UDK 72.01
https://doi.org/10.2298/FID2204004M
Original Scientific Article
Received 05.06.2022. Accepted 03.09.2022.

PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIETY
VOL. 33, NO. 4, 671–1064

To cite text:
Mađanović, Milica (2022), "'Building for the Age' According to the Principles of Holism, Individuality, and Development: Historicism and Architecture", *Philosophy and Society* 33 (4): 1004–1021.

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'BUILDING FOR THE AGE' ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF HOLISM, INDIVIDUALITY, AND DEVELOPMENT: HISTORICISM AND ARCHITECTURE[1]

ABSTRACT
Originating from the fields of philosophy and history, the term historicism is often used by architectural historians. Aiming to contribute to the theoretical framework for the analysis of architectural historicism, the paper first explores the meaning of the concept in its native field of philosophy of history. The paper is aligned with the recent scholarship which interprets historicism as a worldview and deduces three historicist principles – principles of holism, individuality, and development. This paper argues that an historicist outlook marked wider creative achievements of an epoch, and that architecture of the period approximately ranging from the 1750s to the 1950s did not evade its influence. Finally, the paper illustrates the three principles in the idea of building for the age which haunted architects of the Western civilisation for almost two centuries.

KEYWORDS
architectural historicism, individuality, holism, development, proto historicism, relativist historicism, determinist historicism

Introduction

In contrast to its wide presence in architectural scholarship, the term historicism has often been marked by conflicting interpretations, pejorative connotations, and ambiguity of meaning. An extensive review of literature, executed for the purposes of the doctoral dissertation that this paper stems from, suggests that three insufficiently robust accounts largely inform the general understanding

1 This article was realized with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, according to the Agreement on the realization and financing of scientific research.

Please note that this paper is based on the segments of an unpublished PhD thesis: Milica Mađanović, Architectural Historicism Revisited: The Case of Twentieth-Century Traditionalist Architecture in Queen Street, Auckland (University of Auckland, 2020). Permanent link: http://hdl.handle.net/2292/52752

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of historicism in the recent architectural scholarship. In the broadest terms, historicism is frequently associated with the architecture of the nineteenth century (Hvattum 2004; Tietz 1999; Krastiņš 2011; Hassle, Rauhut, Huerta Fernández 2012). Architectural historians and theorists have also postulated two general, largely uncontested, meanings of historicism – either equating it with determinism on one hand or, on the other, using it to denote architecture created with historical forms and elements (Colquhoun 1989; Kadijević 2005; Jadrešin-Milić 2013; Mitrović 2011; Garnham 2013). The latter is perhaps the most common use of the term historicism in architectural vocabulary.

In response to the above-mentioned three points of gap in knowledge, this paper aims to offer a broadened analytical framework for research of historicism in the context of architecture. The paper argues that, though valuable and relevant for some understanding of the concept, the current accounts of historicism in architectural historiography are too narrow. First, the paper shows that, emanated in the idea of building for the age, historicist outlook informed Western conceptions of architecture for a period longer than a single century. Thus, it should not be considered as an exclusively nineteenth-century topic.

Moreover, the paper argues that deterministic interpretations should be broadened to take into consideration the full complexity and the wider implications of a historicist outlook. To properly analyse the conceptual basis of historicist architecture, the paper relies on philosophy of history, the native field of historicism. Stressing the intricacy of historicism in the context of philosophy of history, the paper is aligned with the recent scholarship which suggests that it can be considered as a worldview, a comprehensive view of humans and their world, based upon an analogous body of concepts – not solely as a deterministic philosophy of history.

Finally, the paper argues that interpretation of historicism as merely an inspiration by architectural history is vague and imprecise. Rather, relying on the scholarship which deduced the three main principles from the historicist tradition – holism, individuality and development – the paper proposes that, informing the Western outlook since the second half of the eighteenth century, they can be observed in concurrent architectural theories and production. The paper suggests that the essential trait of architectural historicism is not a relation to the past, but, in fact a heightened attitude towards the present – more specifically, the design philosophy of building for the age, which was informed by the three principles and reached its peak with the Modern Movement in the 20th century.

'The Fundamental Historicisation of All Our Thinking About Man': Historicism as a Worldview

The term historicism is more recent than the concept it entitles. As discussed recently, the term *Historismus* emerged in mid-nineteenth century Germany (Iggers 1995; Paul, Veldhuizen 2020). The second half of the nineteenth century saw wider use of the term historicism, and it was widely popularised during

the interwar period, when intellectuals across Europe came to debate the virtues and vices of historicism. Coined in the nineteenth century, the term historicism did not enter into specialist vocabulary long before the early twentieth century. So, what does historicism denote? To quote Frank Ankersmit, the concept 'remains puzzling' (Ankersmit 1995: 143). It was never a systematically formulated philosophy. Indeed, its meanings in philosophical use have become more complex and diverse over time, causing numerous discussions and resulting in a vast historiographical corpus.

