from the end to the beginning point, we shall see, to what great extent those perturbations at a certain point start to obliterate the goal for him. That is why it is so important for the project to have a clear sense and thesis around which the scenario of persuasion and action is developed.

Another similarity between a screenplay and an architectural design is the codified way of description. In architecture, there is the scale and the phases of the drawings, whereas in film we have the way of subsequent approximations from the idea to the final writing into scenes with stage directions and dialogues. Architects cover a similar way from the first idea to materialized space. We also gradually go into the details of structure, that is, we work at the same time over the whole and its parts, looking for the right relations and proportions between things. In both cases there are certain standards. For instance,

everybody knows, that the scale 1:500 defines the urbanist scale, 1:100 – architectonic scale and 1:20 – interior design. To compare, a page of screenplay is a minute of the film, counting stage directions and dialogues on equal rights. The drafts of a never realized screenplay and notes made by the Russian cinema pioneer, Sergei Eisenstein, served for the initial settings of scenes and situations¹⁰. But the film *Sutter's Gold* never came into being. Most of screenplays and most of architecture designs find their end on paper. Continuing along the parallel line, almost every scriptwriter has in their drawer great scenes which he or she had to throw out. They were great in themselves, but they were dysfunctional in relation to the final composition. Also an architect should not value anecdotes over fluent narration. It concerns the façade as well as the interior.

Now let us have a look at the relation of film to space, matter and colour. In Clint Eastwood's movie *Unforgiven*, in the first scene we can see "a lone standing house, an abandoned horse's harness, a lone tree and a lone figure digging a grave, lit by a shining, orange sky." writes Patti Bellantoni¹¹, an American colour theory lecturer, specialist on visual narration, lecturing for film adepts, and a film consultant for all that concerns colour. "This is an illustration from great romantic legends. It is also the beginning of a very cunning, revisionary western. The characters are the opposite of what we expect them to be. The main character is a killer. The sheriff is a sadist. The outlawed kid is so short-sighted that he can't hit with a shot from his gun even the wall of a barn. What a perfect frame. (...) Clint Eastwood is hopelessly struggling not with oxen, but with giant pigs"¹². Bellantoni goes on to analyze the role of the colour in Eastwood's work: "Although the colours of the earth do not belong to the colours' spectrum, they have been included here due to their affinity with orange. Terracotta, Siena, ochre and umbra all have an important effect onto the way we react. We have a positive reaction to the colour of the earth. We can, for example, feel certain closeness to the tiny, brick house from Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*. It is a place, where mud is an integral part of the day"¹³.

Space, matter and colour are also indispensable elements of the language of architecture. The British,

¹⁰ I. Montagu, *With Eisenstein in Hollywood*, Seven Seas Publishers, Berlin 1974.

¹¹ P. Bellantoni, *Jeśli to fiolet, ktoś umrze. Teoria koloru w filmie (If it's Purple, Someone's Gonna Die: The Power of Color in*

Visual Storytelling), Wydawnictwo Wojciech Marzec, Warszawa 2010, p. 157.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Ibidem, s. 115, p. 115.

in the times of Mandatory Palestine, introduced a regulation saying that building in Jerusalem you are obliged to use the local stone. This is why, until this day, architecture is created there which can be good or bad, stylized, made to look archaic or modern, but the city retains its integral character. Another example is Dubrovnik – a white city with the white pavement of streets and white walls of the buildings. And this one decision – about the material and the colour – allows the city to have its own unique and easily recognizable character.

What decides about a good architectonic screenplay are rather cultural patterns than technical norms or standards. These patterns have been codified in the sixties by Christopher Alexander in his much republished book entitled *A Pattern Language*.¹⁴ Cultural, psycho- and socio-spacial patterns create a series of situations and bonds continually rediscovered in architecture and used over and over, e. g. arcades or varied line of architecture with faults, or a terrace above the level of the street and the sidewalk. Some reoccurring elements can be noticed just as well in the porches of the Gdańsk burgerhouses in Grodzka Street, as in what one designs nowadays. To reoccurring socio-spacial patterns belongs a passage between the entrance, public sphere, semi-public sphere and private sphere. If an architect is not aware of that, he often falls victim to the developer, who maintains that he must have a closed up settlement where the sense of safety can be guaranteed to the inhabitants by traditional barriers of access. Until today in many very different situations architects make a creative use of a set number of patterns. In the effect, fresh, unique designs are made, which have one thing in common: respect for the good tradition, friendly towards man and human interactions. In a similar way, scriptwriters out of a finite pool of cultural archetypes can create an infinite number of original film stories, touching upon universal human problems.

