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THEORIES OF BEAUTY IN CURRENT ARCHITECTURE TRENDS

a doctoral thesis

The Thesis investigates the rarely addressed subject of Beauty in modern architecture. It aims at presentation of a scholarly insight into the process of visual perception of architecture and the related aesthetic judgement as well as systemic approach to architecture techniques and aesthetic issues that shape modern buildings. Modern trends are set within the context of the beauty theories that have been affecting architecture for centuries.

Three initial chapters outline the conceptual framework, the forth provides the core scholarly arguments, while two concluding chapters provide summary and analysis of the results.

Initial, outlining chapters comprise of *1. Introduction*, *2. Theses, objects and scope of the study*, and *3. Theories of Beauty*. Chapter 1 answers the challenges about sense in aesthetics research in Architecture and Urban Planning. The research follows the path of inquiry concerning fundamental understanding, that is: having no practical objective but performed only for the purpose of expansion of human understanding, explanation of the phenomena and relations not yet adequately explored. Second chapter focuses on the thesis' conclusions, the adopted research methodology, the geography range of research and its current state. The Thesis offers a central claim that: *Current trends of Architecture follow comprehensive ideal of beauty and belong to the incessant human kind considerations on Beauty* and the supporting claim that: *In its development, each Theory of Beauty present in the modern Architecture must have been confronted with the Great*

*Theory of Beauty*¹. The conclusions have been drawn under the rules of incomplete induction (i.e. approximate conclusions were derived on the basis of individual cases – particular buildings – and on the experiences of the creators and the critics) and their comparison (comparison of distinctive features, scholarly observations, of concepts and theories). The research strategy comprises of historical research and correlation research while reasoning remains on the cultural-discursive field. The geographical range has been limited to the western (Euro-Atlantic) civilisation comprehensive to the Author and extended with Japan. Chapter three provides short presentations of the applicable theories of Beauty, i.e.: Beauty as proportion, consequence of conformity (aptum), Beauty as an emotion response to discovery, conceptual Beauty and institutional theory of Art (Beauty).

The core chapter 4 has been entitled: *Architectural trends in the context of theories of Beauty*. Here, each of the five analysed trends is described. These are: new classicism, minimalism, deconstructivism, high-tech and parametricism. The order of precedence reflects the relation to the Great Theory of Beauty, from the most conforming to the one most indifferent. Each trend has been subjected to an in depth analysis of its distinctive features. Aspects where the general categories, like forms, colours, texture, material etc. manifest most often have been described. These provide the basis for reasoning about which of the Theories of Beauty most affected the originators of the trend.

Chapter 5. *Summary of the trends analyses* synthesises the observations from the research of particular trends, and offers general conclusions. The distinctive features of the architecture trends and their correlation with the theories of Beauty has been used as an explanatory tool (it explains the buildings' structure) and, being useful in acquisition of new knowledge, it has heuristic value. Both the main and the supportive claims have been substantiated in the study. Each modern architecture trend is driven with well assigned theory of Beauty. Each reveals presence of the Great Theory of Beauty.

Chapter 6. *Summary* discusses the directions of future continuation of the commenced research and practical ways of the results' implementation. The Author

¹ "Great Theory of Beauty" which refers to Pythagorean-Platonic ideas, was named this way by W. Tatarkiewicz, who provided the English translation himself in "The Great Theory of Beauty and Its Decline", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 31 (2)/1972, pp. 165-180;

suggests greater stress on visual aspects in architecture teaching. Concept of Beauty shall return to the curriculum of higher education and become the underline of the foundation of the architecture teaching. The other stipulated result is expansion of the aesthetic awareness of the architects.

Reality of Beauty deserves incessant consideration. Grasp of its time independence summons a human being to search for the meaning in life and enables its full appreciation. That is why Beauty shall never be waved.

translated by Stanisław Semczuk