The variety of viewpoints in the historicist tradition has prompted a number of scholars to try and classify them (Lee and Beck 1954; Reynolds 1999; D'Amico 2007). These classifications show that the notion of historicism has a great plasticity. In the context of philosophy of history, there can be no one meaning of historicism, only several – as diverse as notions which D'Amico grouped as 'historiographic concepts' (D'Amico 2007: 244), distinguishing between the objects of cultural and natural science; Reynolds's 'Popperian historicism' stemming from the premise that 'there are to be found in history general laws, rhythms, or patterns' (Reynolds 1999: 277); or, directly opposed, Lee and Beck's 'historicisation of life' (Lee, Beck 1954: 570), which shows that thinkers such as Ernst Troeltsch and Friedrich Meinecke perceived historicism "as a special form of, or an approach to, intellectual history", maintaining that historical process cannot be explained by laws (and hence are not predictable), but by innate tendencies, 'spiritual spontaneity', and special or external factors (Lee, Beck 1954: 571).

Despite the perplexing variety of definitions, scholars have mainly treated historicism as a strictly intellectual problem, confined to the domain of the, most often, academic thought. This general reading of historicism as a concept exclusive to the fields of history and philosophy has been challenged by more recent scholarship in one important respect. A number of researchers have argued that debate on historicism occurred in a variety of scholarly disciplines across Europe, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Kosík 1977: 65–75; Wittkau 1994; Heinig 2004; Toews 2004). Moreover, it has been proposed that it is possible to condense the two meanings of historicism underlying the variety of definitions, which would allow an intelligible and more precise use of the term – 'historicism as a way of thinking can justifiably be defined as a methodology at the least and as a world-view, *Weltanschauung,* at the most' (Rand 1964: 503–518). As a methodology, historicism entails a body of formal concepts and principles to guide the historian in their study of past events. As a *Weltanschauung*, historicism designates a comprehensive view of humans and their world.

Kurt Nowak attributes the overwhelming success of historicism, in and outside academia, to its ability to explain a world witnessing rapid change and accelerating complexity more convincingly than any other worldview available to educated citizens since the mid-nineteenth century (Nowak 1987: 133–171). According to Nowak, historicism offered a worldview in which not Enlightenment's reason or natural law but history served as a primary mode of orientation

in the world. Historicism, its different variations, assumed not simply that the present was a product of the past, but more specifically that the present was a stage in a process of evolution. Historicism thus offered a worldview that embedded the experiences of change into a narrative of progressive development. Discussing the influence of historicism, Wolfgang Hardtwig even asserted that it can be interpreted as a religion of history (Hardtwig 2005: 35–50).

Friedrich Jaeger argues that historicism not only fascinated an intellectual elite but was appropriated by educated middle classes. Because of its ability to connect past and present, inspiring thoughts about the future, historicism, in Jaeger's analysis, offered "all-compassing perceptions of meaning and continuity in human ways of life through the medium of a historical consciousness, historical justification", and, by consequence, "a specifically historical justification" of what counted as valid moral standards (Jaeger 1996: 52–70). Quoting Karl Manheim's famous description of historicism as "an intellectual force of extraordinary significance... the real agent of our worldview, a principle which not only organizes like an invisible hand, the whole of the work of the human sciences but also permeates everyday life" (Manheim 1952: 84), Jaeger explains that historicism in this sense served as a system of meaning, a mode of interpreting the world, which enabled people in times of rapid change to see a relation between where they came from and where they were heading to. In a context of overwhelming modernisation, historicism's genealogical thought structure offered the educated middle classes a means for maintaining a continuity with the past while sustaining their hopes for stable and steady societal progress in future.

Similarly, in his study of historicism in 1840s Berlin, John Toews calls this the 'historical principle', "the implications of which resonated far beyond the squabbles between members of the Hegelian School and the Historical School" epitomised by Ranke (Toews 2004: XIV). The historical principle was the belief that individuals and collectives could best conceive of themselves in historical terms. It was an attempt "to redefine membership in various communities – religious, ethnic, ethical, and political – as historical identifications, that is, in terms of the subjective identification of individuals with a shared past or public memory" (Toews 2004: XV). This principle not only characterised the narrowly defined academic historicism that generations of historians have learned to associate with Ranke, but also more broadly inculcated itself into the culture of historicism that is the subject of Toews's book.