Let us have a look at a number of examples of designs which are significant for the history of architecture, in the light of the analogy with screenplay and its realization, that is between what is written and what is shot. Often the realization of a film takes a

lot of time, but not as much as the building of the Leaning Tower of Pisa and then the effort to save it from catastrophe.

Its construction began in the years 1170-1180. It was supposed to stand straight, yet in 1280 people noticed that the building had begun to lean. That is why the works were finished as late as 1360, however the tower was not straightened out. The building thus took nearly 200 years and in its course many doubts arose. In recent years, an operation of straightening the tower out was conducted, with the participation of one of the Polish specialists, Michele Jamiolkowski¹⁵. The building was stabilized, weighted down, fastened by special clamps. Next, on one side a counterweight was placed, whereas on the other side the tower was being straightened. This way the alluvial soils were stabilized which did not function well as a basis for foundations.

The system Barcelona Transfer was created in the eighties¹⁶. The rebuilding of the city started with sketches and finished with spectacular realizations. Looking at the project of humanizing the communication arteries running across Barcelona, we can see that the sense of this undertaking can be summarised in one, at most two sentences. Just like with the idea of the best screenplays, in which from the first takes we get to know the main character and become aware of the purpose of his actions, in architecture, from the idea we pass on to the phase of checking the land's cadastre and the soil map, then to the models, then, we make mockups in the terrain and then we go down to the level of solving the details, aesthetic as well as technical. There is a conviction or a superstition – in my opinion quite harmful, methodology-wise, to the designers – that first we should conduct the analysis and only then create the synthesis. In reality, however, everything is completely different. I can risk the opinion that conclusions do not come from analyses. Seeing a particular client and the task, drawing at all the patterns, standards, examples and adequate analogies known to us, we choose the solution. The analysis is very useful then as a tool of risk examination and to check whether the idea is realistic or not. The example of the Barcelona Transfer and the elements used for the humanization and the

¹⁴ Ch. Alexander, S. Ishikawa, M. Silverstein, *A Pattern Language. Towns, Buildings, Constructions*, Oxford University Press, 1977.

¹⁵ V. Caldelli, G. Meucci, *The Leaning Tower. The restoration of the century*, Pacini Editore SpA., Pisa 2005, p. 55.

¹⁶ M. Arenas, X. Basiana, M. Gausa, M. Ruano, *Barcelona Transfer. Sant Andreu. La Sagrera. Urban development*, Actar, Barcelona 1995.

creation of the motorway system seen on the plans prove that this city planning task consisted in the evolution of the design to the scale of architecture integrated with communication. What counts is perseverance and consequence in the work. No idea of a scriptwriter can replace the will of the producer, that is of the city's authorities.

Another example of an over-a-century-long realization of a chosen scenario is the construction of the Sagrada Familia church in Barcelona, which was taken over from his predecessor by Antonio Gaudí, and after his tragic death in 1926 it was renewed and is still going on before our eyes.

As I was on a beach one day, I got interested in the sandcastles built by children. I understood that it was not only stalactites and stalagmites that inspired Gaudí as he was working on the form of the Sagrada Familia church. Already in the first sketches of the Catalan architect one can see his childlike dream about castles and the idea of architecture dripping over itself, just like the wax of a burning candle. No doubt Gaudí was also inspired by the portals of Gothic cathedrals with their incredibly elaboration of ornament and figure.

In Catalonia, there is an at least two centuries old tradition of building human towers. The biggest ones go up as high as nine stories (the circle of athletes forming the basis of the tower must then endure the weight of about 1000 kilos). Catalan children are trained for this challenge since the first years of their lives. All the families take part in erecting those constructions. The affinity between the human towers and the towers of Sagrada Familia is obvious. These curves and tilts cannot but bring to mind this Catalan folk tradition. The tips of the towers in some places assume not only botanic motifs but also anthropomorphic ones.