For the scholars just cited, the crisis of historicism that increasingly haunted Europe from the early decades of the twentieth century onward was, above all other things, a collapse of the nineteenth-century historical principle. It was rooted in a growing inability to define identity in historical terms. In the aftermath of the world wars, for people who had learned to see themselves in terms of history, who positioned themselves in genealogical narratives, who had defined themselves as heirs to traditions that they had hoped to develop further in the future, the awareness that history could be dramatically different than expected not only destroyed certain versions of their past, but also challenged

their 'historical identity'. When, in contexts of sudden change and unexpected upheaval, historical development turned out to be less steady and progressive than historicism had assumed, an entire worldview was put on trial. Thus, for all three authors, the crisis of historicism was not a strictly philosophical problem in the realm of neo-Kantian epistemology, but the shattering of a thought structure widely shared among the Western middle class.

Fully acknowledging the intricacy and ambiguity of the concept, this paper also favours the idea of historicism as a worldview, which permeated all aspects of human creativity – including architecture. To quote Meinecke, historicism can be perceived as an intellectual revolution that profoundly influenced the thought-structure of Western culture (Meinecke 1965: 1). Similarly, Frederick Beiser illustrated his definition of historicism with Troeltsch's position that historicism means "the fundamental historicisation of all our thinking about man, his culture and his values" (Troelstch 1922: 102). Beiser crystallised two defining principles of historicism – the principle of individuality, and the principle of holism (Beiser 2011: 5). The former relates to the idea that the defining subject matter of history – and the object of historical research – is the *individual*, who exists at a particular time and place. The later presupposes that the whole is prior to the parts, and irreducible to them. Beiser also notes that the central historicist thesis was "the omnipresence of historical change" (Beiser 2011: 3). Other scholars dubbed this idea of historical change, which fundamentally marked historicist understanding of history, the principle of development (Rand 1964: 508; Lee, Beck 1954: 568–577). For Lee and Beck, development is the historical process within which individuality manifests itself (Lee, Beck 1954: 571).

This paper proposes that holism, individuality, and development as the important traits of historicist design philosophy. The architects from the period of approximately 1750-1950 perceived of architecture in the tradition of historicist thinking – for most of them, the causes of architecture were utterly historical and dependant on a specific context, a definite time and place. The concept of holism informed the idea, advocated by historicist architects, that architecture is inextricable from society, culture, and the epoch. Furthermore, the principle of individuality permeated the view that, within the stream of history, every society, culture or epoch are individual – unique, different from each other, and determined by specific factors. This uniqueness, or individuality, of different historic periods gave rise to the notion of different epochs from architectural history (i.e. Classical Greece, Medieval, Renaissance, etc.). Having acknowledged the individuality of different historical epochs, historicist architects started to think about the uniqueness of their own age, and architecture that would express it best. Ultimately, the principle of individuality informed the idea of 'building for the age', resulting in a long search for architectural forms expressive of the times. The principle of development was emanated in the firm belief in the historical evolution of architecture. It was an important design influence for generations of architects – both the ones who believed that that a new style of architecture could not simply be invented and

their opponents who believed that it was, in fact, their 'new' architecture that continued the natural course of architectural history, interrupted sometime during the eighteenth century. The following sections explore the three principles and the way they informed the historicist paradigm of building for the age in architectural history ranging roughly from the 1750s until the Modern Movement in the twentieth century.

'Towards a Historical Architecture': Proto Historicism of the Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century set the scene for the emergence of the driving force that would dictate the course of architectural history from the early nineteenth century to the emergence of postmodernism. Heavily influencing historical scholarship, a modern philosophy of history emerged in the eighteenth century. Contrasting the work of the previous epochs, modern historiography rested "on the discovery of man as a peculiarly historical being, subject to a development transcending the life of any individual, nation or race" (Vico 1944: 46). As the professional historians of the Enlightenment era dedicated themselves to the careful particularisation of the history of the Western world, the same enthusiasm for the past extended to the study of architectural history. The eighteenth-century architectural historicism functioned primarily as an historiographical phenomenon, enabling the establishment of an interpretative framework for the study and understanding of works of other cultures. This intellectual climate brought upon the first modern history of architecture, which attempted to approach its object of study, based on a specific methodology. Titled *Towards an Historical Architecture*, it was an extensive study divided into five volumes written by the Austrian architect Johan Fischer von Erlach, first published in 1721 – a few years before the Vico's *New Science* of 1725 (Vico 1999). For the first time in the history of Western architectural historiography, the title presented a comparative history of architecture that covered all periods from its origins up to the eighteenth century. The book was also innovative in its consideration of architectural production from civilisations other than Greek and Roman. Von Erlach not only endeavoured with a comprehensive scholarly contribution, but he also used this publication as a platform to communicate his idea of history as the new basis for architecture (Garnham 2013: 13).

Concurrently with the growing interest in the systematic research of the architectural past, Enlightenment scholars expressed a passion for the inquiry of the 'first causes' – the study of origins of any phenomena. The eighteenth-century quest for the origin of architecture entailed numerous, often conflicting, approaches. One of the most influential ideas of the period was proposed by the Jesuit priest, and later Benedictine Abbot, Marc-Antoine Laugier (1713-1769). In the famous *Essay on Architecture* published in 1755, Laugier searched for the universal origins of architecture in the concept of the primitive hut (Laugier 1977). The hut embodied three basic architectural elements – the post, the lintel, and the gabled roof – and, essentially, represented the natural origins of

architecture. Postulating a rational nature as the origin of architecture, Laugier's origin theory evoked an architecture that represented nothing but its own structural principle. Though profoundly influential, Laugier's proposition attracted a certain number of critics. One of the challengers was his contemporary, the Italian artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1788) (Wilton-Ely 1978: 5). Piranesi ridiculed the concept of the primitive hut. His etchings of Rome illustrated the idea that history, more precisely, the Etruscan stone buildings, was the source from which Roman architecture developed. It is not possible to claim with certainty that Piranesi was familiar with Vico's writings. However, it is possible to interpret Piranesi's idea in relation to Vico's claim that the human mind knows no other reality than history because humans create history. What Piranesi proposed is that architecture emerges from its own history. Architecture is, obviously, a human creation. Creating architecture within a historical stream of development, architects know no other reality than architectural history and, therefore, should draw upon it in its concurrent creations.

Profoundly influenced by Laugier, Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849) also aimed to formulate a "theory of originating principles from which the arts is born" (Lavin 1992: 86; de Quincy, Younes 1999). Quatremère's proposition can be put in the context of the historicist paradigm that Andrew Reynolds named the 'mundane historicism': "to be understood properly things must be considered within their historical contexts" (Reynolds 1999: 276). In contrast to Laugier's universalising approach, Quatremère maintained that the origin of architecture is a historically and geographically specific principle. For Quatremère, architectural form was a result of the particular conditions from which it originated – it was not an emanation of a universal principle. He distinguished between two types of architectural expression, which he named architectural character – *caractère essential* and *caractère relative*. While the former denotes universal and ideal types, the latter was a relative architectural expression, an emanation of the historicist principle of individuality. *Caractère relative* was dependent on different conditions, such as climate, terrain, or government. At the same time, the concept of holism is observable in Quatremère's theory of the dependent architectural character, "any architecture – whether good or poor – could be seen as revelatory of human civilisation and thus as a profoundly social phenomenon" (Lavin 1992: 70). Furthermore, as stressed by Hvattum, Quatremère's line of argument contributed to the perception of past architectural styles as relative phenomena, available to choice, and architecture as a conventional entity. (Hvattum 2004: 42). This concept was crucial for nineteenth-century architecture, when relativisation reached its peak, resulting in rampant pluralism of styles.

The term 'style' has continued to attract the attention of architectural scholars until the present day.[2] It had been used since the Renaissance to denote

2 For example, an entire issue of the *Fabrications* journal was dedicated to the issue of style in architecture: *Fabrications: The Journal of the SAHANZ* 17, no. 2 (2007). See also: van Eck, van de Vall 1995; Crook 1987.

the specific characteristics of individual artists, but, as Caroline van Eck has shown, made its way into architecture in the first half of the eighteenth century (van Eck 1995: 89–108). The second half of the eighteenth century was a time of intellectual ferment, and as discussed by Barry Bergdoll, historical study became the bedrock of architectural theory since years 1770s at the Beaux-Arts Academy in Paris (Bergdoll 1994: 7). Systematically taught by the elite centre of the profession, the architectural past defined and shaped the discourse of modern architecture. Beaux-Arts teaching accepted the basic historicist premise that no historical phenomenon could be understood in isolation. Relative factors of geographic and social situation – climate, geology, human institutions – and of temporal situation in a sequence of development, were deemed essential to understanding the formal appearance, materials, and expression of any given monument.