In the times of the civil war in Spain, when the Catholic church was persecuted and priests murdered, also the models made by Antonio Gaudí were destroyed. (As opposed to his peer, the Slovenian artist Jože Plečnik, like Gaudí a deep believer and a monk-architect, Gaudí was unlucky, not only in being run over by a tram, but in the initial lack of recognition...). The annihilation of models and plans caused the continuation of the building to be extremely difficult and in the effect only the front façade of Sagrada Familia has come into being. This church is one of the few examples in the history of modern architecture where the work's realization is re-undertaken after a many years' break by next

generations of architects and builders. Gaudí's followers are, however, trying to cope with a difficult task. It is not easy to recreate certain details or continue the work, trying to adjust to the imagination of the Catalan architect, as if out of a night dream. The modern presbytery of the church reminds us more of the German expressionism than the form of figural fancy characteristic for Gaudí.

Minoru Yamasaki created the Manhattan twin towers, the World Trade Center. These edifices, in their simplicity, not to say schematicism, undoubtedly resembled the towers of San Gimignano. Just like the Italian twins, they had square floor plans and they stood next to each other. And it was these very Manhattan twin towers that fell victim of the terrorist attack on September 11th 2001.

After the WTC was destroyed, a new screenplay started being created. People had been thinking long what should be put in their stead. Developers argued. At the same time, there were discussions as to what to do with the place of the tragedy and how to preserve the memory of what had happened. Finally, the project of Michael Arad was accepted, a NY-based Israeli architect. Arad invited Peter Walker, an architect one-and-a-half generation his senior, to cooperate with him on the project. Walker's specialty are the NY parks and gardens. Together they created a duo who built two fountains on the exact contour of the towers. Americans have doubts whether one should build anything at all in the spot of the tragedy. There were lots of people who opposed the idea. Finally, a giant investment was planned, among others – a park, where dozens of oaks have been planted.

Renzo Piano is the artist who created the Building Workshop, thanks to which he has shown that the art of architecture is first of all the art of building. Let us have a look at how he developed the "screenplay" of Tjuvholmen Museum in Oslo, since the first sketch and modelling of the form and function until the realization. The museum's project was created for a specific collection and in a specific place, on a peninsula on the sea. Just like the Getty Center near Los Angeles, designed by Richard Meier, it was created for a billions-of-dollars-worth collection of modern art, collected by a great oil potentate, J. Paul Getty. Let us pay attention to the fact that what came first was the collection, and only later its seat was created. It is worth remembering that an important feature of this star architecture is an originally devised collection of art, for which the owner is looking for

an adequate form. So, the architect's individualism and fancy are the answer to the client's personality and his achievement: his changing money into the beauty of the collected works. Sometimes museums of modern art are created in view of hosting works of art which are not known yet. But even then it is better to have at least a beginning of a collection – like the works of Richard Serra in the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Many a designer ought to stop over Eugène Ionesco's cool remark: "It is not worth building theatres for plays which have not been written."

I think the relation between the architect and the client should be similar to the one which exists between the doctor and the patient. The sick man can tell you that the ache in his knee has got so bad now that he asks you to cut off his leg, only he wants to still keep his thigh. But no doctor can fulfill such a wish if he knows that the patient can benefit from non-invasive treatment. And we, the architects, have the same obligation towards our client, towards the developer, even the most aggressive one. We must win him over for our vision, because we are not just hired men to sketch the screenplay of a film which the spectators will come to see because they must. If the result of our work is bad, the client will not even want to enter the building. One can hardly imagine a bigger compliment to the film maker that the audience really liked his movie. Similarly, there is no bigger praise for the architect than to say that the house he designed looks as if it had already been there when the client wished it to be. Or that he desired to have something very spectacular and he has just got it. Or that he was dreaming about a really unique and controversial building and this dream has just been fulfilled. We must be sure that we answer this need of the client (whatever it be) and we replace the x many times, one for another, to in effect provide the y that the investor wished for, but which at the same time in our opinion – as the professionals – is at least correct architecture.