This new consciousness of history would come to replace a general deference to the classical tradition. The 'historicisation of life' as proposed by Lee and Beck (Lee, Beck 1954: 570–572), poured into architecture, and was reflected in the appreciation of various periods from the past. As a result, the authority of the classical orders was undermined, and re-attributing supremacy to a single style became impossible. The repertoire of classical elements remained a valid means of architectural expression. However, the appeal of classical architecture was no longer in the presumed universal qualities it encapsulated. Since the historical styles came to be associated with the values of the societies that produced them, the validity of classicism stemmed from the fact that it manifested the best possible conditions and the qualities of its creators – Ancient Greece and Rome, the cradle of the Western civilisation. The relativism of architectural expression was furthered by the development of an interest in medieval architecture in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Historicist Principles as Design Agencies in the Time of Crisis: Relativist Historicism of the Nineteenth Architecture

Secularisation and standardisation of scholarship in the age of the Enlightenment influenced research – and knowledge of – the architectural past. Ultimately, the new understanding of the past altered the way architects perceived of the present. The nineteenth-century architects inherited knowledge from the extensive studies of the architectural achievements of the past epochs, meticulously researched by enthusiastic scholars. Exploring the past, and influenced by the novel outlook informed by the principles of holism and individuality, historicist architects discovered that every period and every nation had attained its characteristic style – consequently, to quote the German architect Heinrich Hübsch (1795-1863), "modern art must be a clear expression of the present" (Hübsch 1847: 190). Therefore, armed with extensive knowledge of the past, and affected by the relativisation of values and meanings, the architects of the nineteenth century developed an historical self-conscious. They turned their attention to the present. What was the role architecture of their

time played in the course of history? More importantly, what *was* the architecture of their time? This 'dilemma of style', as Mordaunt Crook named the long search for appropriate architectural expression of the 'modern' age, remained the essential feature of historicist architecture (Crook 1987).

The question that would continue to haunt architects in the following century and a half was for the first time formulated in 1828. It was the year of the publication of a short book written by Hübsch. The title formulated the question that settled heavily in the mind of architects: *In What Style Should We Build?* (Hübsch 1992: 63–108). Hübsch was a student of the established Neo-Classicist Friedrich Weinbrenner (1766-1826), had studied in Rome, and travelled to Greece. However, he asserted that continuing to imitate classical antiquity would not be fruitful for the German architecture of his period. Instead, Hübsch set out "to establish a new style, alive to the demands of the present" (Herrmann 1992: 3). Historicist architecture entailed a consciousness of unique traits of different epochs: a self-awareness of one's place within the stream of history; and a purposeful aspiration to develop architectural forms expressive of the unique conditions of the present time.

The strategies employed and arguments provided during the search for the appropriate style of the age were numerous, and often conflicting. However, it is interesting to note that the historicist architectural styles emerging from this obsession with today were, as a rule, developed in relation to history. Regardless of the intensity or the dominant attitude of a position, the connection with history was always present. Positions could be strong, moderate, or feeble. Attitudes ranged from positive, neutral, to negative. The two opposing poles of the historicist outlook were, on one hand, an appreciation of past experience that consolidated the premise *historia magistra vitae est*, and, on the other, a rejection of the past styles as proposed by the Modernist architects. It is necessary to note that the strong positive attitude for the architectural past did not condition a cohesive emotional and intellectual response to the architecture of the present. Hence, the content students of history, confident of their work based on the study of precedents, were the contemporaries of the architects left paralyzed in the face of the great achievements of the past, haunted by the feeling of self-doubt. As Ruskin noted, "we are oppressed by the bitter sense of inferiority... we are walled in by the great buildings of other times, and their fierce reverberation falls upon us without pause, in our feverish and oppressive consciousness of captivity" (Ruskin 1903: 173).

In the search for a new style, nineteenth-century architects were faced with a challenge of innovation: new living and working conditions; new materials; new building processes; new building types; new perceptions of history; and a new consciousness of the present time. Crook notes that Thomas L. Donaldson (1795-1885) kept on asking in lectures, letters, and books: "Are we to have an architecture of our period, a distinct, individual, palpable style of the nineteenth century?" (Crook 1987: 100). Donaldson's contemporary, George Gilbert Scott wrote: "I am no medievalist. I do not advocate the styles of the middle ages as such. If we had a distinctive architecture of our own day, worthy

of the greatness of the age, I should be content to follow it; but we have not" (Gilbert Scott 1857: 192). Similarly, one of the questions debated at 'the great artistic congress' held at Antwerp in 1861 was: "why our epoch, superior in so many respects to former centuries, has not its own particular form of architecture" (The Great Artistic Congress, Antwerp 1861: 3). From its very first volume in 1843, the influential architectural British journal, the *Builder*, consistently called for a new style that would emerge "from the workshop, the mine, and the laboratory". But by 1853 the same journal could see no way out of the 'dungeon' of archaeology (Crook 1987: 101).

This obsession with the idea of a new style was a novel concept – prior to the late eighteenth century, the prevalent architectural style was generally the undisputed, predominantly accepted language of the age. A sense of creative disorientation marked architectural production for the longer part of the historicist era. Prior to the answer the Modernist architecture provided in the twentieth century, the relativist crisis of historicism shook the foundations of the architectural profession. Carl Böttcher (1838-1900) worded the disorientated state the newly acquired historical relativism left the majority of nineteenth-century architects in: "we would find ourselves alone in an immense void, having lost all the historical ground that the past had provided for us and for the future as the only basis on which further development is possible" (Hermann 1992: 10). Böttcher's comment and the general state nineteenth-century architects found themselves are in accordance with Allan Megill's suggestion that a 'crisis of historicism', usually associated with intellectual life in the Weimar Republic, manifested itself already in the 1830s.[3]

The nineteenth century architects felt robbed of a single guiding design principle. However, though creatively disoriented, dissatisfied with the contemporary state of architecture, and of contradictory convictions with regards to the way out of the stylistic dilemma, they were unified in a common goal – towards a new architecture expressive of the unique conditions of their period. Driven both by the dissatisfaction and the urge to 'build for the age', architectural historicism was characterised by a strong sense of innovation and experimentation. However, for the major part of the historicist era, the eagerness to innovate did not necessitate the creation of previously non-existent architectural forms. In fact, though the demands for a 'new' style were ever-present, influenced by the historicist notion of development the majority of architects shared the opinion that it was impossible to invent a new style. For example, Edmund Beckett started his chapter on principles of construction with an explanation of why a new style could not be invented and, even if it could, it would be useless. Beckett remarked – quite prophetically – that "if a new one [style] were invented to-morrow, it would very soon be old, and would be only one more than we have already to choose out of and copy" (Beckett 1876, 57).

3 Of course, Megill was thinking about the publication of David Friedrich Strauss's provocative piece of Biblical criticism, *Das Leben Jesu*: Megill 1997: 420–421. For a different view, see Paul 2010: 169–193.

Beckett was, like many of his contemporaries, concerned with the break in the sequence of style, and focused on finding a way to continue the natural development interrupted by their predecessors. Similarly, Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), one of the protagonists of German Romanticism, warned against the attempt at "creating a new art, as it were, out of nothing" (Schlegel 1812: 283).

Described as the first architect to grasp the condition of modernity (Mallgrave 1996), Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) developed a theory of style he named 'practical aesthetics', proposing an innovative reading of history (Hvattum 2004). For him, history was not identified with architectural styles, nor were the styles rooted in the construction forms and the values associated with the society that produced them. Instead, Semper asserted that architectural elements were derived from the materials and traditional ways of making the objects. As a result, he maintained that the architects of his time had to adapt the traditional types of built form because of the historical orientation of their age. Claiming that "no century can be erased from world history", Semper asserted that contemporary architecture "must therefore give some indication... of the connections between the present and the past centuries" (Garnham 2013: 62). Architects should neither copy from history, nor try to invent new forms. They should try and express new ideas with the old types: "architecture has over the centuries created its own store of forms from which it borrows the types for new creations; by using these types, architecture remains legible and comprehensible to everyone" (Garnham 2013: 62).

In his introduction to the German debate on style, Wolfgang Hermann remarked that as the discussion about a style gained traction and revealed its complexity, the idea of inventing a new style 'at a stroke' or '*par force*' was dismissed as 'foolish' and 'misguided'. However, the issue of a new style was taken quite seriously by the Germans – and not only by the architects of the period. At the order of King Maximilian of Bavaria, the Akademie der Bildenden Kunste in Munich organised a competition in 1850 "to invent a new style". Herrmann notes that the conclusion would be reached if the aftermath of the competition reflected a general attitude of the period: "styles are not made; they develop" (Herrmann 1992: 9).

The Power of Zeitgeist: Determinist Historicism of the Twentieth Century

The historicist search for architecture expressive of the unique conditions of the present reached its peak in the first decades of the twentieth century. Building for the age remained the period's leitmotif. The notion was equally employed as a leading argument by both of the two conflicted camps of architectural thought that polarised during the first three decades of the century – the traditionalist[4] and the Modernist. The proponents of the former were part of

4 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, the first historian to dedicate a complete chapter to the topic, called this type of architecture 'traditional' architecture of the 20th century.

the institutionalised mainstream, while the latter were an emerging minority before the Second World War. This ratio gradually shifted in the interwar period, as the Modernist ideas increasingly attracted supporters.

In his seminal title *The Historiographies of Modern Architecture*, Panayotis Tournikiotis examined the crucial contributions of three art historians who laid the theoretical foundations of the Modern Movement, playing a decisive role in shaping of the Modernist ideology – Nikolaus Pevsner, Emil Kaufmann, and Sigfried Giedion (Tournikiotis 1999: 21-51). Tournikiotis has shown that, in addition to other fundamental principles of the German tradition of art history, the spirit of the age was at the core of their reasoning.[5] In the tradition of determinist historicism, articulated in various forms by various philosophers and historians maintaining that human decisions and reasoning are historically determined, and informed by the principle of holism, the writings of the three inextricably link architecture and Zeitgeist. The new architecture they proclaimed – the architecture of the Modern Movement – is the architecture of reason and function, tantamount to a new spirit of the Machine Age.