Jerzy Wójcik says that "the highest form of [film] practice is thinking. Separating practice from thought is something disastrous. (...) an art work is a unity. One can on the occasion of every piece speak about aesthetic, technical or technological problems,

but they are only elements of the piece, aspects of the same issue. They do not exist on their own, as everything is really a unity."¹⁷

Thinking, so important in a film work, is also necessary in architecture. Both in the case of film and architectural design the artist strives after an ideal in which "every part – of the composition system carries in itself a higher order – of the system's entirety (...) . The composition is a system, an organized whole which has an order of its own. It is a situation in which we understand the meaning of the particular parts. (...) It is something more than the sum of the systems, more than the sum of the parts. In the composition, a part has the awareness of the whole."¹⁸ Meanwhile, today's architecture often lacks the ability to endow the work with meaning. How does the outstanding film operator see the problem?

"In our contemporary church architecture there are many various cylinders, triangles, pyramids which are completely unaware of what they are doing. They carry nothing, they support nothing. They are an accidental system, a system of a lack of understanding and of ignorance. *Sacrum* is, of course, absent there (...) it cannot dwell therein. The essence of composition, not just church composition, is *sacrum*. Every composition is a feast, a holiday."¹⁹

The materialization of the meaning, the true sense of the description and drawings of an architect/scriptwriter is not only a financial and constructional operation. It is supposed to serve art. Tatarkiewicz's definition, doubly alternative, took into account intention and action. "Art is re-creating things or construing forms, or expressing experiences – if the product of this recreation, construction or expression is capable of delighting or moving or shocking."²⁰

Looking together with others for a paradigm of modern architecture, I would like to draw the borders of modern architecture in a way which would allow me to combine the designing practice with reflection about modern art as a *continuum* of the Great Tradition²¹ through its interpretation or negation. Looking for the paradigm of the modern one should rise above the delusions of modernism. Because modernism and the international style only or 30 years²² were trying with their canon of modernity to finish the history off architecture, I am trying

¹⁷ J. Wójcik, op. cit., p. 121.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p.122.

²⁰ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć (A History of Six Ideas)*, PWN, Warszawa 1976, p. 52.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² The period between the first CIAM (Congrès International d'Architecture) in La Sarraz, Switzerland in 1928 and the last one in 1956 in Dubrovnik.

in such a way to describe the modern paradigm of the art of building as not to separate another “new” from another “old” (be it from several years ago) and to undertake a defence of lasting values. In fact, even the most rebellious ideas of architects fit into the ancient, medieval or modern tradition. Only if I draw the goal in such a way can I defend the place of architecture in art and in culture. The basis of my consideration is not any chosen trend of the last decades, nor my personal designing preferences.

The filters of professional literature and architecture criticism, as well as social sciences, allow us today to separate those architectural and city planning ideas which build the urban civilisation. And if in the beginnings of the 21st century over a half of mankind lives in cities – the idea of the *polis* and understanding of the *city game*²³ place the problem of the parts in the whole and draws the rights of an individual in public space. So that the res publica do not fall victim of bad government. To paraphrase Thomas Mann²⁴, it is worth asking the question of what novel are we the characters, where is the place of architecture, what it would like to be, what it can be and what it is not?

Julia Robinson’s diagram shows this new paradigm of architecture as of a cultural medium combining the subfields with which it goes into relations.

“The cultural approach,” Robinson writes, “clarifies the relations between the academy and the practicing profession, for it creates complementary roles for the two arenas. Practicing architects respond to the question of what architecture ought to be by creating buildings; academics respond by studying buildings to develop explicit knowledge that guides improved design.”²⁵

Today’s designing *hic et nunc* – here and now – has been, since the times of Alberti²⁶ gradually being deprived of the function of the sacrum, which was drawing the fundamentals of the house or founding a city. Yet, the cultures of East and West have common roots here, which we are still re-discovering.

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²³ Cz. Bielecki, *Gra w miasto (The City Game)*, DiM 1984-2009, Warszawa 1996.

²⁴ T. Mann, *Józef i jego bracia (Joseph and His Brothers)*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1961.

²⁵ J. W. Robinson, *The Form and Structure of Architectural Knowledge: From Practice to Discipline*, in: A. Piotrowski, J.

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²⁶ L.B. Alberti, *Ten Books of Architecture*, wyd. J. Rykwert, Alec Tiranti, Londyn 1965.