For Pevsner, whose theories have been described as historicist by David Watkin, those historians and architects who grasped the Zeitgeist were in a position to decide what the architectural expression of their age actually was and what it ought to be (Watkin 1977: 104–111). Obviously, not all who practised architecture or history understood the spirit of their time, and, therefore, not everyone could become the catalyst of social evolution (Pevsner 1960: 72). This right was reserved for the proponents of the Modern Movement. Tournikiotis notes that David Watkin criticised this 'committed' side of Pevsner's *Pioneers* (Tournikiotis 1999: 275). Watkin maintained that the "art-historical belief in the all-dominating Zeitgeist, combined with a historicist emphasis on progress and the necessary superiority of novelty, has come dangerously close to undermining, on one hand, our appreciation of the imaginative genius of the individual, and, on the other, the importance of artistic tradition" (Watkin 1977: 115).

Similarly to Pevsner, Giedion wrote that "the historian has to give insight into what is happening in the changing structure of his own time. His observations must always run parallel to those specialists of optical vision whom we call artists" (Giedion 1957: 56) because the artists express the unique qualities of their period through symbols even before the majority of people became aware of them. The discussion of a 'new' architecture expressive of the unique conditions of the age was lively in post-October Revolution Russia. *Style and Epoch* by Moisei Iakovlevich Ginzburg was, according to Anatole Senkevitch, the first and most important elucidation of early Constructivist theory in Soviet architecture (Senkevitch 1982: 10). Similarly to the early writers on Modernist architecture in the West, Ginzburg's thesis was historicist in its essence.

According to Hitchcock, traditional architecture included "the majority of buildings designed before 1930 in most countries of the Western World and a considerable, if rapidly decreasing, proportion of those erected in succeeding decades" (Hitchcock 1968: 392).

5 See, for example: Pevsner 1960, Kaufmann 1933, Gideion 1967.

Proposing a new architecture, suitable for his own period, Ginzburg maintained that style was an immediate expression of the unique qualities of its time: "each historical period, or rather each vital creative force, is characterised by certain artistic organisms; each epoch in the plastic arts thus has its favourite types, which are especially characteristic of it" (Ginzburg 1982: 78).

It was not only the early writers about Modernist architecture who used the unique qualities of their time and the Zeitgeist to validate their radical rhetoric. The ideas of the pioneer architects whose work they promoted also developed in the context of the intellectual climate of historicism. According to Iain Boyd Whyte, with reference to the inseparable bond between architecture and the period, "the architect functioned as a seismograph, highly and predictively responsive to the demands of the age" (Whyte 2004: 46). In his influential essay 'Ornament and Crime', articulating a criticism of traditionalist architectural ornament crucial for the later aesthetics of Modernist architecture, Adolf Loos (1870-1933) cried: "Every epoch had its own style, and ours alone should be denied one?!" (Loos 1998: 167–176). Stanford Anderson thoroughly examined the connections between the unique conditions of the period and the work of Peter Behrens (1868-1940) in his *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the Twentieth Century*, claiming that the German architect showed incessant interest in the Spirit of the Age in his buildings and writings (Anderson 2000). Le Corbusier (1887-1965), the venerated virtuoso of the early Modernist architecture, often expressed the relevance of the link between a specific period and architectural style in his writings.

Branko Mitrović opens his discussion of architectural Modernism in relation to historicism with words by Le Corbusier (Mitrović 2011: 112). In his seminal *Toward a New Architecture*, Le Corbusier wrote that "our own epoch is determining day by day its own style" (Le Corbusier 2003: 10) Whyte noted another occasion when Corbusier 'very predictably hailed the particularity of the moment: "There is a new spirit: it is the spirit of construction and of synthesis, guided by a clear conception. Whatever may be thought of it, it animates to-day the great part of human society" (Boyd Whyte 2004: 46). Mitrović aligned Le Corbusier's writing with the historicism of Hegel, who interpreted human creativity as a manifestation of a single spirit (Mitrović 2011: 112). Richard A. Etlin discussed the architectural responses to the Zeitgeist on both sides of the Atlantic, exploring the relations between the spirit of the age and the ideas of the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) and Le Corbusier (Etlin 1994: 165–201).[6]

It can be argued that the 'new' architecture, as proposed by the Modernists in the West, or the Constructivists in Soviet Russia, was the last phase, and the key achievement of historicism. Almost a two centuries' long quest for a 'style of our times' was concluded in the shared vision of these revolutionary

6 Richard A. Etlin, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier: The Romantic Legacy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), especially "Chapter 4: The Spirit of the Age," 165–201.

architects. Driven by an historicist self-consciousness of one's place in the stream of history, they developed an architectural vocabulary expressive of the present. This should not come as a surprise, given that all of these people matured in the same intellectual and academic tradition of historicism. As did most of their peers – regardless of their preferred mode of design – the Modernist architects acted in response to the same initiative to express the individuality of their own time, the Age of the Machine. Their creative efforts were driven by the same exigency to architecturally communicate the unique characteristics of the present.

Conclusion

Architectural historicism can be perceived as a phenomenon that grew out of the context of the academic discussions from the philosophy of history. The first part of the paper illustrates the change in the understanding of the role and efforts to develop specific methods of historical scholarship. More importantly, it shows the change in the way history was perceived since the early eighteenth century. Since this time, history was comprehended as a succession of individual, specific epochs. Within the stream of history, every epoch is unique, influenced by specific sets of conditions. This outlook undermined the concept of universal values and led to the relativisation of meanings. Another important quality of the historicist way of thinking was its holism. For historicists, and according to holism, concepts such as society, culture or epoch are indivisible unities that determine the very identity of its parts – none of which can exist in isolation from it (Beiser 2011: 4–5). Success of historicism laid in its ability to convincingly ground the rapidly changing and increasingly complex world in the minds of nineteenth-century people (Nowak 1987: 133–171). Historicism, in its different variations, assumed not simply that the present was a product of past, but more specifically that the present was a stage in a process of evolution, offering a worldview that translated the overwhelming experiences of change into a narrative of progressive development. Ultimately, this new understanding of the past altered the understanding of the present.

The architectural production and theory were marked by this significant change of outlook. In addition to its central thesis of holism that informed the idea that architecture is inextricable from the broader historical and socio-cultural context, two principles underlying architecture of the period c. 1750-1950 are distilled from the historicist theories – the concepts individuality and development. Unlike most of the positions previously presented in architectural historiography, this paper proposes that architectural historicism is not a style, nor is it a specific design method. Influenced by the altered comprehension of history, the essence of architectural historicism is not the architectural past, but, in fact, the architectural present. The new historical consciousness made the architects historically self-conscious; it urged them to focus on their own period. What was it that made their own age different, special, or unique within the course of history? What was the most appropriate way to architecturally

express it – to plastically convey the unique qualities of their own time and place? Architectural historicism, therefore, is not a specific approach to architectural design; it is not embodied in any specific form.

Architectural historicism could be defined as a conscious aspiration to architecturally express unique qualities of the present epoch, which increasingly dominated Western design culture from the early nineteenth until the mid-twentieth century. The epoch of architectural historicism was marked by a historical self-consciousness, heightened attitude towards the past, and the understanding of architecture as a socio-temporal and contextual construct defined by, and inextricable from, the unique qualities of the time and place of its creation. The motivation for designing, the drive behind the effort to create specific architectural forms, was the result of the awakened historical self-awareness of the architects and was bound up with the obsession to find 'a style of our times'. The true manifestation of architectural historicism is the conscious efforts by generations of architects to answer the question, "In what style should we build?". With historicism a new meaning and a new primary function were ascribed to architecture. Architecture became a socio-temporal and contextual construct. It reflected broader conditions, and – above all – a society of a certain period. Moreover, architecture was not considered merely a society's reflection but also a tool used in the shaping of the latter. Introducing a temporal element into architecture, an historicist understanding of the historicity of time incorporated into design methodology the imperative to appropriately express the present.

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„Gradeći za doba“ prema principima holizma, individualnosti i razvoja: istorizam i arhitektura

Apstrakt

Poreklom iz oblasti filozofije i istorije, termin istorizam se često susreće u radovima istoričara arhitekture. Sa ciljem da doprinese teorijskom okviru za analizu istorizma u kontekstu arhitekture, rad najpre istražuje značenje pojma u njegovom matičnom polju filozofije istorije. Rad se pozicionira u okviru skorašnjih istraivanja koje istorizam tumače kao pogled na svet i sugerišu postojanje tri principa istorizma – principe holizma, individualnosti i razvoja. U ovom radu se tvrdi da je istoristički pogled obeležio šira stvaralačka dostignuća jedne epohe i da arhitektura perioda od 1750-ih do 1950-ih nije izmicala njegovom uticaju. Konačno, rad ilustruje tri principa u ideji izgradnje za doba koja je tokom perioda od gotovo dva stoleća proganjala arhitekte zapadne civilizacije.

Ključne reči: arhitektonski istorizam, individualnost, holizam, razvoj, protoistorizam, relativistički istorizam, deterministički istorizam